

**Representing the Dynasty in Flavian Rome: The Case of
Josephus' *Jewish War***

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the problem of contemporary historiography and regime representation in Flavian Rome through a close study of a text not usually read for such purposes but which has obvious promise for a study of this theme, the *Jewish War* of Flavius Josephus. Having surveyed the evolution of our conception of Josephus' relationship to Flavian power, taken a broad account of issues of political expression and regime representation in Flavian Rome outside Josephus and examined questions relating to the structure and date of the work, I will provide a series of thematically-focused readings of the three senior members of the Flavian family, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, as represented by their contemporary and client Josephus. Key topics to be explored include the level of independence of Josephus' vision, his work's relationship to how the regime is depicted in other contemporary sources, how Josephus makes the Flavians serve his own agenda (which is distinct from the heavy focus of most previous scholarship on how Josephus served their agenda), and the viability and usefulness of certain types of reading practices relating to figured critique which have recently become influential in Josephan scholarship. The thesis offers a new approach to Josephus' relationship to the Flavian Dynasty and sheds new light on contemporary historiography and political expression in the Early Principate.

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Texts and Abbreviations

Works of Josephus were consulted in the Loeb Classical Library editions. The following abbreviations are used:

<i>AJ</i>	=	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>BJ</i>	=	<i>Jewish War</i>
<i>C.Ap</i>	=	<i>Against Apion</i>
<i>V</i>	=	<i>Life</i>

Other classical texts were consulted in the latest edition of the Loeb Classical Library, unless another edition is cited in the bibliography. Abbreviations are those used by the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (4th Edition), with the following additions:

Isoc. <i>Ad Nic.</i>	=	Isocrates, <i>To Nicocles</i>
Nic. Dam. <i>Aug</i>	=	Nicolaus of Damascus, <i>Agoge of Augustus</i>
Onasander	=	Onasander, <i>The General</i>
Oros. <i>Hist. adv. Pag.</i>	=	Orosius, <i>History against the Pagans</i>
Philo, <i>Quis heres?</i>	=	Philo of Alexandria, <i>Who is the Heir of Divine Things?</i>
Plut. <i>Dion</i>	=	Plutarch, <i>Life of Dion</i>
Plut. <i>Otho</i>	=	Plutarch, <i>Life of Otho</i>
Plut. <i>Quomodo adulator</i>	=	Plutarch, <i>How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend</i>
Suet. <i>Otho</i>	=	Suetonius, <i>Life of Otho</i>
Sulp. Sev. <i>Chron.</i>	=	Sulpicius Severus, <i>Chronicles</i>
Val. Flacc.	=	Valerius Flaccus, <i>Argonautica</i>

Books of the Hebrew Bible were consulted in the Masoretic text as printed in the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (5th Edition, Stuttgart, 1997). Abbreviations used are those recommended in the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Abbreviations for **scholarly journals** follow the conventions of *L'Année Philologique*, with the following additions:

<i>AJBI</i>	=	<i>Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute</i>
<i>EESE</i>	=	<i>Erfurt Electronic Studies in English</i>
<i>H&T</i>	=	<i>History and Theory</i>
<i>Hirundo</i>	=	<i>Hirundo: The McGill Journal of Classical Studies</i>
<i>JES</i>	=	<i>Journal of European Studies</i>
<i>JJS</i>	=	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JPol</i>	=	<i>Journal of Politics</i>
<i>JQR</i>	=	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>Jur.Rev.</i>	=	<i>Juridical Review</i>
<i>MW-P</i>	=	<i>Marburger Winckelmann-Programm</i>
<i>PMLA</i>	=	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association</i>
<i>ROI</i>	=	<i>Revue de l'Organisation Internationale pour l'Étude des Langues Anciennes par Ordinateur</i>

<i>Pol.Stud.</i>	=	<i>Political Studies</i>
<i>SBLSP</i>	=	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
<i>W&H</i>	=	<i>War and History</i>
<i>Zutot</i>	=	<i>Zutot: Perspectives on Jewish Culture</i>

Other abbreviations are as follows:

<i>ANRW</i>	=	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>BMC 1</i>	=	H. Mattingly and E. A. Sydenham (rev. C. H. V. Sutherland) (1984), <i>Roman Imperial Coins in the British Museum vol. 1</i> (London)
<i>BMC 2</i>	=	H. Mattingly and E. A. Sydenham (rev. I. A. Carradice and T. V. Buttrey) (2007), <i>Roman Imperial Coins in the British Museum vol. 2(1)</i> (London)
<i>CIL</i>	=	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>F.G.Hist</i>	=	F. Jacoby (1940-1958) <i>Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker</i> (7 vols, Leiden)
<i>F.R.Hist</i>	=	T. J. Cornell (ed.) (2013), <i>The Fragments of the Roman Historians</i> (3 vols, Oxford)
<i>ILS</i>	=	H. Dessau (1974), <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> (Dublin)
McCrum and Woodhead	=	M. McCrum and A. G. Woodhead (1961), <i>Select Documents of the Principates of the Flavian Emperors, Including the Year of Revolution, AD 68-96</i> (Cambridge)
<i>PIR²</i>	=	<i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani (Second Edition)</i>
<i>RDGE</i>	=	Sherk, R. K. (1969), <i>Roman Documents of the Greek East</i> (Baltimore)
<i>SIG</i>	=	Dittenberger, W. (1915-1924), <i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> (Leipzig)

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis constitutes a study of dynastic representation in a major narrative history of the early Principate, Flavius Josephus' *Jewish War*. The great interest of this work for Roman historiographers lies in its status as our only extensive extant example from the early Principate of a once-common type of literature, contemporary historiography, understood here to mean an account of recent events which prominently features individuals still in powerful positions at the time of composition. As we shall see in section 2.4 (56-58), such histories are derided in some extant authors; Josephus (though rarely read from such a perspective today) allows us to get beyond the strictures of ancient critics of contemporary historiography and see how a contemporary historian negotiated potentially difficult issues concerning bias, obligation, historiographical "truth" and the constraints that defined the boundaries of permissible discourse about the imperial family at Rome. This study will attempt to explore these issues, considering the *Jewish War* in its context of composition (Rome under Vespasian and possibly Domitian), closely examining the pictures of Vespasian, Titus and Domitian which emerge from the work, and attempting to situate Josephus' dynastic representations within the broader landscape of discourse about the Flavian dynasts which obtained at Rome under Flavian rule.

The traditional view of Josephus' relationship to Flavian power is scathing, and can be well illustrated by a quotation from one of the classic studies of Josephus' work:

It will be evident that his is not a wholly admirable, still less an heroic character, and that as a writer he lacks some of the essential qualifications of the great

historians. Egoist, self-interested, time-server and flatterer of his Roman patrons he may be justly called: such defects are obvious.¹

This devastating assessment of his character and works is far from unparalleled in older scholarship. Josephus' defection in captivity following the siege of Jotapata, and his subsequent willingness to vaunt his close connections with the Flavian emperors, have seen him reviled as an untrustworthy Quisling and, in a familiar phrase, a "Flavian propagandist".² While one could characterise this as the old view of Josephus, it has appeared in more recent scholarship too.³ However, in recent decades there has been a shift towards a more nuanced approach to Josephus as a political communicator. Several scholarly trends underlie this shift in perspective.

Some of these trends originate outside the fields of Classics and Jewish Studies, but have explicitly influenced the evolution of our conception of Josephus. Perhaps above all, postcolonial theory has changed the approaches that scholars in a range of disciplines take towards colonial identities in ways which directly relate to Josephus' position. In a foundational text of postcolonial studies, *Orientalism*, Edward Said studied the ways in which colonising nations wrote about the colonised in 18th and 19th Century Europe. His key finding, for our purposes, is that the "Orient" (itself a western category) is never allowed to speak for itself: it exists solely to be studied, catalogued and explained by the

¹ Thackeray (1929) 19.

² On the latter charge, see (e.g.) Bentwich (1914) 27; Laqueur (1920) 126-7; Bardón (1940) 294-297; Shutt (1961) 26; Schürer (1973) 57; Yavetz (1975) 421; Rhoads (1976) 11-14; Alon (1977b); Bengtson (1979) 275; Franchet d'Espérey (1983) 3065-3067; Stern (1987); Schwartz (1990) 2; Sterling (1991) 238-240; Southern (1997) 1; Levick (1999) 3. The notion of Josephus as a propagandist was ostensibly supported by the suggestion, in important studies of the composition of the *Jewish War*, that large sections of the text were copied largely *verbatim* from texts produced by those close to the regime for explicitly propagandist purposes (Laqueur 1920, Weber 1921, Drexler 1925, Eisler 1931, Bardón 1940 271-272). For a detailed study of the classic conception of Josephus (and the early indications of a change in this conception) see Bilde (1988).

³ Beard (2003), who urges classicists to engage with Josephus, but precisely on the grounds that he is a propagandist for the Flavian line; a similar perspective is found in Morgan (2006) 270, Rappaport (2007) 68 and Ash (2007) 29.

learned men of the dominant culture.⁴ Subsequent theorists, influenced by Said, paid more attention to how representatives of colonised peoples *can* try to speak in a colonial framework, often by appropriating and deploying the language of the hegemonic culture in order to present themselves and their cultures in ways comprehensible to their colonial masters, but which nonetheless have the power to unsettle. The theorist Homi K. Bhabha has been particularly influential in this area, especially with his concept of colonial mimicry. Mimicry is, to Bhabha, inherently subversive of colonial thought, insofar as the figure of the mimic makes visible the interstices between two major and internally incongruent aspects of imperial ideology, the colonists' desire for a civilised and reformed Other ("the civilising mission"), and the notion of the essential and fixed racial inferiority of the colonised to the coloniser.⁵ Later theorists have developed Bhabha's ideas by considering the notion of strategic mimicry, the adoption of modes of discourse or of categories and ascriptions from the colonising culture by the colonised, as a strategy of deliberate resistance.⁶ Important considerations of Josephus which explicitly invoke postcolonial theorists include the contributions of Barclay, Mason and Spilsbury to Sievers and Lembi (2005), Kaden (2011) examining Josephan mimicry and hybridity in his account of Agrippa II's *gentes devictae* speech, and Ferda (2013) on Josephus' channelling of Jeremiah's Temple Sermon at various points of his work.⁷

In parallel with this, changes in the understanding of the relationship between emperors and literature have also contributed to the development of our understanding of Josephus. Since Millar's *Emperor in the Roman World*, there has been more of an awareness of the reactive nature of Roman imperial government, and consequently less of a tendency to see

⁴ Said (1978).

⁵ Bhabha (1994) 121-131.

⁶ Important to this trend, in different ways, are Spivak (2010), Schülting (1996) and (particularly usefully) Fuchs (2001) 64-99, a study of how Incan historians were able to adopt elite Spanish notions of chivalry and use them, in their Spanish-language narratives, to critique the Spanish occupation of Peru.

⁷ Other explicit discussions of postcolonial theory's relevance to the study of Josephus include Rajak (2014), esp. 191-196, and Barclay (2007) lxvi-lxxi.

the emperor closely involved in every aspect of Roman society. One symptom of this has been that the notion of poets and other authors as literary propagandists has been somewhat in abeyance, even in the cases of authors known to have been in a direct relationship to members of the regime. More recent work has tended to stress authorial independence, with authors aware of the necessity of not upsetting the emperor and consequently aiming to write works which did not overtly disrespect him, but nevertheless retaining much independence and remaining responsible for the contents of their own works.⁸ Furthermore, starting with Frederick Ahl's essay on safe criticism in Greece and Rome, a number of classicists have undertaken specific studies of political expression, "censorship" and dissidence in Roman literature, and found potentially unsettling content in Roman authors once almost universally considered as propagandistic.⁹ Steve Mason has brought such scholarship into the conversation about Josephus, principally in an important 2005 essay which explicitly cites Ahl as its methodological inspiration.¹⁰ Readings of Josephus have become increasingly sensitive to possible veiled critique or dissidence. Thus Barclay argues that Josephus adopts aristocratic Roman values in order to use them to criticise Rome's conduct during the Revolt, Mader documents how Josephus adopts, in the *Jewish War*, a Thucydidean framework of "scientific history" in order to bolster his partisan objectives under an illusion of impartiality, while Mason argues that, far from being Flavian propaganda, the *Jewish War* actually contradicts the official Flavian line on almost every point, depicting Titus as reckless and undisciplined and transferring all the glory for Rome's suppression of the Revolt from the Flavians to the Jewish God.¹¹

Chapman's work has focused on how Josephus uses classical literary models to transform

⁸ Particularly important contributions to this development have been Kennedy (1992) and Galinsky (1996), both contesting the notion that the Maecenas circle were regime propagandists.

⁹ Ahl (1984a); Ahl (1984b); Rudich (1993); Barstch (1994); Rudich (1997); Sluiter and Rosen (2004); Dominik *et al.* (2009); Heilig (2015); Baltussen and Davis (2015a).

¹⁰ Mason (2005a).

¹¹ Barclay (2005); Mader (2000) 4; Mason (2005a) 257-267.

the Jews from enemies into tragic victims in the eyes of Greek and Roman readers.¹²

Mason has argued that Josephus even positions himself within internal Roman constitutional debates: his express preference for aristocratic over monarchical forms of government constitutes a criticism of the Principate, his focus on the dynastic struggles of Herod and his subtle attempts to link this theme to Augustus deliberately highlight one of the most hazardous aspects of Roman-style autocracy, and his deployment of the language and arguments of Stoicism in the speech of Eleazar ben Yair on Masada reflects the so-called Stoic opposition.¹³ This brief survey is necessarily piecemeal and selective, but nonetheless sufficient to show the radically changed tenor of recent Josephan scholarship, and the central importance that postcolonial insights and evolving understandings of Roman political communication have had on effecting this transformation. Far from being a mouthpiece of the Flavians, modern trends in scholarship have enabled us to reconceptualise Josephus as a consistent advocate and spokesman for Israel, even while living at the court of Nebuchadnezzar.

What is still lacking in the scholarship, however, is a detailed study of Josephus' delineation of his Flavian friends and patrons. The last book-length study of this topic, Weber (1921), still contains worthwhile insights, but is vitiated by a now-archaic conception of political expression in Rome, and by the fact that the purpose of the book seems largely to argue for an elaborate composition history of the *Jewish War* which has no adherents today.¹⁴ This thesis aims to fill that lacuna. It is hoped that the findings will be of interest to Roman historians interested in regime representation under the Flavians,

¹² Chapman (2005).

¹³ Mason (2009a). On the last point, see also Ladouceur (1987), esp. 99-101. Mason's views, however, should be qualified by a recognition of the fact that the language of the Republic continued to be employed by the early emperors, meaning that Josephus' expressed preference for aristocratic rule need not have been interpreted by ancient readers as a critique of the Principate.

¹⁴ Despite its promising title, William Den Hollander's 2014 book *Josephus, the Emperors and the City of Rome* has little to say about Flavian representation in Josephus' texts, and is much more concerned with considering what can be said about the life and social position of Josephus himself at Rome.

to historiographers curious about our sole substantial contemporary history from the early Principate, to Josephus scholars in helping to situate Josephus in his immediate political context of composition, and to historians of the Jewish Revolt, who need to consider the extent and nature of Josephus' obligations to the Flavians.

Chapter 2 surveys political expression in Flavian Rome. It considers literary ideologies of veridiction, especially in relation to the historiographical *genre*, as well as ways in which the limits of acceptable discourse were conceptualised and policed, and how those limits could be challenged. Chapter 3, informed by this context, examines the background of political messaging against which Josephus was writing, specifically the nature and content of regime representation in Flavian Rome, in order more clearly to perceive what in Josephus' depictions of his patrons is surprising and unique. Chapter 4 addresses important and related questions of intended audience, date and structure in the *Jewish War*, particularly the long-debated question of the date of the seventh book of that work. It concludes that there is a reasonable likelihood that Book 7 was added in the reign of Domitian to an already completed work comprising Books 1-6; therefore Josephus' Flavian representations in that book need to be treated separately from the rest, because of the different political conditions which obtained under Domitian. Chapter 5 examines Josephus' portraits of the Flavians in Books 1-6; Chapter 6 considers how the Flavians are represented in the seventh book. The final section, Chapter 7, provides a series of overall conclusions.

Chapter 2: Political Expression in Flavian Rome

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a theoretical and methodological framework for an analysis of political expression and regime representation in the *Jewish War*, a framework which both takes into account modern thinking about issues of political expression and develops an approach to these questions rooted firmly in Josephus' historical context. I begin with a consideration of relevant aspects of modern theoretical work on political expression; subsequent sections will survey the constraints operative on authors under the early emperors, examine the countervailing literary ideologies of the time which correspond in various ways to modern notions of free speech, consider the ways in which ancient authors represent and evaluate the characters of rulers, and address the specific aspects of the genre of contemporary historiography which pertain to these issues. As the goals of this chapter are methodological and contextual, the *Jewish War* will not be discussed in detail at this stage, and references to that work will be infrequent and made in passing; material from the other works of Josephus will be treated here in more detail where appropriate.

2.1. Preliminary observations on publication and censorship

In considering Josephus' place in the landscape of political expression under the Flavian emperors, we are engaging with themes already prominent in antiquity. The perceived loss of freedom openly to express one's views on political affairs which accompanied the transformation of Rome's political system under the Principate is one of the great themes of early imperial literature, and the contrast (implied or explicit) is almost invariably with

the period of the “free” Republic.¹⁵ While some authors grant that the emergence of the Principate brought greater stability to the state, it came at a price: the stifling of expression, and the creation of a culture where the only literary art which could truly flourish was the debased rhetoric of the panegyrists and the *delatores*.¹⁶ When reading such verdicts, it is almost irresistibly tempting to reach for sinister parallels from the modern world, to more recent and familiar societies which felt the malign censorial effects of the imposition of autocracy.¹⁷

However, such parallels should be resisted. Modern notions of both free speech and censorship are anachronistic to the Roman world. The great modern liberal tradition of free-speech theory in the West passes, as J. D. Peters puts it, through “a succession of English-speaking Protestants called John” (chiefly John Milton, Locke and Stuart Mill), before being taken up by lawyers, particularly in the field of United States First Amendment jurisprudence.¹⁸ But all these authors and thinkers were working in a profoundly different landscape of text production and circulation from the authors of imperial Rome, and their familiar models are necessarily shaped by the fact that these authors were writing after the advent of mechanised printing. The printing press brought a genuinely fundamental change in the history of censorship. Representing to ruling authorities both a threat (because of the massively expanded reach of published material) and an opportunity (because of the creation of a bottleneck in text circulation which might plausibly be monitored and controlled by the State), mechanised printing introduced the modern censorship regime, with its bureaucratised apparatus and its obsessive focus on the

¹⁵ E.g. Tac. *Hist.* 1.1-1.2; *Ann.* 1.72, 4.34-35; *Agric.* 1.1-2; Plin. *Pan.* 57.

¹⁶ E.g. Tac. *Dial.* 11-13, 36-41; Plin. *Pan.* 54, 76.

¹⁷ Cramer (1946) is full of the language of modern totalitarianism. See also Toynbee (1944) 43, Quinn (1982) 128, and the astonishing verdict of R. M. Ogilvie (1980, 184) that “literature under the Early Principate was in an exactly analogous plight to literature in the modern Soviet Union.”

¹⁸ Peters (2005) 64. His summary of the liberal tradition is at 14-32.

pre-publication licensing of appropriate literature.¹⁹ Such systems are primarily preventive rather than punitive, and within them the punishment of authors and the destruction of works only becomes necessary when the censorship system fails, when illicitly printed or imported literature circumvents the safety-net of the censorship bureau.²⁰ Conversely in antiquity, as we shall see, nothing like this was known, and given the difficulty of controlling and policing manuscript circulation as it was practiced at Rome such systems could never have developed.²¹ Milton himself, often seen as the originator of modern thinking about free speech in his *Areopagitica* (1644), shows a clear awareness of the fact that the regulation of literature in antiquity worked fundamentally differently from in his own times.²²

If we wish to avoid anachronism, our approach to literary regulation in imperial Rome must then proceed from a consideration of the ways in which literature circulated in that society. Much has been written on the nature of “publication” in the early Empire, and while there is some disagreement on specific details, the basic pattern is a subject of broad consensus.²³ “Unpublished” texts would be shared by the author with their friends, acquaintances and literary patrons in the form of private readings or written drafts for comment, all on the implicit understanding that these texts would not be shared further

¹⁹ By far the most detailed and useful account of the legislative history behind the foundational Early Modern system is Siebert (1952). See also Thomas (1969) 1-33; Hill (1985b). On the importance of printing to the history of censorship, see Coetzee (1999) 9, 41-42.

²⁰ For preventive and punitive censorship, see Blyum (2003) 1-2.

²¹ It is interesting to note that some authors of high social status in Milton’s day disdained the press and preferred to circulate their writing in manuscript form, and that this alternative system of literary circulation persisted right through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries entirely unmolested by the government censorship apparatus, either because there was no perceived need to control texts whose numbers would be comparatively strictly limited, or because there is simply no effective way to police the production of hand-written manuscripts. On this, see Hill (1985b) 33.

²² Milton (ed. Kerrigan et al.) (2013), 183. On Milton as the originator of free speech theory, see Siebert (1952) 3, 196-197; Saillens (1964) 125. This is a literary origins myth, and as such should be treated with caution. Hill (1977) 150 lists many obscure radical treatises of the 16th and early 17th Century which anticipate Milton’s arguments.

²³ Ogilvie (1980) 12-14; Quinn (1982) 88-92, 169-171; Starr (1987); Harris (1989) 224-225; Dupont (1999) 223-237; Potter (1999) 29-36; Nauta (2002) 92-124; Mason (2005b); Huitink and Van Henten (2006); Mason (2011b).

until the author decided the work was ready.²⁴ Eventually, authors would relinquish control of their texts, beginning by sending gift copies of the polished work to friends and patrons (who would be expected to encourage further circulation), and perhaps by depositing some copies with booksellers to make copies for their customers.²⁵ If any moment in this process ought to be called “publication” it is this final relinquishing of control, which was designated by a range of terms, ἐκδιδόναι and δημοσιῶσαι in Greek, *edidere*, *emittere* and *publicare* in Latin.²⁶ However, even at this stage we ought not imagine book production on a scale at all comparable to printing: in a well-known case study, Pliny the Younger describes how Aemilius Regulus circulated one thousand copies of a memoir of his deceased son’s life, and Pliny’s tone suggests that this rather modest scale of production was, by contemporary standards, wildly extravagant.²⁷ Nothing comparable to the scale of manuscript distribution enabled by the printing press existed, greatly limiting the “damage” that written criticism could do to the reputations of those in power. Furthermore, considering the private nature of manuscript copying in the ancient world, the lack of authorial control over who could make copies, and the absence of any centres of manuscript mass-production, it is hard to imagine how the Roman emperors or their agents could have controlled or screened the production of literary texts in the way that the rulers of Early Modern England could, even if it occurred to any of them that this would be desirable.

It would seem from these preliminary remarks that the profound differences between publication and censorship ancient and modern make it impossible to apply any of the classic modern models of censorship whole-cloth to the situation in Rome under the early

²⁴ Quinn (1982) 88-90, 170; Starr (1987) 213. Harris (1989) 225.

²⁵ Quinn (1982) 90-92; Starr (1987) 214-215; Potter (1999) 29; Nauta (2002) 121-122. For booksellers, see Starr (1990).

²⁶ Huitink and Van Henten (2006) 51-53.

²⁷ Plin. *Ep.* 4.7; Harris (1989) 224; Potter (1999) 32.

Principate. However, in more recent years an approach to the study of censorship has emerged which is more promising for our purposes, not least because it enables the meaningful discussion of censorship in societies which, like Rome, had no official censorship apparatus. This approach, which Helen Freshwater calls the “New Censorship”, has its roots in theoretical models developed by Foucault.²⁸

For Foucault, knowledge and power are mutually productive and reinforcing, and since power is produced out of force relations at all levels of society, the production of knowledge is likewise ubiquitous. Some of this power-knowledge has censorious qualities: one of the key techniques of Foucauldian disciplinary power is normative judgement, which necessarily creates domains of unacceptability.²⁹ However, the generation of power-knowledge is not repressive, but rather constitutive and productive. Power both defines and produces knowledge about the areas declared taboo, not only (in the modern “carceral archipelago”) specific and administrative knowledge, but also categories and theoretical models to explain (and safely discuss) the deviant and the taboo.³⁰ Classic examples of this are the post-Enlightenment categorisations of the initially taboo areas of homosexuality, mental illness and criminality.³¹ Once an authoritative discourse has become established and fixed its limits, it can be extremely difficult for the modern subject to redefine or step outside of this discourse. Even art or literature which is “transgressive” is, in its own awareness of the limit, complicit in the fixing of that limit.³² The ultimate *telos* of Foucauldian systems of domination is the same as the *telos* of Bentham’s Panopticon, that the subject, conscious of (the possibility of) constant surveillance, examination and normative judgement, internalises the dominant discourse,

²⁸ Freshwater (2004). This article is a more comprehensive survey of “New Censorship” scholarship than can be essayed here: another survey is provided by Müller (2004b).

²⁹ Foucault (1991) 177-184.

³⁰ Carceral archipelago: Foucault (1991) 298.

³¹ Foucault (1998) 42-43; Foucault (2001); Foucault (1991) 16-24; 126-131.

³² Foucault (1977b) 34-35.

thus becoming complicit in their own subjection; under such a system perfectly formed, overt censorship should not be necessary at all.³³ However, the authoritative discourse itself supplies the means for its own resistance. Marginalised people do not create their own counter-discourses so much as deploy the terms of the marginalising discourse to suit their own ends: the adoption of the originally pejorative term “homosexual” as a badge of self-identity is exemplary of this, as is the later use by people so designated of the same category and terminology to demand rights.³⁴ The requirement of the marginalised to adopt and adapt the dominant discourse is an insight of some relevance to postcolonial theory, whose applicability to the works of Josephus has already been noted in Chapter 1.³⁵

The logical conclusion of all this is that censorship, in any society, is inescapable, but this is not the whole story. An act of censorship always embodies and contains the censored message, and so does a censored work, in its interlinear whispers and its eloquent silences.³⁶ One of the ways in which censorship is productive is that it encourages literary strategies of polysemy, an aspect of censorship particularly studied by Annabel Patterson in *Censorship and Interpretation*, a wide-ranging reading of 16th and 17th Century English literature. Patterson’s analysis of “the hermeneutics of censorship” focuses on how censorship does not impose silence over literary expression so much as it generates an etiquette about how difficult subject-matter ought and ought not be discussed, and as such it stimulates evasion, ambiguity and allusion.³⁷ In such a cultural climate the relationship between censors and censored becomes not oppositional but collaborative, with censors assuming the role of editors or co-authors, the goal being the creation of an

³³ Bourdieu (1991b) 138.

³⁴ Foucault (1998) 101.

³⁵ 10-11 above.

³⁶ Jansen (1991) 193-4; Butler (1998) 250; Freshwater (2004) 232.

³⁷ Patterson (1984). See also Loseff (1984).

acceptable text.³⁸ Central to this is the construction of a sort of plausible deniability, ensuring that texts are not *self-evidently* subversive.³⁹ This complicity extends beyond the censor-author dyad, however, out into the reading public. The consumers of literature in censoring societies become accustomed to reading between the lines, expert at picking up on muted signals from the text.⁴⁰ But the suspicion of sophisticated readers carries its own dangers, as witnessed by the complaints of a number of classical authors about the “incorrect” interpretation of some of their works (itself a censorious strategy). The connection between this and censorship is particularly clear in Martial 7.34, where Martial observes that his “harmless” question *quid thermis melius Neronianis?* (“what could be better than Nero’s baths?”) might be taken by some *malignus* to imply a preference for Nero over Domitian. The poem takes on more of an edge when we remember that such a suspicious reading could form the basis of a *maiestas* trial. Just as censors cannot pin a single meaning on a multivalent text, so authors cannot control what readers will see there. Readers can be complicit with censors as easily as with authors, and this is no doubt another source of anxiety in a society where literary reception can be a matter of life and death.

The Foucauldian model offers certain advantages for this project. It allows us to retain the term “censorship” without needing to imagine the existence of a Roman Ministry of Truth; it offers a way of thinking about the role played by authors in the networks of power relations in their day, and of seeing more clearly the kinds of pressures under which they wrote and which they tried to exert on their societies; it connects usefully with postcolonial models which are particularly valuable for the study of Josephus; and it can

³⁸ Harrison (1995) 18 observes that many French censors of the *Ancien Régime* were themselves literary men and *philosophes*, whose notes show that they approached their censorial duties much as literary editors or critics.

³⁹ Burt (1998) 21-25.

⁴⁰ Holquist (1994) 14; Freshwater (2004) 234.

both explain and refine our appreciation of known and recognisable phenomena in Roman literature. It is not my aim in what follows to be dogmatically Foucauldian, but rather to offer a Foucault-influenced reading of the dynamics of power-knowledge in Rome as seen through the lens of literary expression and constraint, a reading which is attentive to the productive and constitutive nature of the limits enforced by censorship, to the appropriation and reuse of the dominant discourse by authors in that context, and to the strategies of indirection that we may detect in the texts.

2.2: Writing politics in Flavian Rome

2.2.1: Constraining and policing political expression

The methods available to the powerful in the early Roman Empire to deter, suppress or punish inappropriate political expression have been extensively studied in prior literature, and a full discussion is not necessary here.⁴¹ What is required in order to set Josephus in his context is a brief survey of these methods, with a particular focus on types of censorship attested in the Flavian period, together with consideration of the effect these measures are likely to have had on authors attempting to engage with contemporary political issues. The survey which follows will consider instances of the censorship of oral as well as written political expression, because it is by no means clear that for legal purposes a real distinction was drawn in antiquity between these categories. While Flavian instances will be prioritised in this discussion, occasional reference will be made to techniques of discourse regulation attested under the Julio-Claudians but not the Flavians;

⁴¹ Important contributions on aspects of imperial censorship include Dürr (1880); Greenidge (1885); Forbes (1936); Cramer (1945); Smith (1951); Chilton (1953); Rogers (1959); Allison and Cloud (1962); Bauman (1970); Bauman (1974); Levick (1979); Ferrary (1983); McHugh (1994); Moles (1998); Rutledge (2001); Rutledge (2009); Stiles (2013).

what is significant for our discussion is not whether or not the Flavians actually did practice any given technique of censorship, but the range of possible techniques which were available by the Flavian period.

In the previous section, attention was drawn to the distinction between preventive and punitive censorship, and to the fact that censorship in modern censoring societies tends to be primarily preventive in nature, while in antiquity punitive censorship predominated because of the impossibility of controlling manuscript production.⁴² A few anecdotes in the sources reveal evidence of some forms of preventive censorship in antiquity, but that preventive censorship was not the preserve of the courts or a censorship bureau, but was exerted in more informal ways, and related rather to the nature of patronage, publication and literary culture. Authors who were personally known to the emperors, whether the recipients of imperial patronage or not, might expect their works to be of personal interest to the emperors or those around them. We have a few anecdotes (though not many, and none from the Flavian period) illustrating emperors personally requesting the inclusion or removal of particular material in the works of authors known to them.⁴³ However, even in the absence of direct imperial interventions into the content of authors' works, the importance and desirability of imperial patronage (attested frequently enough in the poetry of Martial under Domitian) would act as a spur to the production of works which are, at

⁴² 16-18.

⁴³ Serv. *ad. Ecl.* 10. init, *ad Georg.* 4.1 mentions Augustus' request to Virgil to remove a panegyric of the disgraced Cornelius Gallus from the end of the Fourth Eclogue (on which, see Anderson 1933, Duckworth 1959, Otis 1963 412-413, Pagan 2004; on Gallus, see Boucher 1966). Suetonius' *Life of Horace* mentions that Augustus complained to Horace that he did not feature sufficiently prominently in the *Sermones*, leading to the panegyric comments at *Epist.* 2.1.1-4. Note also Livy 4.20.5-7, where Livy reports his inclusion of an antiquarian testimony about the *spolia opima* from Augustus, which contradicted all previous reports (on this, see Harrison 1989, Rich 1996, Flower 2000, MacPherson 2010). J. Griffin (1985) 190-191 comments on the irresistible force of such requests from the *princeps*.

least ostensibly, highly appreciative of the *princeps*.⁴⁴ In the Flavian period, we might note the establishment by Vespasian of chairs of Greek and Latin rhetoric at Rome, a move which could be interpreted either as disinterested patronage of the arts or as an attempt to create prestigious and influential rhetorical “experts” at Rome whose output was likely to have an imperial panegyric slant (and regardless of the intention behind the move, this is likely to have been its outcome).⁴⁵ Similarly, Domitian’s establishment of two poetic contests, the Capitoline and Alban Games, has been seen by some as helping to foster a culture of panegyric poetry: all that we know about the winners of these contests suggests that their works traded in the praise of the *princeps*’ accomplishments.⁴⁶ Of course it is true that the emperor was never the sole literary patron available in the Flavian period, but the evident desirability of imperial favour is likely to dictate, to some extent, the nature and tone of the work produced by many contemporary authors, and to render certain types of political expression less likely to be articulated.⁴⁷ The semi-public nature of the drafting process at Rome, incorporating the prevalent culture of the *recitatio*, means that the habit of emperors and other powerful people of attending *recitationes* could further exert a chilling effect, and offer opportunities for the powerful to voice to authors their dissatisfaction with certain aspects of literary productions ahead of final “publication”.⁴⁸ The mechanics of this are perhaps in evidence in Tacitus’ *Dialogus*, set in the reign of Vespasian: Maternus’ *recitatio* has upset some *potentes*, and his visitors advise him to remove the offending passages from his play ahead of final “publication” (although he refuses).⁴⁹ In the case of Josephus, who not only sent the finished product of his labours to the emperors but apparently sent drafts to Vespasian, Titus and Agrippa II, the expectation

⁴⁴ Imperial patronage in Martial: (e.g.) 1.4; 4.27; 8.24; 8.56.

⁴⁵ Suet. *Vesp.* 18; Dio 65.12.1a. Franchet. D’Espèrey (1986) 3052-3053.

⁴⁶ Bardon (1940) 327-9; Coleman (1986) 3095-3109.

⁴⁷ On the non-imperial patronage scene in Flavian Rome, see Nauta (2002).

⁴⁸ On *recitationes* and publishing, see the discussion on 17-18 above, with references there. For Augustus attending *recitationes*, see Suet. *Aug.* 89.3; for Claudius, Plin. *Ep.* 1.13.3.

⁴⁹ Tac. *Dial.* 2-3. On this, see Gallia (2009).

of an imperial audience would need to be regarded as a virtual certainty, a fact which would presumably have never been far from his mind when constructing his Flavian portraits in the *Jewish War*.⁵⁰

We now move from informal strategies of preventive discourse-regulation to more formal punitive strategies. There operated all through the Principate the Roman “civil law” of *iniuria*, one means through which people could seek redress if they believed they had been defamed.⁵¹ Although our sources are silent on the employment of the *lex de iniuriis* in cases of defamation under the early Empire, it is perfectly possible that such procedures were taking place outside the imperial circle, and that then as now the possibility of having to pay damages for incautious invective may have acted as a significant incentive towards literary self-censorship.⁵²

More notorious by far was the *crimen maiestatis*. This law, originally a measure introduced by the radical tribune Appuleius Saturninus to punish senatorial incompetence and abuse of office, had from the reign of Augustus come to be a potent weapon against the defamation of the powerful.⁵³ It is important to note, however, that in several respects this was not in any straightforward way a tool wielded by the regime to suppress criticism

⁵⁰ V. 361-367. For an earlier iteration of the heavy involvement of the powerful in directing an author’s drafts, see Cicero’s struggles with the letter of advice to Caesar which he hoped to publish (Cic. *Att.* 12.40.2, 13.27.1, 13.28.2, with Hall 2009 100-103).

⁵¹ Late juristic sources discuss this legislation as current, which shows that it continued to operate. Bauman (1974) 36-37 collects the references from the jurists. Roman defamation law appears to have its origins in the Twelve Tables, in a piece of legislation quoted from by both Cicero and the elder Pliny. (Cic. *Tusc.* 4.4, ap. Aug. *De Civ. D.* 2.9; Pliny *HN* 28.19). On this law, see Smith (1951) and Rives (2002). This law apparently mandated death as the penalty for defamation: by the middle Republic, however, it had been subsumed into the offences susceptible to a *iuris actio*, a civil suit for damages. The penalty remained financial, though conviction also incurred *infamia* (Garnsey 1970 185).

⁵² Of course this does not have to be a weapon used only by the powerful, as the civil courts were available to anybody. However, Roman (as modern) civil courts were strongly favourable to the wealthy and powerful, and indeed status considerations factored into the process of assessing damages for defamation. Garnsey (1970) 181-192; Borkowski and Du Plessis (2010) 63-65.

⁵³ Chilton (1953); Allison and Cloud (1962); Bauman (1970) 34-245; Jones (1972) 45-85, 106-108; Bauman (1974) 1-108; Levick (1976) 183-195; Talbert (1984) 460-487; Rutledge (2001) 87-89.

of the *princeps*. In the first place, the legislation had a broader remit than that, encompassing the defamation of anybody prominent (probably meaning members of the senatorial class).⁵⁴ Moreover, unlike a *iuris actio* for *iniuria* which could only be brought by the injured party or their guardian, a charge of *maiestas* could be brought by anybody for what they perceived as (or could present as) defamation of the powerful.⁵⁵ Once the precedent became secure that people could be tried under this law for defaming the *princeps* or those close to him, a potentially dangerous situation developed. In the Republic, one's dignity was one's own concern, and affronts to that dignity were settled either extra-judicially or in private law; under the Principate, responsibility for the protection of the *princeps*' reputation devolved onto the whole of society, and moreover financial rewards for successful prosecution further incentivised the zealous voluntary policing of discourse about the emperor.⁵⁶ Any reader could attempt to set themselves up as a potential censor by initiating *maiestas*-proceedings to avenge (what they presented as) insults against the *princeps*. Unlike in more recent censoring societies, the censor's gaze did not emanate from court or from a government bureau, but was dispersed throughout the whole reading public. From a Benthamite-Foucauldian perspective, this is an extraordinarily effective means of regulating political expression and encouraging the internalisation of the dominant discourse: the secret of the Panopticon's success is that an inmate never knows whether or not he is under observation, and so he behaves at all times on the assumption that he is. This helps to explain the concern evinced by some authors

⁵⁴ The earliest attestations of *maiestas* being used against defamation, the trials of Cassius Severus (Tac. *Ann.* 1.72) and Titus Labienus (Sen. *Controv.* 5.praef, 10.praef.4-8; Suet. *Cal.* 16) under Augustus, both involved the defamation of prominent individuals outside the imperial family. The same may be true of the unnamed authors of pamphlets mentioned by Dio (56.27.1). See also the trial of Fabricius Veiento under Nero (Tac. *Ann.* 14.50) and more unnamed pamphleteers from the reign of Domitian (Suet. *Dom.* 8.3). The first clearly-attested case of abuse of the *princeps* falling under the remit of *maiestas* is the case of Aelius Saturninus under Tiberius in 23 (Dio 57.22.5).

⁵⁵ Borkowski and Du Plessis (2010) 340-341.

⁵⁶ Rutledge (2001) 40-44.

that their texts should be read “correctly” (as in Martial 7.34, discussed above).⁵⁷ The ability of anybody to bring a *maiestas*-charge complicates any understanding of *maiestas* as a tool of the regime. Although our narrative historians try to pin the blame for the proliferation of *maiestas*-trials squarely on the emperor concerned, in fact a whole array of possible motivations existed for why a charge might be brought, and our sources even occasionally discuss these motivations.⁵⁸ Thus rather than being an oppressive means of enforcing the will of the *princeps* on dissident writers, *maiestas* was often a tool to be used creatively by those outside the palace to further their own personal aims. The weight of state power is here being harnessed by citizens to settle their own scores.⁵⁹ The possibility of a *maiestas*-accusation being deployed by personal enemies who maliciously interpret texts in order to obtain opportunities to settle grudges or to obtain the wealth of the accused must have loomed large in the consciousness of contemporary authors, and perhaps especially an author like Josephus, who freely admits the existence of numerous litigious personal enemies at Rome.⁶⁰

A variety of extraordinary forms of sanction complete the picture of early imperial discourse regulation. In addition to the punishment or deterrence of authors, attempts could be made to destroy transgressive literature already in circulation through book-burning.⁶¹ The attested incidences of the burning of literature under the early emperors can

⁵⁷ 21 above. Further concerns about reader-reception can be seen in Mart. 1.*praef.*8, 1.4, 7.72.12-16; Plin. *Ep.*5.7.6.

⁵⁸ On Tacitus’ tendency to blame the *princeps*, see Griffin (1995) 33 and 49-55, Stiles (2013) 3-4. On varied motivations for delation, see Tac. *Ann.* 16.21; Dio 52.37.2-3; Rutledge (2001) 4, 35-53.

⁵⁹ Parallels can be adduced from more recent censoring regimes. Talbot (2008) records instances when ordinary citizens in Fascist Italy sought to mobilise the state censorship apparatus against each other, often for the purposes of settling (sometimes remarkably petty) private grievances.

⁶⁰ V. 425, 428-9.

⁶¹ Seneca the Elder claims that the book-burning that followed the conviction of Titus Labienus under Augustus was a novelty (Sen. *Controv.* 5.*praef.*), but in fact the practice of burning literature, including by known and condemned authors, had ample precedent in the Classical Greek and Hellenistic world and in the Republic. For a cursory overview including Greek and Republican examples, see Forbes (1936). A more

be grouped into two categories, the burning of anonymous literature whose authors were not known and the burning of some or all of the works of convicted authors.⁶² In the case of known authors, there appears to be no consistent pattern dictating which author's books would or would not be burned, or whether an author's whole output or just the offending texts were liable to destruction. The essential arbitrariness in the employment of this punishment, which does not seem to have been a usual penalty for literary *maiestas*, no doubt contributed to the instability of notions of what was or was not acceptable in terms of political expression. Other extraordinary punishments could involve apparently arbitrary collective punishments of certain kinds of author or speaker such as the expulsions of philosophers in the reigns of both Vespasian and Domitian and, most alarmingly of all, the spectre (ever-present in the early Principate) of summary punishment from the *princeps*.⁶³ It is not always possible on the basis of the evidence available to determine with confidence what, if any, legal basis lay behind a given instance of the sanctioning of inappropriate expression in this period, but it was surely no secret that ultimately if a *princeps* wanted to lash out without formal legal sanction, that possibility always existed. For instance when two foreign Cynics denounced Titus and Berenice in the theatre in the reign of Vespasian, one was flogged and another executed, and Dio gives no indication of a trial.⁶⁴ Hermogenes of Tarsus, a historian condemned for some *figurae*

detailed survey of book-burning in the principate (albeit a survey which repeatedly introduces anachronistic assumptions) is Cramer (1945). A more recent broad overview is provided by Báez (2008), although the sections which deal with classical antiquity (38-65, 75-87) are marred by numerous inaccuracies. See also Wilson (2015) 141-143.

⁶² Anonymous literature: prophetic books burned by Augustus (Tac. *Ann.* 6.12, Suet. *Aug.* 51); anonymous pamphlets burned by Augustus (Dio 55.27.12-2); further pamphlets under Augustus (Dio 56.27.1). Convicted authors: the works of Labienus (Sen. *Controv.* 5.*praef.* 10.*praef.* 4-8, Suet. *Cal.* 16) and Cassius Severus (Tac. *Ann.* 1.72); the history of A. Cremutius Cordus (Tac. *Ann.* 4.34, Dio 57.24.2-3, Suet. *Tib.* 61, Sen. *Ad Marc.* 1.2-4, 22.4-5); seven speeches of Mamercus Aemilius Scaurus (Sen. *Controv.* 10.*praef.* 3, Tac. *Ann.* 6.29, Suet. *Tib.* 61, Dio 58.24.3-5); the works of Fabricius Veiento (Tac. *Ann.* 14.50), and the biographies of Herennius Senecio (Tac. *Agr.* 2, Dio 67.13, Plin. *Ep.* 7.19.5) and Arulenus Rusticus (Tac. *Agr.* 2, Suet. *Dom.* 10.3, Dio 67.13) under Domitian.

⁶³ Philosophers: Dio 66.13.1-2.3; Suet. *Dom.* 10.3; Plin. *Ep.* 3.11.2. Another example of apparently arbitrary group restrictions to prevent inappropriate expression is Domitian's ban on actors performing in public (Suet. *Dom.* 7.1).

⁶⁴ Dio 66.15.5.

introduced into his work, died on a cross along with his slave copyists under Domitian, and this is likely another instance of summary justice.⁶⁵ Suetonius tells us that Vitellius always put lampoonists to death without trial.⁶⁶ The extrajudicial execution of A. Caecina Alienus by Titus as praetorian prefect might be a further example of summary execution for an offence involving political expression (although other issues were clearly involved in that case), given that Suetonius tells us that Titus' action was prompted by the discovery on his person of an autograph copy of a harangue against the emperor which he intended to deliver to the troops.⁶⁷

These are the best-attested means by which political expression was regulated in early imperial Rome. Clearly this was rather loose, unregulated and *ad hoc*. Sanctions could be applied or proceedings initiated, by the regime or others, on a case-by-case basis, depending on a wide array of factors and for a wide array of reasons. Of course most authors of the period about whom we know (including Josephus) do not appear to have been punished at all, but that does not mean what has been written above is not relevant to them; rather these are the formal structures in place whose effect was to encourage the most pervasive and ubiquitous form of censorship of all, and one to which all Roman authors would have been subject, self-censorship, whether conscious or otherwise. Josephus would no doubt have been aware of what was at stake, that gaucheness or indelicacy in the way he depicted his Flavian friends might have activated any one out of a range of sanctions running from a gentle request to rework his text all the way up to a public execution. This is likely to have exerted what would nowadays be called a chilling effect, the idea that the threat of punishment fosters reticence and self-censorship and thus its very possibility curtails expression, regardless of whether or not that punishment is ever

⁶⁵ Suet. *Dom.* 10.

⁶⁶ Suet. *Vit.* 14.4.

⁶⁷ Suet. *Tit.* 6.2. The parallel account by Dio (66.16.3) has no specific mention of a speech.

directly experienced by an author.⁶⁸ It is highly significant that both of the emperors under whom Josephus is known to have written, Vespasian and Domitian, showed themselves willing to employ some of the strategies discussed above in order to enforce boundaries on political discourse, endowing what has gone before in this section with more than theoretical or hypothetical importance for our enquiry: the censorship strategies adopted by these emperors meant that anybody writing during their reigns would have been aware of the potentially brutal consequences of their failure to produce an acceptable representation of Flavian power.⁶⁹ Josephus' decision to write a contemporary history which treats issues as important to the dynasty as the Jewish Revolt and Vespasian's rise to power was thus a more courageous decision than is often recognised.

2.2.2: Ideologies and strategies of veridiction

So far I have focused on what could be called censorship in Imperial Rome. In this section I will consider censorship's antagonistic opposite, ideologies that correspond in some way to modern notions of freedom of expression. I shall argue that literary ideologies and strategies of veridiction both overt and covert did exist in antiquity, that authors could and did invoke these ideologies and employ these strategies to enable them to communicate material which would perhaps ordinarily be regarded as unacceptable, and that the ultimate result of this pressure from below was to confuse and destabilise the limits of

⁶⁸ McGuire (1997) 10: "One prosecution alone (not necessarily a conviction, even) would serve to warn writers that their material was being monitored and that current Imperial favour might always turn to disfavour".

⁶⁹ In addition to the incidents of suppression mentioned above, we ought to note Vespasian's banishment and execution of the elder Helvidius Priscus (Suet. *Vesp.* 66.12, Dio 66.12.2) and his banishment of Demetrius the Cynic (Suet. *Vesp.* 13), Domitian's infliction of *ignominia* on the authors of libellous pamphlets (Suet. *Dom.* 8.3), his execution of Aelius Lamia for jokes made at his expense (Suet. *Dom.* 10.2), and his execution of various prophets who predicted his death (Suet. *Dom.* 15.3, 16.2).

acceptable political expression, preventing the establishment and maintenance of stable boundaries in Roman censorship.

In Greek, notions of free expression were conceptualised under the heading of *παρρησία*, a concept which appears to have emerged during the period of radical Athenian democracy and which was always closely associated with that political system.⁷⁰ Initially denoting the ability of the individual citizen freely to speak at the citizen assembly, *parrhesia* subsequently came to be reconfigured by some fourth-century authors as a largely private quality, the essential basis of true friendship, and in such a form it was able to survive the eclipse of the democracy by the Hellenistic kingdoms and continue to exist under the Roman emperors.⁷¹ This later “monarchical” form of *parrhesia* involved the freedom of a monarch’s *philoï* to address the king openly and fearlessly, and thus offer him their authentic counsel. By the early imperial period, *parrhesia* was often seen as a crucial index of the nature of a monarch’s rule, and kings who could not endure fearless frank speech (like Dionysius I and II of Syracuse and their inability to tolerate the *parrhesia* of Dion and Plato) could expect to join the ranks of tyrants condemned in the literary tradition.⁷² This offered authors and others a weapon in their dealings with kings: “tolerate my frank speech or show yourself to be a tyrant”. However, authors of the early Principate are also aware of a dark side to all this, the emergence of forms of shadow-*parrhesia* and the rhetoricisation of the posture of the parrhesiast, with flatterers falsely adopting the

⁷⁰ Centrality of *parrhesia* to democracy: Pl. *Resp.* 8.557B, Eur. *Hipp.* 419-423, Polyb. 2.38.6; Raaflaub (2004) 41-51; Landauer (2012). The word *parrhesia* as possibly a democratic Athenian invention: Momigliano (1973) 259.

⁷¹ For the emergence of “private” *parrhesia* in the fourth century, see Foucault (2011) 187-376.

⁷² For the requirement of good kings to tolerate *parrhesia* see (among many others) Isoc. *ad Nic.* 27-28; Pl. *Leg.* 3. 694a-b, and Dio’s comments that Augustus’ tolerance of Maecenas’ *parrhesia* often saved him from error (55.7.3). On *parrhesia* at issue in the relationship between Plato and the Dionysiuses, see esp. Plut. *Dion* 5-22 and Diog. Laert. 3.18-21. See also the comments of Philo (*Leg.* 40-61), who sees Caligula’s inability to tolerate the *parrhesia* of Macro as an early sign of his tyrannical nature.

language and attitude of *parrhesia* in order to confirm rulers in their vices and enhance their own positions.⁷³

In the Latin tradition, the corresponding notion of *libertas* had a broader semantic range than the Greek *parrhesia*, which always referred to spoken or written expression. Rooted in the opposition between *servus* and *liber*, *libertas* is the quality of independence from domination: the capacity for free expression is an important component of this, given the strong limitations on slave-speech in antiquity.⁷⁴ Chaim Wirszubski's famous model of *libertas* sees the word being deployed differently in the Late Republic, with the *populares* emphasising popular liberty from the domination of the Senate and the *optimates* (whose definition was generally followed by Cicero) emphasising the liberty of the Senate to discuss policy through free and open discussion, without fearing the dominance of one person.⁷⁵ By the end of the first century a tradition of presenting *libertas* as the gift of the emperor had developed, but the word never lost its disruptive potential (perhaps best seen in its use as a watchword by the assassins of Caligula), and the difficulty of reconciling the “new” *libertas* with the old is periodically in evidence in the texts, as in the circumscribed *libertas* which Statius depicts Domitian as offering to the people at Saturnalia, or in Pliny's famously problematic statement to Trajan, “you order us to be free”.⁷⁶

Thus in the Flavian period, both Latin and Greek knew important ideologies of veridiction, ideologies which functioned as an informal check on the power of the dominant to

⁷³ Rather than the opposite of rhetoric, *parrhesia* could itself be a rhetorical figure, as recognised by Quintilian (*Inst.* 9.2.2) and Markovits (2012) 111. On false *parrhesia*, see Plut. *Quomodo adulator* 51B-60D.

⁷⁴ The imposed silence of slaves is stressed in the preface to the third book of Phaedrus' *Fables*, in Sen. *Ep.* 47.3, and in Hor. *Serm.* 2.7.1-2. Fitzgerald (2000) 75-77. Opposition with *servus*: Arena (2012) 14-44.

⁷⁵ Wirszubski (1950) 1-96. See also Brunt (1988b) and Kennedy (2014). Arena (2012, esp. 73-168) sees disagreement between *optimates* and *populares* not so much about the nature of *libertas* as about the means through which *libertas* could best be safeguarded.

⁷⁶ On the change under the Principate, see Hammond (1963) 108-111. Watchword: *AJ* 19.186, assuming, as seems likely, that it is correct to read *libertas* behind Josephus' ἐλευθερία. Saturnalia: Stat. *Silv.* 1.6.45 (with Newlands 2002 227-259; Chinn 2008). Pliny: *Pan.* 66.4 (with Morford 1992).

constrain discourse, and which could be appealed to by authors and speakers to justify straining the bounds of propriety and reverence.⁷⁷ However, the scope and acceptable limits of both of these ideologies came to be contested in early imperial texts, illustrating the innate tension between the expectations of reverence towards superiors in early imperial society and the highly destabilising potential of these ideologies. *Libertas*, a universally positively valued term, had a negative double, *licentia*, which was *libertas* carried too far. The wrangling between Cicero and Clodius over the applicability of these two terms to each of their actions and the obsession shown by early imperial satirists and epigrammatists with demarcating whose poetry was characterised by noble *libertas* and whose by ignoble *licentia* reveal the unstable boundary between these two domains.⁷⁸ *Parrhesia* was itself innately problematic, because of the fact that, etymologically, it can mean “the tendency to blurt out everything” as well as “the ability to express anything”. Thus *parrhesia* is as often a negative trait as a positive one: it may be significant that Roman rhetoricians translated the word not as *libertas* but as *licentia*.⁷⁹ The full radical, counter-cultural potential of *parrhesia* seems to have been embraced by the Cynics, whose sages are sometimes depicted as expressing high estimations of this trait and whose outspokenness, even (perhaps especially) in the face of authority, represents the extreme possibility for enacting parrhesiastic political expression; however, the low estimation in which Cynicism was often held implies that this attitude was seen by many as

⁷⁷ Neither *libertas dicendi* nor *parrhesia* should be thought of as a “right”, like modern free speech, as neither was protected by law, and both (perhaps definitionally in the case of *parrhesia*) carried a risk of reprisal. For *parrhesia* imagined as a right in modern scholarship, see Pearson (1937) 41; Momigliano (1973) 258; Konstan (1996) 9. Risk inherent in *parrhesia*: Foucault (2011) 56-57.

⁷⁸ In 63 BCE, Cicero’s execution of the alleged conspirators was partly justified with reference to the threat they posed to Roman *libertas*. Conversely, Clodius called Cicero an *ereptor libertatis* (“thief of liberty”, *Sest.* 109); after Cicero’s self-imposed exile had been made official, Clodius drove his point home by erecting a temple to *Libertas* in what had previously been Cicero’s house (*Dom.* 110-11). In texts written after his restoration to Rome, Cicero heavily exploits what he presents as the irony of Clodius’ responsible for the crushing of Roman liberty, making such claims (*Dom.* 130), and he declares that Clodius’ temple was not really dedicated to *Libertas* but to *Licentia* (*Leg.* 2.42). On satirists and epigrammatists, see Braund (2004), with examples cited there.

⁷⁹ Quint. *Inst.* 9.2.2; *Rhet. Her.* 48-50. Note the belief which Tacitus attributes to Cremutius Cordus, that the Greeks tolerated not only *libertas* but even *licentia* (*Ann.* 4.35).

problematic.⁸⁰ Philodemus' comments on the necessity of mixing *parrhesia* with praise when addressing powerful individuals is illustrative of the sort of compromises which the hierarchies of incipient autocracy necessitated on both of these ideologies of fearless veridiction.⁸¹

Nowhere in the *Jewish War* does Josephus strike the pose of a parrhesiast speaking truth to power. However, what has been said above matters. As has been shown, he was working in a literary culture in which frank expression was highly valued, but at a time when the impulse to veridiction often ran up against the expectations of a stratified and hierarchical society, and where a certain degree of tact and discretion was widely recognised as necessary, especially against the backdrop of the sometimes savage punitive measures which could be enacted against authors. These conditions were fertile for the emergence of what might be termed strategies of surreptitious truth-telling, the various means of figured speech, Aesopian language and veiled critique discussed in the ancient rhetorical handbooks. The literature of the Flavian age has, in recent years, attracted a great deal of interest from critics who approach the texts with such techniques in mind, combing them for instances of veiled critique (it can thus be seen that the recent spate of figured speech readings of Josephus, as discussed in Chapter 1, is a specific instantiation of a broader trend in Flavian studies).⁸² Given the absence of overt parrhesiastic critique in the *Jewish War*, it is reasonable to turn to these sorts of strategies if we wish to understand

⁸⁰ Diog. Laert. 6.69. Book 6 of Diogenes Laertius includes many tales of the public abuse of the prominent by Cynics, as does Dio Chrysostom's *Fourth Oration*, an extended retelling of the story of Diogenes' encounter with Alexander, and Arr. *Epict. diss.* 3.22 (with some authorial reservations, e.g. 3.22.50). On Cynic *parrhesia* generally, see Klassen (1996) 227-233; Foucault (2011) 157-324, with extensive discussion of Cynicism as counter-culture; Husson (2014) 5-11.

⁸¹ Konstan *et al.* (1998), fr. 60; cols 7a and 7b. For further discussions of the necessity of tempering *parrhesia* with deference, see Plut. *Quomodo adulator* 66A-74C; Philo, *Quis heres?* 19-23; in Latin, see *Rhet. Her.* 49; Val. Max. 6.2 *praef.*; Hor. *Ep.* 1.18, esp. 6-20; Konstan (1997) 135-148.

⁸² Martial: Garthwaite (1990); Garthwaite (1993); Garthwaite (2009). Statius: Ahl (1986); Dominik (1990); Hill (1990); Henderson (1992); Dominik (1994) 130-180; Leigh (2000) 483-488; Penwill (2000); Newlands (2002). Valerius Flaccus: M. Davis (1990); Hershkowitz (1998) 242-274; Zissos (2003); P. Davis (2013); P. Davis (2015). Silius: Ahl *et al.* (1986). Flavian epic more broadly: McGuire (1990); McGuire (1997); Gibson (2013); Penwill (2013); Bernstein (2016).

how Josephus might have been able to communicate in his work messages unwelcome to his all-powerful patrons.

In *The Captive Mind*, Czeslaw Milosz writes at length about the impact of the “New Faith” of Leninist-Stalinist Communism on thought and language in Poland when that country came under Soviet control after the Second World War. According to Milosz, the inherent linguistic and conceptual fluidity of dialectical materialism served to destabilise old ways of thinking and speaking, allowing the missionaries of the New Faith to define and redefine at will. But, in a society like Poland (or early Imperial Rome) which allowed for the continuing circulation of literary classics written before the establishment of the new order, old ideas persisted, and symbols could never be entirely dissociated from their former unruly referents.⁸³ Thus an educated subject of Claudius viewing one of that emperor’s *LIBERTAS AUGUSTA* coins could not fail to recognise that the version of *libertas* there advocated (security under the tutelage of a *princeps* who behaved as if there were limits on his power) would simply not have been recognised as *libertas* by Cicero or other authors of his generation.⁸⁴ *Libertas* had a new and approved meaning, but it could never entirely shake off its old political connotations of freedom from the domination of a single individual. Thus any deployment of that word was potentially subversive, depending on which definition a reader brought to bear. This phenomenon enabled and encouraged what Shadi Bartsch has called “doublespeak”, the tendency of early imperial texts to be capable of communicating different meanings to different readers, depending

⁸³ Milosz (2001), especially 16-24. Vasily Rudich’s reading of literature and dissent in Rome (1993, esp. xiv-xxxii; 1997, esp. 1-13) also focuses on the dissociation between symbols and referents under a new political settlement.

⁸⁴ Coins: *BMC* 1 Claudius 97, 113.

on the way in which the text is read.⁸⁵ This is part of a larger phenomenon, the phenomenon of “doublethink”. Under the early Principate, everyone at Rome was well aware that the polity was run by an autocrat, and yet public acknowledgement of this fact was difficult. Rather, subjects of the emperor tended to pretend, at least in elite Roman literature, that they lived in a collaboratively-governed *res publica*. Given this dissonance between what was said and what was experienced, we should not be surprised if literary doublespeak abounds in the texts of the period. The topic of tyranny and its place in early imperial discourse is instructive. Given that the Roman polity was not officially a tyranny, it should not have been problematic to denounce tyranny. Indeed, it generally was not, but we do find two instances in the early Principate when such denunciations incurred punishment.⁸⁶ Generally emperors could not risk punishing an author who condemned tyrants, or it would look like a public confession that that emperor was a tyrant. But from time to time, apparently quite arbitrarily, such punishments did come. At moments like these cracks show in the mask, and the official conceptual vocabulary of power under the Principate is shown up in all its tendentiousness.

Not only did the political conditions of literary production encourage and foster doublespeak, but so did the education system which produced the people by and for whom, in the main, Roman literature was written. The rhetorical handbooks have much to say about concealed meaning in literature. A good deal of scholarship has focused on the rhetorical concept of figured speech (*schema logou*) since the publication of Frederick Ahl’s 1984 article “The art of safe criticism in Greece and Rome”.⁸⁷ This is particularly

⁸⁵ Bartsch (1994), esp. 63-71.

⁸⁶ Dio 59.20.6 on Carrinas Secundus, banished for performing a rhetorical exercise against tyrants under Caligula, and Dio 67.12.5 on Maternus, executed under Domitian for the same offence.

⁸⁷ Further insights into Ahl’s understanding of censorship and political expression in Rome can be gleaned from Ahl (1976) 17-29 and Ahl (1984b).

important for this inquiry, as Ahl's model forms the basis of Steve Mason's influential 2005 piece "Figured speech and irony in T. Flavius Josephus".⁸⁸

Figured speech is a means of insinuating criticism when one wishes to avoid overt criticism; the rhetoricians claim that it is to be deployed either when overt criticism would be unsafe or when it would be impolite.⁸⁹ It consists in an author communicating something which is not the same as what the author appears to be communicating. Both Demetrius and Quintilian distinguish it from (their rather narrow definition of) irony on the basis that figured speech does not simply communicate the opposite of what is being said.⁹⁰ It must be deniable, carrying the possibility of an innocuous interpretation, and it is at its most effective (in a legal situation) when the audience believes the speaker is unwilling openly to make the implied criticism.⁹¹ Various types of figuration are discussed by the rhetoricians. Hidden meanings can be communicated by an author leaving a thought incomplete, or by not connecting two statements which have a logical connection, thereby requiring the audience to participate in constructing meaning by supplying what is missing.⁹² Other types of figuration can involve displacement, such as criticising a king by criticising another person who behaved in a similar way to or shared some important traits with the real target of the criticism; one thinks here of Helvidius Priscus the Younger, who was believed to have mocked Domitian's divorce in a play ostensibly about Paris and

⁸⁸ Significant criticisms of Ahl's article are articulated in Wisse (2013), but none of Wisse's criticisms necessitate us entirely abandoning Ahl's model. Some of the criticisms (the well-founded objection that Ahl too narrowly defines the rhetorical technique of *emphasis*, and the less well-founded concerns about the date when figured speech began to be practised) do not affect the argument of this thesis. Potentially more troubling is Wisse's objection that the rhetoricians only ever claim that figuration is used in rhetorical exercises delivered before imaginary tyrants. However, such exercises were not fully divorced from the real world (people undertook a rhetorical education in order to learn useful skills), and we have clear evidence from the narrative historians of people being executed specifically because they were suspected of engaging in figured critique in their works (Mamercus Aemilius Scaurus: Tac. *Ann.* 6.29, Suet. *Tib.* 61, Dio 58.24.3-5, Sen. *Controv.* 10 *praef* 3; an anonymous author of Atellan farces: Suet. *Cal.* 27; Hermogenes of Tarsus: Suet. *Dom.* 10), so clearly these techniques did not have as restricted a field of application as Wisse would have it.

⁸⁹ Quint. *Inst.* 9.1.21, 9.2.66; Demetr. *Eloc.* 287.

⁹⁰ Quint. *Inst.* 9.2.44-46; Demetr. *Eloc.* 291.

⁹¹ Deniability: Quint. *Inst.* 9.2.67; appearance of reluctance: Quint. *Inst.* 9.2.72.

⁹² Demetr. *Eloc.* 288-289; Quint. *Inst.* 9.2.65.

Oenone, as well as the school of thought which sees Statius' choice in the *Thebaid* to thematise a war between two brothers as a possible way of commenting on the relations between Domitian and Titus.⁹³ One can criticise by praising tyrants for qualities they manifestly do not possess, or by praising them extravagantly for the few occasions when they behave in a genuinely (and atypically) praiseworthy manner, or by praising other people for behaving in ways which contrast with the behaviour of the tyrant.⁹⁴ All of these types of disguise count as figured speech, in that they require that something that is not explicit in the text be supplied by the audience. Thus texts which ostensibly remain courteous and appreciative on all points can conceivably be full of disguised dissent.

Thus rhetorical culture placed a high premium on surreptitious political expression, and this raises problems of interpretation. Ambiguity always presents difficulties for those who want to regulate literature (Michael Holquist identifies “the monologic fear of indeterminacy that is the essence of all censorship”), and modern readers who scour ancient texts for subversive implications are to a large extent following reading practices very familiar to censors.⁹⁵ So how can we confidently identify an intentional subversive implication as opposed to an accidental one, the product of authorial incaution or a modern tendency to over-interpret? One thing is certain: claims made in texts by authors themselves are no help. We may return one final time to Martial 7.34 (21 above). We have seen how Martial here attempts to steer his readers towards an “innocent” interpretation of his poem, that his expressed preference for Nero's baths should not imply denigration of the current *princeps*, and that anybody who might interpret it as such would have to be *malignus*. However, in a rhetorical culture conversant with figured critique, even this ostensibly straightforward disavowal of dissident intent can be suspect. In its surface

⁹³ Demetr. *Eloc.* 292. For Helvidius, see Suet. *Dom.* 10.3. For Statius, see Ahl (1986) 2821; Dominik (1990) 84-87. Against this, see Henderson (1992) 34; Braund (2006) 267-268.

⁹⁴ Quint. *Inst.* 9.2.49; Demetr. *Eloc.* 292. On extravagant praise as criticism, see also Dio 59.25.4.

⁹⁵ Holquist (1994) 21.

anxiety to be interpreted “correctly” the poem raises in the reader’s mind the existence of the possibility of a dissident interpretation. It is important to note that this suspicion does not arise *despite* Martial’s protestations of semantic innocence, but it arises *because of* them. In protesting his innocence, Martial draws attention to the subversive potential inherent in his question: he insinuates his own guilt by disavowing it. Similar things could be said about Pliny’s *Panegyricus*, for many readers the acme of regime loyalism. Pliny frequently stresses the sincerity of his praises of Trajan, and Shadi Bartsch’s reading of this text has suggested why. Pliny has taken the decision to base his panegyric around a denunciation of Domitian, and in particular he points out repeatedly that the tyrant Domitian extorted praise from his unwilling subjects, a potentially awkward message to be attempting to communicate in a ritual panegyric given in the presence of an autocrat.⁹⁶ It is easy to see how a “subversive” reading of Pliny’s text (a much less sophisticated reading than Bartsch’s) could arise from these observations. After all, Pliny does not need to draw attention in such a suggestive context to the fact that the tyrannical Domitian extorted praise from his unwilling subjects. The implication (so the argument would run) is clear: Pliny is secretly signalling to astute listeners that Trajan is, in fact, a tyrant indistinguishable from his predecessor, a ruler who demands hollow praise from his frightened retinue. And again, the suspicion arises not in spite of Pliny’s repeated claims of sincerity, but because of them: they exist precisely to signal the author’s insincerity.

Thus in the literature of autocracy claims of sincerity inspire suspicions of insincerity; protestations of innocence provoke intimations of guilt. Once we admit the existence of figured speech and a political environment not conducive to free expression, authors lose all ability to direct the way we read the texts they produce, and no claim of theirs about their own intent can be accepted at face value. However, the solution to this at first

⁹⁶ Bartsch (1994) 148-187.

dispiriting quandary may be relatively straightforward: we may simply need to abandon methodologically problematic attempts to reconstruct authorial intent when considering possible instances of figured critique, and focus instead on questions of reader reception.

The very existence of rhetorical theories of figured speech demonstrates that Greek and Roman authors could intentionally insert figured criticism into their works, but this demonstrable fact does not help to us address the problem of how to identify intention definitively. As early as 1992 Duncan Kennedy problematised the practice of categorising authors as pro- and anti-Augustan, partly on the grounds that this dichotomy is a reductive conception of the possibilities of political expression, and partly precisely because of the problems of identifying, fixing and demonstrating authorial intention. Kennedy urges us rather to consider the interpretative possibilities offered up by their texts, particularly with the regard to the extent to which texts map onto or expose the interstices in politically sanctioned language.⁹⁷ A similar stress on the importance of reader-reception is seen in the work of Vasily Rudich, who divides readers up into four categories, loyalist, neutral, dissident and censorious, each of which are capable of interpreting a text in a different way informed by their prior attitude to the regime.⁹⁸ It is not my (or anybody else's) place to say which of these potential readings maps onto the original intentions of an author, whether or not Pliny's frequent claims of sincerity in the *Panegyricus* are themselves sincere, and we cannot demonstrate this either way. We can, however, observe that Pliny's

⁹⁷ Kennedy (1992). The strong objections to Kennedy's article in Davis (2006) 9-22 have little force for our purposes. Davis's demonstration that texts could be pro- or anti-Augustan does not seem necessary (Kennedy would presumably not dispute the existence of authorial intention, just the possibility of confidently reconstructing it), and the texts with which he chooses to illustrate this, the *Res Gestae* (written by the *princeps*) and the anti-Augustan arguments attributed to some people at the start of Tacitus' *Annals* (written long after the death of the emperor in question) do not illuminate the situation of authors writing about emperors under those same emperors. His argument that texts can play a role in directing their own reception by creating a framework which explicitly guides reader-response is of course true, but as we have already seen in the discussion of Martial and Pliny in this section, it is precisely at the level of authorial framing that figuration can often be suspected, with explicit authorial promptings towards a "loyalist" reading potentially signalling the existence of a "subversive" reading. Nothing in Davis's argument undermines the difficulties Kennedy has identified with attempting to fix authorial intention in texts which address or represent ruling emperors.

⁹⁸ Rudich (1997), esp. 10-11.

speech, whether loyalist or dissident in intent, exposes possible alternatives to the official discourse: while claiming to present Trajan as an enlightened *princeps* restoring the liberties abrogated by his tyrannical predecessor, in its very anxieties the speech exposes the possibility of another reality, according to which Trajan and Domitian are not all that different. This way of using literature remains realistically agnostic about the extent to which Pliny had really swallowed, internalised and endorsed Trajan's preferred discourse, but examining his text's anxieties and difficulties has revealed some of the potential resistances that the official version may have encountered among its audience, and marked one part of the dissociation between the regime's deployment of language and other ways of understanding political issues. Moreover, this approach has the agreeable consequence that we do not have to read like censors, proceeding under the misconception that the authority vested in us as interpreters entitles us to make bold pronouncements about what was in the minds of the authors of our texts, and to definitively fix their meanings and degrees of subservience or subversiveness according to our own tastes and preferences.⁹⁹

One crucial consequence of this reader-response focused approach remains to be addressed. It is evident from what has gone before that, even in early imperial texts which we may suspect are saturated with intentional veiled dissidence, there must *always* be a possible "loyalist" (or at least non-subversive) interpretation. If we suspect figured critique of a Flavian in the *Jewish War*, it is not enough simply to explain how the critique might work. We must further be able to demonstrate how the very same features in the text could be interpreted innocently. Thus in the discussion of Josephus in subsequent chapters, an innocent interpretation of any given passage will always be assumed, and the ambiguities of reader-response and the uncertainties about authorial intention will only be invoked

⁹⁹ In addition to Kennedy, this recalls the approach taken by Carole Newlands (2002) to the *Silvae* of Statius, considering potential subversive interpretations of the text as indicative of "faultlines" in imperial ideology rather than as intentional dissidence. See especially the methodological comments at 18-27. The notion of "reality gaps" in the imperial image, as developed by Olivier Hekster (2011), is also comparable.

when a potentially subversive reading is under consideration. This should not be interpreted as rhetoric, or as a persistent bias towards an image of the “loyalist” Josephus; it is rather a realistic response to the problem of figured speech, which means that (ostensible) loyalism can always be assumed while (suspected) dissidence must always be qualified and hedged with uncertainty. Figured critique can never be overt or transparent. It is precisely at the moment when we are most fully convinced that a hidden meaning is closest to the surface of the text that the reader-response ripcord needs to be pulled.

2.2.3: The prince and his virtues

Before we can examine Josephus’ depiction of the characters of the Flavians in the *Jewish War*, some consideration needs to be taken of what classical authors understood as “character”, and how character was conceptualised and communicated in contemporary literary texts and in non-literary sources (principally on imperial coin-issues), as well as the related question of how emperors were able to communicate a sense of their personality to their subjects. As we shall see, personality in antiquity was usually conceptualised as a fragmented phenomenon, as the presence or absence in a person of certain positive moral qualities, virtues, or their corresponding vices, and these qualities could be demonstrated by or inferred from a person’s actions in private and public life. Character was thus not an internal, psychological, private phenomenon so much as an accumulation of performative gestures, the concrete enactments in society of various behavioural traits which accorded with positively or negatively valued abstract concepts.¹⁰⁰ The virtue-model of character profoundly shaped both how emperors were

¹⁰⁰ Duff (2002) 13-14.

presented to their public and how authors sought to understand, represent and evaluate rulers.

The tendency towards a morally evaluative approach to historical writing in antiquity was strongly bolstered by the notion of exemplarity. One of the most commonly-cited justifications for writing and reading histories and biographies was ethical improvement, that the reader could fashion their characters after the virtues of the heroes of the past, and similarly avoid the vicious traits of history's villains.¹⁰¹ Thus the job of the historian or biographer is to identify from the record of a person's life what is worthy of imitation and what is not. Education in rhetoric supplied authors with the techniques necessary for this. Rhetorical manuals provide instructions on how to construct panegyric (praises of a person's virtues), as well as panegyric's evil twin invective (denunciation of a person's vices). The procedure in both cases is often rubricisation: the subject of praise should be the recipient of an instantiated virtue-catalogue, where his virtues are identified and advertised and exemplified with reference to his actions, while the victim of invective should face a similar catalogue of vices.¹⁰² This diverges from the natural mode of narrative historiography, a chronological account of deeds and events, and tends towards a synchronic assessment of character fragmented into headings of virtue and vice. This encomiastic mode is in evidence in certain specimens of historical writing from the early Principate where virtues and vices form part of the structuring principle of the work: thus Plutarch often selects his parallel Greek and Roman statesmen because he believed that the pair demonstrate similar virtues or vices, and Valerius Maximus' compendium of memorable deeds and sayings is often organised under the rubrics of virtue or vice (most notably in Books 4 and 5). This approach to character description reaches its apogee in the

¹⁰¹ See e.g. Livy *praef.* 10 (for history), Plut. *Tim. praef.* (for biography). Duff (2002) 30-45 is useful for this aspect of Plutarch's *Lives*, and Kraus (2005) for imperial historiography.

¹⁰² *Rhet. Her.* 3.10-15; *Men. Rhet.* 2.373-377; *Quint. Inst.* 3.7.15-22.

scholarly imperial biographies of Suetonius, which often eschew chronological narrative in favour of sections illustrating an emperor's virtues and vices, with exemplifying deeds drawn from across that emperor's reign.¹⁰³ But Suetonius' procedure remained unusual; most biographers and historians preferred to stick to broadly chronological narrative, punctuated by occasional authorial comments on which particular virtue or vice a given character's actions demonstrate. But even in these more conventional chronological narratives, opportunities still existed for the encomiastic organising principle thanks to two literary conventions of classical historiography, the introductory character-sketch marking a significant character's first appearance in the narrative, and the obituary notice at a major character's death, which summarises that person's achievements, virtues and vices synchronically.¹⁰⁴

Literary representations of the virtues specifically of rulers are particularly resonant because of the tradition of conceiving of the ideal monarch in virtue terms rather than considering a ruler's technical competence. Ideal monarch literature flourished under the Hellenistic kings and continued to be important under the early emperors, as exemplified, for instance, by the first four treatises of Dio Chrysostom or Seneca's famous discussion of the monarchical virtue of *clementia*. The details vary, but in sum the message of such literature is that the holder of absolute power can be one of two types, the legitimate and beneficial monarch (*basileus*) or the illegitimate and harmful tyrant (*tyrannos*), and the distinction depends solely on ethical considerations, on whether the ruler enacts certain

¹⁰³ On the influence of encomiastic rhetoric on this aspect of Suetonius' method, see Wardman (1974) 146-147; Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 145-146. The panegyric virtue-catalogue also influenced visual representation. The best example of this is probably the *clupeus virtutis*, which represented graphically the Augustan virtues of *virtus*, *pietas*, *clementia* and *iustitia*. See also Fears (1981b) 917-918, for a reading of the relief panels on Trajan's arch at Beneventum as an aretology of the virtues of the emperor.

¹⁰⁴ Famous instances of the introductory character sketch include Sallust's Catiline (*Cat.* 5), as well as Tacitus' Sejanus, which it inspired (*Ann.* 4.1). The most famous obituary notice in classical historiography is Thuc. 2.65, on Pericles, partly imitated by Josephus in his obituary of Ananus (*BJ* 4.318-321).

types of virtues or certain types of vices.¹⁰⁵ Particular virtues were often singled out as especially appropriate for monarchs, and lists of four pre-eminent royal virtues were often identified.¹⁰⁶ In practice, this meant that depictions of the virtues of rulers could never be simply a matter of the evaluation of private character, but were always political: a ruler's virtues indicated the extent to which that ruler adhered to or fell short of idealised standards of proper governance.

Outside of literary sources, the most striking manifestation of the dominance of virtue-language in designations of character is on imperial coin-types which depict on the reverse personified virtues, in an apparent attempt to associate these qualities with the emperor whose head adorns the obverse. These female personifications, usually identified with a simple Latin legend, often have their own characteristic attributes and resemble cult statues, a reminder of the fact that most of the virtues represented on the coins are known to have received cult worship at Rome.¹⁰⁷ Care should be taken to discriminate when considering personification coinage, as not all personifications are strictly speaking virtues. Many (*salus*, *pax* etc.) are not so much personal qualities of the emperor as desirable states which that emperor's rule brings. A failure to distinguish between personified states and virtues on the coins has led some scholars to the point of having to regard things like *annona* (the city of Rome's corn supply) as personal qualities of the emperor.¹⁰⁸ However, personified states on an emperor's coins are not wholly distinct

¹⁰⁵ North (1966).

¹⁰⁶ The lists varied from school to school and from author to author. For surveys of this literature and its varying virtues, see North (1966); Weinstock (1971) 228-229; Wallace-Hadrill (1981a) 300-304; Nawotka (1993) 258-259. The hypothesis of Charlesworth (1937) that the four virtues depicted on Augustus' *clupeus virtutis* came to be regarded as the official fixed canon of monarchical virtues in the Principate is comprehensively rebutted by Wallace-Hadrill (1981a) and Classen (1992).

¹⁰⁷ Fears (1981b) is a strongly "theological" reading of virtue-language concerning emperors, which sees the virtues less as personal qualities of the emperor than as deities whose powers are channelled through the emperor's person. See also Wallace-Hadrill (1981a) 314-6, who restricts this sort of reading to the coins, and Mattingly (1937) 111.

¹⁰⁸ Failure to preserve this distinction is evident in Mattingly (1937), Bradley (1976), Fears (1981b). Wallace-Hadrill (1981a) 308-309 criticises the failure to distinguish virtues from states in some scholars.

from the notion of the emperor's virtues. Even the troublesome *annona*, for instance, pertains to both the emperor's *providentia* (his benevolent supervision of the world to ensure the provision and security of his subjects) and, insofar as such issues also commemorate the continued operation of the imperial corn-dole to the urban poor, his *liberalitas* too.¹⁰⁹ Thus it seems that the personification coins, and especially the virtues, can offer us an excellent window into imperial self-representation, a ready-made survey of the qualities which emperors wanted to have publicly associated with their names, even access to a programmatic and official imperial persona. But in fact it is not quite as simple as that: some preliminary consideration will have to be given to how these coin-types can be used by historians.

The long-standing debate about the appropriateness of regarding imperial coin-issues as propaganda does not need rehearsing in detail here.¹¹⁰ However, there are two particular difficulties which are strongly pertinent to the issue of what the virtue coinage can tell us about the public promotion of an emperor's personality. The first is the problem of authorisation. It remains an awkward fact that we simply do not know who designed and selected the coin-types which went into production at the mint.¹¹¹ The literary testimony from Suetonius, Dio and Eusebius which demonstrates emperors taking a personal interest in the designs on their coins, and which is often cited in this debate, is not decisive: such attested episodes are few and far between, and may have always been exceptional.¹¹² Emperors had other means by which they could direct their public image, such as the circulation, dissemination and public display of edicts and letters written by the emperor, their conduct in judicial affairs and in how they received petitions, and even their

¹⁰⁹ Bradley (1976) 251.

¹¹⁰ The key contributions are Sutherland (1959); Buttrey (1972, on the coinage of Vespasian); Jones (1974b); Shotton (1978); Levick (1982); Crawford (1983); Evans (1992) 17-34 (for the Republic); Potter (1994) 124-125; Noreña (2001) 147 n.3; Duncan-Jones (2005); Beckmann (2009); Hekster (2015) 30-38.

¹¹¹ Mattingly (*BMC* 1.lxvii-lx); Sutherland (1959) 5; Levick (1982); Crawford (1983) 59.

¹¹² References collected by S.R.F. Price (1979) 277-278.

behaviour at public events such as religious ceremonies or public spectacles. Coin-types could potentially be left to others.¹¹³ However, even if we are to postulate that coin-types were selected by relatively low-level mint officials with no supervision from emperors or those close to them, we must still recognise that such individuals were imperial employees working at an institution operated by the emperor and overseen by his agents, and that they would be highly unlikely to choose designs which they had reason to suspect the emperor would not like.¹¹⁴ Thus the coins offer us a selection of virtues with which an informed contemporary in a direct relationship to the regime believed an emperor would want to be associated. In a sense, then, the picture is not very different from that of literary sources, where authors sought to create their own representations of emperors, but generally in ways which they believed would meet with imperial approval. But in another sense, coin-evidence remains more “official” than literary evidence. The coins were the direct products of an imperial institution, and they bore the emperor’s image and official titulature on the obverse. As a Jewish sage of the generation before Josephus is said to have recognised, coins which bore the image of Caesar can be said, on one level, to belong to Caesar.¹¹⁵ Thus, while not a direct and unmediated window into how an emperor wanted to be seen, coins still offer us an official version of the imperial character, produced by informed contemporaries and authorised by the name and image of the *princeps*.

A more significant potential problem is the topicality of some of the virtue coins. Although virtue imagery in coins seems to suggest the perennial possession of stable qualities by the emperor, in a number of instances it has been plausibly argued that specific personification issues referred to or commemorated specific events or actions of

¹¹³ For the means of imperial self-promotion, see Potter (1994) 110-131; Noreña (2001) 157; Hekster (2015) 30-38.

¹¹⁴ Levick (1982) 108.

¹¹⁵ Mark 12:15-17; Matt. 22:15-22; Luke 20:20-26.

the *princeps*. Thus *VICTORIA* issues often commemorated a specific military success rather than celebrated the emperor as perpetual *victor*; *LIBERALITAS* coins were often issued at *congiaria* (imperial cash-handouts), meaning that the coins commemorate the generosity manifested at their own disbursement; it has been suggested that Vitellius' *CLEMENTIA*-issue celebrates not Vitellius' humane qualities in general, but very specifically his merciful treatment of the family of his defeated civil war rival Otho.¹¹⁶ Likewise, specific virtue-coin issues can be seen to respond directly to immediate needs at specific moments of a reign: for instance the insistence on the early coins of Claudius on *VICTORIA* and *CONSTANTIA* may have been designed to combat that emperor's public image as a bookish, weak-willed invalid.¹¹⁷ What this means is that we cannot simply take a survey of the virtue-coins of any given emperor and see them, with the confidence of earlier generations of scholars, as the result of a pre-planned, programmatic and joined-up attempt to create and promulgate a consciously-developed imperial personality. The coinage is simply too reactive to be used in that way.¹¹⁸ However, we may note that, whatever the circumstances which led to the dissemination of a particular virtue-issue, it remains the case that an emperor must have been happy (or could have reasonably been expected to be happy) to be associated with whatever virtue is so promoted. Overall, while the coins do not give us access to a pre-planned imperial image, devised or approved by the emperor and imposed from the top down, they remain useful as a means of taking the temperature of a particular reign, of mapping the constellation of virtues which came to cluster around an emperor and to form a positive vision of that emperor's public image.

¹¹⁶ Noreña (2001) 163 (*VICTORIA*); Mattingly, *BMC* 1. Ccxxviii (*LIBERALITAS*); Rogers (1943) 36 (Vitellius).

¹¹⁷ Fears (1981b) 894. One is reminded here of a similar epigraphic convention, which saw acts of imperial generosity celebrated by communities on inscriptions in virtue-language: again, specific events and acts are being clothed in the language of general and perpetual characteristics of the emperor (Wallace-Hadrill 1983 147).

¹¹⁸ Perhaps the best statement of the old view of virtue-coins as programmatic is expressed in Rogers (1943) 3: "those [*virtues*] of which the individual Emperor was most proudly conscious, or which were part of his imperial programme, so to speak, were frequently propagated on the coins which issued from the mint to circulate among the population of the Empire."

That is how I will use the coins of the Flavians in the following chapters, when considering how the virtues of Josephus' Flavians relate to other contemporary depictions of their characters.

2.2.4: The problem of contemporary historiography

The general concerns about the appropriate representation of emperors discussed in the previous sections no doubt afflicted historians as much as authors in other genres, but the conventions of historiography also imposed their own special constraints on any attempt to represent a living emperor. In this section, I will consider those special constraints, survey some of the objections to contemporary historiographical imperial representations in extant classical texts, and examine the works of the only two historians whose works are (partially) extant who attempted to assay this problem before Josephus in the *Jewish War*, namely Velleius in his abbreviated universal history and Nicolaus in the so-called *Life of Augustus*.

The particular problems associated with historiography arise because of the relationship of that genre to "the truth". This assertion requires some discussion because of the popularity of arguments associated with what Andrew Feldherr has called "the Woodman-Wiseman revolution".¹¹⁹ This scholarly tendency has its origins in two important books, T.P. Wiseman's *Clio's Cosmetics* and A.J. Woodman's *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography*. These works focus on the rhetorical aspect of classical historiography, and while both studies accept some basic association between historiography and what an author understands as the truth, they are scathing about the tendency of modern historians

¹¹⁹ Feldherr (2009b) 7.

uncritically to accept statements found in classical historians as documented “facts”.¹²⁰ This is because the rhetorical dimension of historiography is not restricted to issues of style, tone and form: the requirements of the rhetorical practices of *inventio* and *enargeia* necessitate, in the words of Woodman, “the elaboration of content by content”, fictionality at the level of ostensibly factual statements themselves.¹²¹ This view of history as a fictionalised genre complicates any attempt to characterise classical histories as repositories of facts, and raises the possibility that the relationship between historiography and what is “true” may be more apparent than real.¹²² This is significant for our theme because if the connection between history and any notion of factual truth is really as loose as Woodman’s and Wiseman’s works suggest, then Josephus could conceivably get away with a great deal of fabrication and mendacity in his Flavian portraits without violating the standards of his genre or his age.

The books of both Wiseman and Woodman were major contributions to the field but neither is problem-free. Both valuably draw attention to the previously underappreciated importance of rhetorical practice to historiography, and some of their observations (such as Wiseman’s understandable disquiet at the ballooning growth in the scale of early Roman histories, which seems to indicate a precipitous increase in the amount of rhetorical padding) indeed retain their force.¹²³ Wiseman’s demonstration of the relative rarity of archival research in Roman historiography and the predominant reliance on earlier literary histories also seems persuasive, and has important implications.¹²⁴

However, Wiseman’s conclusions about the working methods of ancient historians seem

¹²⁰ Basic association between historiography and truth: Wiseman (1979) 26, “they had to keep to the basic outline of the story”, and Woodman (1988) 77 on the distinction between *fundamenta* and *ornamenta* in Cic. *De Or.* 2.63.

¹²¹ Woodman (1988) 78.

¹²² For important studies following in the Wiseman-Woodman tradition, see Kraus and Woodman (1997); O’Gorman (2000); Batstone (2009); for its application to Josephus, Mason (2009c).

¹²³ Wiseman (1979) 10-23.

¹²⁴ Wiseman (1979) 44-45.

questionable. His attempt to argue that Roman historians simply accepted as true the first story they found in their sources which was *veri similis* (“like the truth”) does not seem to reflect the texts, which often contain significant comparisons of rival traditions, along with explanations of why the author has accepted one version over another, an altogether more arduous process than Wiseman’s model admits.¹²⁵ Of course, the criteria used by ancient historians to determine which competing tradition is most likely to be “true” may not meet with our approval, but nevertheless such passages show authors attempting to create narratives which seem to them to correspond to an objective truth about the past. And indeed, few historians today are bold enough to claim that they deal with anything other than (what seem to them to be) probabilities: the criterion of *veri similis* is as much a part of modern historiographical practice as ancient, and condemning the honesty of the ancients for focusing on probability in historiography seems odd.

Woodman’s work rests largely on a reading of a passage in Cicero’s *De Oratore* (2.62), in which the speaker Antonius outlines his understanding of the rules of practice for historians:

Nam quis nescit, primam esse historiae legem, ne quid falsi dicere audeat?

Deinde ne quid veri non audeat? Ne qua suspicio gratiae sit in scribendo? Ne qua simultatis?

Who does not know that the first law of history is that the historian ought not dare say anything false? And the second, that he should not dare to fail to say something that is true? That there should be no suspicion of favouritism in his writing? Nor of malice?

¹²⁵ Even the procedure of Livy, to accept one pre-eminent source for a period but to supplement or refute it when necessary, on various grounds, from other accounts (Walsh, 1961, 138-145), implies a process of constant evaluation of competing claims which seems somewhat more rigorous than that suggested by Wiseman.

Woodman reads the third and fourth sentences as essentially a restatement of the first and second, and concludes from this that the only type of falsehood that Cicero recognised in historical texts was that which arises from bias, either towards or against characters in the text.¹²⁶ Thus any statement of facts not produced under the influence of bias or hostility would be accepted as true in historiography, regardless of other considerations. But this is a problematic reading: there is no textual indication that we should see the second half of the quoted passage as simply a restatement of the first, and the third and fourth sentences in fact look like either further laws of history, or like partial instances of the first two laws.¹²⁷ It cannot be doubted that bias and malice are frequently cited as distorting the truth of historical writing but they are not the only violations of truth discussed in historiography. Note for instance the ire with which Lucian castigates a historian for mislocating his home-town of Samosata in Mesopotamia, or Velleius inveighing against historians who misstate the age of Pompey, two instances of purely factual corruptions of historical truth which have nothing to do with bias.¹²⁸ But even if bias is the only factor at play, the problem with bias is that it leads to the corruption of the factual record in someone's favour: in other words, the basic proposition that historians ought to write what they understand to be the truth is still valid.¹²⁹ Moreover, Woodman's acceptance of Antonius' depiction of the centrality of rhetoric to historiographical narrative is problematic because these claims themselves are taken from a rhetorical text, and the purpose of Antonius' speech is precisely to demonstrate the general utility of a rhetorical

¹²⁶ Woodman (1988) 73-91, a reading endorsed by Wiseman (1993) 126-127.

¹²⁷ Pitcher (2009) 18, preferring the second alternative reading.

¹²⁸ *Luc. Hist. Conscr.* 24, *Vell. Pat.* 2.53.4. Further examples in Pitcher (2009) 19-21.

¹²⁹ Note Josephus' criticisms of certain statements made by Nicolaus of Damascus about Herod (*AJ* 14.9 and 16.183-186). In both cases, Josephus identifies *bias* as the cause of the problem, but his specific criticisms are about the *factual inaccuracies* that this bias entails, specifically the suppression of some material which Josephus believes is true (the story of Herod robbing the tomb of David), and the invention of certain "facts" which Josephus takes to be false (tampering with Herod's family tree, and inventing stories about the vices of some of Herod's disgraced family members). Note the precise correspondence of these two faults - suppression and falsification - with Cicero's first two laws of history. Further discussion on Josephus' criticisms of Nicolaus: Wacholder (1989) 155-159; Toher (2003) and Teets (2013).

education, so it cannot be said that he offers us a disinterested account of the practice of history.¹³⁰ The passage is prescriptive rather than descriptive in nature, and Antonius' contention remains that history should be written by orators in line with general rhetorical practices, not that it always was.¹³¹

Rhetorical theory, however, was clearly very important to the writing of history, if for no other reason than that the authors of texts in all the major genres regularly avail themselves of the *rhetor*'s bag of tricks. If we consider the rhetorical practice of *inventio* (which is not mentioned by Antonius in any part of his discussion of historiography), we might be able to get some understanding of how Woodman's elaboration of content with content manifests itself in practice, in ways which echo actual historical texts we possess. One possible topic which could be subjected to *inventio* was an account of the sacking of a city, a recognised rhetorical *topos* and a theme quite likely to require description in a historical work. At *Inst.* 8.3.67-70, Quintilian explains how a city-sack can be described vividly in a *narratio* by singly describing episodes such as the burning of important buildings and the panicked reactions of the townspeople. He concludes by articulating his understanding of how to achieve *enargeia* ("vividness") in such descriptions:

Consequemur autem ut manifesta sint si fuerint veri similia, et licebit etiam
falso adfingere quidquid fieri solet

We will achieve the clarity of description of these events if they are plausible,
and we will even be able to invent falsehood if it is consonant with what
usually happens.

¹³⁰ Lendon (2009) 51, Pitcher (2009) 22-25.

¹³¹ For further insightful critiques of the Woodman-Wiseman school, raising more points than can be discussed here, see Dench (2009); Lendon (2009); Marincola (2009), esp. 18; Pitcher (2009) 14-25.

Descriptions of the sacks of cities which adhere closely to Quintilian's stereotyped prescriptions occur not infrequently in historiography: we can take as a *locus classicus* Tacitus, *Histories* 3.33.3, which recounts the sack of Cremona by the Flavian forces during the Year of the Four Emperors. Tacitus includes numerous details familiar from Quintilian: the burning of buildings, the robbing of temples, the panic of the townsfolk and the violence committed against them. Given the striking similarity between Tacitus' "factual" account and the purely rhetorical list of commonplaces in Quintilian, disconcerting questions about Tacitus' method suggest themselves. Is he drawing upon written sources or eyewitness testimony? Perhaps not: he may instead be practicing rhetorical *inventio*, *inventio* which could arguably be justified by Quintilian's principles of *veri similia* and similarity to *quidquid fieri solet*, but which nevertheless need have no authority outside the historian's imagination. However, even here Tacitus' understanding of the truth has to have some constraining effect. However conventional some aspects of this account may be, Tacitus could not have written it unless he had good reason to believe that it was true that Cremona had been sacked by Flavian forces. The details of a siege can be invented for rhetorical purposes, but the occurrence of a siege cannot. This fundamental level of adherence to the truth as the author understood it (fundamental because it seems to correspond to Antonius' category of *fundamenta* in *De Oratore*) presumably explains why we have no work of Roman history which claims, for instance, that Hannibal won the Battle of Zama. Pure fictionality at a basic factual level in a history, whether essayed because of bias or for any other reason, is simply not acceptable.

Not all cases of the distinction between true *fundamenta* and rhetorical *ornamenta* will be this easy to disentangle: any presentation of "factual" material which seems in some way conventional cannot be above suspicion. Nevertheless, the connection between historiography and what an author believed to be the truth about the past has needed to be

restated. For the purposes of our inquiry, this means that any attempt to fabricate facts in the favour of an emperor, any suspicion of deliberate mendacity advantageous to the *princeps*, can be considered problematic not only when judged by modern notions of responsible historiography, but in the light of ancient expectations too.¹³² A contemporary historian of Domitian would have been able to praise to the skies that emperor's military achievements on the Rhine and Danube, to exalt beyond all proportion the significance of those achievements, and to paint those exploits in all the rhetorical colours that decorated accounts of great military victories, regardless of whether or not the details of those tropes were attested by his sources. But the same contemporary historian of Domitian would not have been able to claim that his subject had conquered India without violating beyond repair the generic requirements of historiography, however rhetorically implicated those requirements might have been. What this suggests is that if factual mendacity for purposes other than vivid description can be demonstrated in Josephus, this would contravene what most contemporaries understood as the rules of the historical genre. Furthermore if, in such a case, it appears that such mendacity was undertaken in order to improve the image of one of the Flavians, this may indicate that the traditional "Flavian lackey" approach to Josephus is not entirely without merit.

Given this ideal connection between historiography and what the historian believes to be the facts about the past, what can be said about the writing of histories featuring contemporary emperors? Although we are lacking in extant examples of this type of historiography, such texts clearly existed in some number in the early Principate, and the dearth of *comparanda* can be partially alleviated by considering comments about such

¹³² Ancient expressions that history and "the truth" were connected are abundant: for examples, see Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 2; Strabo 1.2.17; Luc. *Hist. Conscr.* 9; Cic. *Inv. Rhet.* 1.27.

historians in extant texts. The most explicit and enlightening of such comments come from Tacitus and Lucian. Tacitus claims in the *Annals* that contemporary historians cannot write freely because they fear the emperor, while those who write soon after an emperor's death are biased against that emperor by hatred.¹³³ Later in the same passage, however, the famous promise to write *sine ira et studio* suggests that partiality (*studium*) is as important a distorting factor as fear in contemporary history.¹³⁴ In the *Histories* we find a similar formulation, although here the motive for flattering an emperor is explicitly not fear but the desire for rewards.¹³⁵ Lucian likewise criticises contemporary historians as flatterers who hope for rewards for their panegyrical efforts.¹³⁶ Also revealing is Pliny the Elder's decision to withhold publication of his part-contemporary history until after his death in order to avoid the suspicion of it being motivated by flattery; Pliny the Younger's comments that contemporary historiography was potentially more "offensive" than histories of former times; the same author's celebration of the parrhesiastic power of contemporary historiography after witnessing the *recitatio* of a history which embarrassed a malefactor in the audience; even Polybius' injunction that contemporary history is necessarily written under constraint, and therefore it should be read in a forgiving spirit, in full awareness of the author's circumstances.¹³⁷ These comments, diverse as they are, share an awareness of the potential awkwardness of the contemporary historian's commitment to veridiction, of the constraints under which contemporary history often must be written, of the potentially distorting effects of fear or the impulse to flattery on the historian's project, or of the potential for critique in contemporary history to seriously discomfort the powerful. Josephus clearly understands these problems, as his comments in

¹³³ Tac. *Ann.* 1.1.

¹³⁴ See also Plut. *Per.* 13.12.

¹³⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 1.1.

¹³⁶ Luc. *Hist. Conscr.* 7; 12-13; 38-40.

¹³⁷ Plin. *HN* praef. 20; Plin. *Ep.* 5.8.12-14, 9.27; Polyb. 8.8.8-9.

the *Antiquities* on Nicolaus of Damascus' history of his patron Herod make clear.¹³⁸ If his comments on Nicolaus show evidence of an awareness of the dangers of partiality (which he nowhere applies to his own writings), his comments on the Flavian historiography of Nero, which he criticises as being overly derogatory, show he understands the *ira* part of Tacitus' formulation too.¹³⁹

Hence the difficulties with contemporary historiography: a historian's judgements of individuals should be measured and unforced, and in order to fulfil his crucial task of furnishing *exempla* for his readers the historian must be free to pass judgement on the conduct of his characters as he sees fit. This is patently impossible in the case of contemporary emperors, for the reasons discussed earlier in this chapter. Lucian goes so far as to suggest that historians should choose to avoid contemporary history altogether; Tacitus comments on the greater potential for veridiction for the historian of ancient affairs, as nobody will fear punishment for speaking well or critically of the Carthaginians.¹⁴⁰ And we have examples of precisely this sort of desire for "distance" in the cases of known contemporary historians. Pliny's deferred publication has already been mentioned; Titus Labienus insinuated that parts of his contemporary history could not be performed publicly until after his own death.¹⁴¹ Luce has argued cogently that such problems may have been endemic to Roman society. *Beneficia* imposed certain requirements on their recipient and, since the emperor was the benefactor of all, writers were effectively obliged to eulogise, unless they wanted to risk being denounced as *ingrati* (a potentially dangerous category to be in).¹⁴² Thus, as Josephus implies with regard to Nicolaus at the court of Herod, contemporary historians were obliged to panegyriser to

¹³⁸ *AJ* 14.9 and 16.183-186. See 52 n. 129 above.

¹³⁹ *AJ* 20.154. On Josephus' failure to connect his comments on Nicolaus' enforced panegyric to his own work, a suspicious reader may intimate that these passages constitute a figured warning about the sincerity of Josephus' own praise of Vespasian and Titus in the *Jewish War*.

¹⁴⁰ *Luc. Hist. Conscr.* 40; *Tac. Ann.* 4.33.

¹⁴¹ *Sen. Controv.* 10.praef.8.

¹⁴² Luce (1989). See also Barton (1993) 114-129 on compulsory flattery under the early emperors.

some extent; nevertheless, such historians could be morally condemned simply because they took the decision to write contemporary history, with all the obligations and distortions that that genre necessarily brought with it under the Principate.

Such are the views of those who chose not to practise this kind of history. It may be possible to discern the elements of a counter-argument in the works of Josephus besides the *War*. Josephus never makes claims of impartiality from the emperors in the *Jewish War*; at most he claims not to be affected by the anti-Jewish or pro-Roman prejudices of some of his predecessors.¹⁴³ However, in his *Vita* he engages in a remarkable dispute with his rival historian of the Revolt, Justus of Tiberius.¹⁴⁴ Justus waited until after the death of Titus to bring out his history, which was evidently highly critical of Josephus as both a participant in the Revolt and as a historian. However, rather than present Justus' delay in publication as a necessary precaution against suspicions of bias, Josephus castigates it as an act of cowardice. Justus withheld publication until after the deaths of Vespasian and Titus so that those emperors would not be around to refute his fabrications.¹⁴⁵ Josephus then recounts how Vespasian and (particularly) Titus were very enthusiastic about his own version of events. This is clearly a rather dangerous strategy in terms of Josephus' credibility, but it may reflect a different understanding of the figure of the *princeps* which those who chose to write contemporary history could deploy. Authors as diverse as Tacitus, Lucian and Pliny present the figure of the *princeps* as a distorting influence, necessitating mendacious panegyric or at least the suspicion of such, even (in the case of Titus as presented by Pliny) when there is no active desire on the part of the emperor to distort the facts. To Josephus, by contrast, the emperor is a figure whose extraordinary *auctoritas* guarantees the truth of the version of events presented by the historian. He is

¹⁴³ *BJ* 1.2-3.

¹⁴⁴ Justus: *FGHist* 734. On Justus, see Laqueur (1920) 6-23; Drexler (1925) 293-299; Rajak (1973); Rajak (1989).

¹⁴⁵ *V* 361-2.

both a literary *iudex* bestowing informed approval on a text, and an eyewitness with an uncommon degree of confirmatory power. According to such a conception, the writing of contemporary history is not only possible, but desirable, particularly where the author is in a position to be able to present his work to the *princeps* for approval. However, as John Marincola notes, it is significant that Josephus reserves this line of argument for his *Vita*, and does not include it as an authority-claim in the text of the work in question.¹⁴⁶ This may indicate that, when composing the *War*, Josephus refrained from this type of authority-claim as he understood that it may expose him to suspicions of bias, and that he reached for it only in a different, later work after his truthfulness had come under attack.

How did the other extant contemporary historians of the early Principate negotiate these issues? The Tiberian senator Velleius Paterculus devotes a striking proportion of his “miniature universal history” to an account of Tiberius, particularly his years as a general prior to his accession, when the author saw service under his command.¹⁴⁷ This striking excess of proportion could itself be seen as a panegyric strategy, particularly in the light of the *festinatio* and *brevitas* to which Velleius constantly refers.¹⁴⁸ If, as has been suggested, this *brevitas* is a rhetorical ploy designed both to indicate Velleius’ total mastery over the records of world history and also his judicious ability to select what really matters, then it is a great tribute to Tiberius that he deserves a full third of one of only two books in which the entire history of the world is to be recounted.¹⁴⁹ A look at the broad strategy of selectivity and level of detail of Velleius’ treatment of world history

¹⁴⁶ Marincola (1999) 88-89.

¹⁴⁷ The Tiberian material in Velleius begins at 2.94 and continues to the end. “Miniature universal history”: Sumner (1970) 282.

¹⁴⁸ *Festinatio* and *brevitas*: Lobur (2007).

¹⁴⁹ Lobur (2007) 220. The lost *Universal History* of another contemporary historian, Nicolaus, demonstrates this strategy to an even greater extent: the final 30 books of his 144-volume history of the world were devoted to the life of his patron Herod (Wacholder 1989 155-156).

demonstrates the remarkable weight of Tiberius' presence.¹⁵⁰ The badly mutilated Book One covers world history from an indeterminable starting point (probably either Troy or the foundation of the Assyrian Empire) to the fall of Carthage.¹⁵¹ Continuing a line of Roman historiographical interpretation recognisable from Livy and Sallust, Velleius depicts the fall of Carthage, in some ways Rome's greatest victory, as a moral catastrophe for the Roman state, and Book 2, opening with the Gracchi, abandons world history to focus entirely on Roman affairs, charting the decline of morals and domestic concord and the ensuing collapse of the Republic. Then, at chapter 2.89, the fightback begins: Augustus' reign, presented in the "restoration" language of the *Res Gestae*, reintroduces the lost virtues of the pristine Roman state, as best exemplified by the energetic campaigning of Augustus' beloved stepson Tiberius. Tiberius himself (whose own reign is summarised in language which echoes both the *Res Gestae* and Velleius' overview of the reign of Augustus) forms the culmination of this process, the apex of Roman history, completing what Augustus started, and embodying all of the disparate virtues of Velleius' prime historical *exempla* (and none of their concomitant vices).¹⁵² Unlike other historical writers, Velleius recognises no sharp distinction between the Republic and the Principate; this is a nice tribute both to the constitutional language favoured by Augustus and the "Republican" public image of his successor, and indeed the office of *princeps* looks less anomalous coming at the end of a long narrative of the Republican period laid out

¹⁵⁰ Kramer (2005) is useful on levels of detail in general, but his specific quantification (150-152) is vitiated by the fact that we have no real way of knowing how long Book One originally was.

¹⁵¹ Troy: Starr (1981) 163-164; Assyria (which I prefer, on the strength of 1.6.5): Kuntze (1985) 205-226; Kramer (2005) 144-149; Bispham (2011); Rich (2011) 78.

¹⁵² Summary of Tib's reign: 2.126. On the echoes between this passage and Velleius earlier summary of Augustus' reign, see Ramage (1982) 268-269. On the shape of the work overall, see Rich (2011) 76-80.

primarily in the form of miniature biographies of leading men, often themselves designated *principes*.¹⁵³

In the overall scheme of Velleius' slim *opus*, this structuring of material and manipulation of levels of detail (an extreme example of a common tendency in classical histories of the *longue durée* which Luke Pitcher designates "present-bulge") is the most immediately noticeable panegyric strategy in the work.¹⁵⁴ As Lana expresses it, "il moto ascensionale tocca il suo culmine col principato di Tiberio"; world history is a rush towards consummation in the figure of the current *princeps*.¹⁵⁵ In fact, world history effectively stops in 146: after the fall of Rome's last credible foreign rival, all history is Roman history, and just as Rome subsumes the history of the rest of the world, so Tiberius subsumes that of Rome. This strong teleology creates some interesting interplay between past and present, between Book One and Book Two as it were. Thus Velleius emphasises that the *luxuria* of Sardanapallus led to the destruction of Assyria, a message which he reinforces by juxtaposing the fall of Assyria with the rise of Sparta, which flourished because of the *severitas* of the Lycurgan law-code.¹⁵⁶ This reading of world history corresponds to a common reading of Roman history, a reading to which Velleius himself subscribes, according to which the austere early Republic was undone by wealth and luxury after the sacks of Carthage and Corinth, and thus a Roman interpretation of Roman history is imposed upon other nations in the distant past. But other dimensions emerge: this "anti-luxury" reading of the past chimes interestingly with Tiberius' famously severe public image, and Velleius' original readers cannot fail to have been reminded by such

¹⁵³ Chris Pelling describes Velleius' tendency to structure events around the lives of his protagonists as "biostructuring" (2011, 157, 159). Velleian continuity between Republic and Principate: Kuntze (1985) 155-169. *Principes* in Velleius: Cowan (2011b), esp. 344.

¹⁵⁴ Pitcher (2009) 122-123.

¹⁵⁵ Lana (1952) 213. See also Ogilvie (1980) 180.

¹⁵⁶ Vell. Pat. 1.6.1-3.

passages of the anti-luxury laws passed by Tiberius.¹⁵⁷ The rise and fall of whole civilisations depends upon qualities which the readers know are exemplified to perfection by the *princeps*, both because Velleius tells us so and because these qualities are themselves emphasised by the *princeps* in his public acts and behaviour.

This teleological, Tiberian-focused historical framework shows that Velleius was interested in producing a work which presented his emperor, benefactor and former commander in a highly favourable light.¹⁵⁸ Therefore bias is unarguable. The central question now is whether or not the author's desire to magnify the emperor led to knowing mendacity, which might manifest itself (in accordance with Cicero's laws of history) either in the omission or fraudulent amelioration of awkward material, or in the active invention of complimentary "facts" about Tiberius. Perhaps the best place to start would be Ronald Syme's suggestively-titled article "Mendacity in Velleius". In fact, not all of Syme's instances of mendacity need imply any such thing (in particular, his identification of mendacity in Velleius' account of the revolt of Tacfarinas does not seem to stand up to scrutiny).¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, enough of Syme's instances hit the mark to reveal that Velleius was prepared to play fast and loose with the facts in the emperor's favour or that of Augustus. Woodman's demonstration that there is no mendacity at the factual level in Velleius' formal panegyric of Tiberius (2.126) should thus be tempered with an awareness that the charge of mendacity can be documented elsewhere in the narrative.¹⁶⁰ The question of the suppression of awkward information is harder to discuss, because

¹⁵⁷ Dio 57.15.1; Tac. *Ann.* 2.33; Suet. *Tib.* 34.1.

¹⁵⁸ Velleius' biography: Levick (2011).

¹⁵⁹ Syme (1978) 45-48. He supports his contention that Velleius mendaciously inflated the importance of this conflict with reference to the fact that it is passed over in silence by Suetonius (who often neglects to discuss important military events) and Dio (despite the fact that Dio's text breaks off before the revolt commences), and by claiming that Tacitus' detailed account of this revolt is due not to the conflict's importance but to the fact that the material was attractive to historians. This seems like special pleading. His second contention, that Velleius suppresses the achievements of P. Cornelius Dolabella in the war in order not to detract from the earlier achievements of Sejanus' uncle Junius Blaesus, would perhaps carry some force if Velleius mentioned Blaesus at all in this passage, but he does not.

¹⁶⁰ Woodman (1975) 290-296.

selectivity is necessarily the historian's privilege and is inescapable. However, perhaps the most striking instance of what looks like the omission of an unpleasant fact has been identified not by Velleius' detractor Syme, but by his defender Woodman. Syme reads Velleius' account of Agrippa Postumus' death (2.112.7) as propagandistic. Velleius displaces the murder to his narrative of the reign of Augustus, and blames Agrippa for meriting his own demise by his unreasonable and unpleasant behaviour. The displacement of temporal sequence is here mendacious, but otherwise no mendacity is present, simply a disagreeable outburst of victim-blaming and an interpretation of the event which differs from that of later historians.¹⁶¹ However, Woodman disputes this reading: on his understanding of the passage, the *exitus* referred to is not Agrippa's death but his exile, and Velleius does not mention Agrippa's death at all.¹⁶² Thus on Syme's reading, there is clear positive mendacity in Velleius' account, but even in Woodman's kinder interpretation Velleius is guilty of airbrushing out of existence what Tacitus memorialised as the first crime of the new principate.¹⁶³

But if Velleius has drawn a veil over this episode, this does not necessarily mean that he is entirely silent on all difficult material. Far from it; Velleius strikingly ends his history with a brief summary of the disappointments and frustrations of Tiberius' reign and an anxious prayer to preserve Rome's happiness.¹⁶⁴ This remarkable passage mentions several conspiracies against the *princeps*, the loss of his mother, sons and grandsons and the open hostility between Tiberius and the family of Germanicus, all material which demanded some care. When narrating this material, Velleius is careful to present these incidents as incomprehensible strokes of malicious fortune (understood in the Greek sense, rather than, as usual in Velleius, the Roman), an interpretation which is enhanced by the string of

¹⁶¹ Syme (1978) 58.

¹⁶² Woodman (1977) 171.

¹⁶³ Tac. *Ann.* 1.6.1.

¹⁶⁴ Vell. Pat. 2.130.3-131.

rhetorical questions and exclamations in which these incidents are related.¹⁶⁵ Velleius, usually so interested in vivid portraits of charismatic antagonists, does not motivate the family of Germanicus or the conspirators at all: their hostility to their benefactor is presented as utterly incomprehensible. So a tendency to present Tiberius in a positive light does not preclude the discussion of sensitive material in all cases, so long as sufficient care is taken over how these instances are covered. This suggests (as we shall see again in the case of Nicolaus) that absolute silence was not imposed over the discussion of awkward facts in contemporary historiography, as has been the case in more recent censoring societies. Rather, such material presented authors with problems of impression management.

One final aspect of Velleius' imperial representation deserves mention. It is striking that the portrait of Tiberius in Velleius, though all-consuming by the end, becomes noticeably vague when Tiberius becomes *princeps*. The greatest detail (lavish by Velleian standards) is reserved for the account of Tiberius' commands and activities under Augustus.¹⁶⁶ Once Augustus has died, Velleius switches from a strictly chronological and detailed account to a broadly but not strictly chronological overview of the *princeps*' achievements since his accession, impressionistic, selective and primarily oriented to display the emperor's qualities (i.e. biographical rather than historical).¹⁶⁷ This reluctance to depict a contemporary emperor as an emperor is interestingly mirrored in both of our other extant works of contemporary historiography, Josephus' *Jewish War*, which deals primarily with the pre-rule exploits of the Flavians, and Nicolaus' *Life of Augustus*, which concentrates heavily on Octavian's youth. While the comments of Tacitus discussed above make it clear that many historians did recount the story of the reigns of contemporary emperors, it

¹⁶⁵ On fortune in Velleius, see Domainko (2015) 77-83. On *Fortuna* and *Tyche*, see Kajanto (1981).

¹⁶⁶ 2.94-125.

¹⁶⁷ 2.126-131. On the impressionistic nature of Velleius' summary of Tiberius' reign, see Schmitzer (2011) 199-200.

may be the case that such histories presented unique problems to their authors which our extant historians avoid by shying away from representing their subjects actually as rulers in any detail.

The second extant *comparandum* to the *Jewish War* is the text which is usually referred to as the *Life of Augustus*, by the Syrian-Greek intellectual Nicolaus of Damascus.¹⁶⁸ The situation with this text is complicated by the fact that it is preserved in two separate Byzantine literary anthologies: I accept Jane Bellemore's argument that what are conventionally printed as chapters 1-15 come from Nicolaus' biography of Augustus, while the rest derive from the Caesarian and Augustan portions of Nicolaus' *Universal History*.¹⁶⁹ The so-called *Life* is in fact usually referred to in other sources as the *Agoge*, a sub-genre of biography which covers the early life and upbringing of its subject; as with Velleius, this may indicate an unwillingness on the author's part to engage in representing the ruler actually as a ruler.¹⁷⁰

The biographical nature of (the first fifteen chapters of) Nicolaus' extant work raises certain generic problems concerning the distinction between history and biography, problems which can illuminate Josephus' historiographical practice by comparison. The difference between history and biography, as usually stated in classical texts, was that history dealt with great and noteworthy deeds, whereas biography was ethical, it focused on reporting such deeds and sayings as revealed character, and therefore material which was unworthy of history might make its way into biographical writing.¹⁷¹ Of course, we find in the *Agoge* none of the salacious stories of Suetonius about adultery or other

¹⁶⁸ Nicolaus: *F.G.Hist.* 90. For biography, see Wacholder (1962) and Bellemore (1984) xv-xvii. For his works, see Gabba (1984) 61-64.

¹⁶⁹ Bellemore (1984) ix-xv.

¹⁷⁰ Bellemore (1984) xi.

¹⁷¹ See Fornara (1983) 184-189.

youthful indiscretions, but when, for instance, Nicolaus tells us that the young Octavian's good looks and high station brought him throngs of female admirers (although the young man remained appropriately chaste), it is not easy to escape the suspicion that we are not exactly in the domain of serious history.¹⁷² The border between biography and history was in fact rather more porous in practice than in theory, but nonetheless the decision to write a non-biographical history may serve to liberate a contemporary historian from the (potentially awkward) need to include consideration of some of the less exalted aspects of the lives of his imperial protagonists.¹⁷³

Nicolaus' practice confirms and extends some of the more heartening tendencies noted in the discussion of Velleius above. Just as Velleius is able to treat awkward material, as long as the emperor does not emerge badly from that treatment, so Nicolaus discusses moments in the life of his subject which the emperor may have preferred his subjects to forget. Thus Nicolaus records rumours that Octavian was behind a plot on Antony's life, although he firmly denies the charge.¹⁷⁴ He cites a defence of Republican liberty as one of the motives for Caesar's assassins, implying an awareness that Caesar's position was incompatible with said liberty, although he makes sure to present this as a mere pretext.¹⁷⁵ Additionally, there is at least one passage in which Nicolaus' actual interpretation of events seems to differ markedly from that promoted by Augustus: right at the outset, Nicolaus writes that after the assumption of the name of Augustus, his subject excelled all others in power (*δυνάμεως*), a proposition flatly rejected at *RG* 34.¹⁷⁶ However, despite these signs of independence, which suggest that Nicolaus felt able both to recollect awkward factual material and to differ from "official" readings of events as long as such deviations were

¹⁷² Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 5.

¹⁷³ Porous border between biography and history in the Principate: Kraus (2007) 250-254.

¹⁷⁴ Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 30, with comments by Hall (1923) 95 and Bellemore (1984) 129-30.

¹⁷⁵ Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 19.

¹⁷⁶ Nic. Dam. *Aug.* 1.

handled respectfully, we still find distortions in the narrative, especially in the account of tensions between Octavian and Antony, which are without fail represented from Octavian's point of view, even at the cost of factual fabrication or omission.¹⁷⁷

This section has examined the kinds of violation of the “truth” which were and were not permissible in classical historiography, the pitfalls of contemporary historiography in theory, and how authors addressed (or failed to address) those pitfalls in practice. Contrary to some modern assertions, truth (or at least the understanding of “truth” as constituted by the judgement of a historian free from personal bias or obligation) did matter in classical historiography, and the precise problem with contemporary history was that such adherence to truth was made difficult by the author's obligations to the prince. We have seen some evidence of distortions of the record by both Velleius and Nicolaus, but we have also seen that blanket silence on awkward facts, or insistence on adherence to a preferred interpretation, was not imposed on or expected from historians who engaged in this endeavour. While making sure that their emperors emerged looking broadly positive, both Nicolaus and Velleius discuss material which their ruler may have preferred them to pass over in silence, and Nicolaus even dares to dispute the nature of Augustus' power and position. It is important to emphasise that neither of these authors (nor Josephus) were commissioned or compelled to write history: rather they were engaged in a literary activity in which authors of many genres participated, the project of constructing an acceptable imperial image in texts written at their own initiative and in accordance with their own judgement. This endeavour always entailed a certain amount of experimentation and,

¹⁷⁷ This need not imply, as the commentators almost invariably suggest, that Nicolaus was simply repeating sections of Augustus' autobiography here (see Toher 1989 on this misguided assumption). Nicolaus was, after all, a talented author with a demonstrable flair for writing history pleasing to a tyrant, and therefore more than capable of creating his own pro-Augustan narrative if necessary.

while the penalties for getting it wrong could be very high indeed, authors never worked within constraints quite as tight as the comments of Tacitus and Lucian might lead us to believe.

2.3: Conclusions

In writing a contemporary history, Josephus inherited generic requirements to express, at a fundamental level, the “truth” about the past as he understood it. While he could elaborate and even invent content for the purposes of vivid description in line with rhetorical practice, absolute fabrication was unacceptable. His job as a historian, when presenting and evaluating character, was to express his own authentic judgement on the virtues and vices of his characters for the purpose of exemplarity and the commemoration of worthy deeds done worthily. However, his position as a client of the Flavian house and a citizen of Rome under Flavian autocracy imposed some sharp constraints on what he could and could not say: outright abuse of the emperors, or even passages which could be interpreted by a (malign) reader as excessively critical, could potentially have seen Josephus subject to sometimes very severe punitive strategies, either in court or imposed by the arbitrary exercise of power. His sending of drafts to the emperors meant that he can surely have had no hope or desire that his work would escape imperial notice. The ever-present threat of punitive actions, in a society in which the limits of acceptable discourse were fluid and unfixed and where no guidance from above was forthcoming in the form of bureaucratised preventive censorship, made contemporary history a high-risk game, and must surely have encouraged a great deal of caution and circumspection about regime representation on the part of Josephus, as it would any other author in that context engaged in the project of creating an image of the new dynasty. Thus outspoken, parrhesiastic critique of the

Flavians was effectively impossible. However (as would be entirely predictable according to modern thinking about censorship) there had developed by Josephus' time a repertoire of strategies for hidden critique, the ingenuity of which was highly prized in contemporary rhetorical theory and which allowed authors one means of speaking truth to power, however indistinctly. If we are to find any critique of the Flavians in the *Jewish War*, it is critique of this kind which we should expect to find, but detecting such critique involves us in profound methodological problems. In the discussion which follows, I shall aim to be alert to the possibility of dissident readings, but I will always aim to explain how, in line with the necessary criteria of figured speech, such passages may also be interpreted in loyalist or innocent ways. I will refrain from ruling definitively on Josephus' intent in any such instances, but shall instead treat such possible "anti-Flavian" readings as illustrations of the flaws and faultlines in the contemporary pro-Flavian discourse.

Chapter 3: The Dynastic Image in Flavian Rome

This chapter will examine the background of regime representation at the time and place of the *Jewish War*'s composition, Flavian Rome. An understanding of the kind of political messaging in evidence in that context, taking into account how the emperors and those close to them chose to represent imperial ideologies and personalities as well as how other contemporary authors responded to the imperial image, will enable us to determine how far Josephus engages with broader political discourse in the *War*, and will help us to perceive more clearly what is conventional and what is unusual about Josephus' Flavians. The intention here is not to attempt a complete survey of all aspects of the images of Vespasian, Titus and Domitian in evidence from the period of Flavian rule, but merely to provide a more restricted examination of aspects of the imperial image of direct relevance to the *Jewish War*, and thus to serve the discussion in Chapters 5 and 6. Consequently, important aspects of the images of the emperors which do not find an echo in Josephus' text (such as Vespasian's sense of humour, or Domitian's special devotion to the goddess Minerva) will not be treated here.¹⁷⁸ In addition to the reign of Vespasian (Section 3.1), consideration will be given to the image of the Flavians in the reign of Domitian (Section 3.2), because of the strong possibility that part of the *Jewish War*, Book 7, was written under that emperor, as discussed in Chapter 4 below.

3.1: Aspects of the dynastic image under Vespasian

Perhaps the greatest challenges facing Vespasian in terms of image management in the early years of the dynasty arose from the circumstances in which he came to power.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Sense of humour: Suet. *Vesp.* 13, 14, 22, 23; Minerva: D'Ambra (1993) 3-18, Hekster (2015) 252-256.

¹⁷⁹ The standard modern accounts of the so-called Year of the Four Emperors are Greenhalgh (1975), Wellesley (1975) and Morgan (2006). Besides Josephus, the ancient narrative sources are Tacitus' *Histories*,

Vespasian was a civil war victor: the only reason he rose to power was because in 69 he happened to command a large concentration of military force, and because he had been prepared to use that force to attack the city of Rome itself. Clearly (as Suetonius intimates when writing about Vespasian's position at the start of his reign) work needed to be done to legitimise the new dynasty, and any consideration of Vespasian's image during his reign must begin by addressing how he attempted to tackle these difficulties.¹⁸⁰ Broadly, four different strategies to establish Flavian legitimacy after 69 are in evidence: the circulation of convenient narratives concerning Vespasian's immediate predecessors in the Year of the Four Emperors; the emergence of Flavian-friendly stories about the conduct of the civil war campaign by the Flavian side; a proliferation of anecdotes concerning divine approval for the new dynasty; and an intense focus on a much less controversial and much more palatable military achievement of the family, the suppression of the Jewish Revolt. I will consider each of these tendencies in turn.

Only one of Vespasian's immediate predecessors, Galba, would go on to have his memory partially rehabilitated in the Flavian period.¹⁸¹ Galba's importance is that he was the last emperor whose accession could boast of even a veneer of senatorial legitimacy: the Senate hailed Galba emperor of their own free will and accord.¹⁸² We have evidence that Vespasian sought to present himself as Galba's avenger, not an illegitimate usurper but the destroyer of the illegitimate usurpers whose accessions followed the death of the last

the epitomes of books 64-66 of Cassius Dio, Suetonius' *Galba*, *Otho*, *Vitellius* and *Vespasian*, and Plutarch's *Galba* and *Otho*, along with passing references in a number of other works.

¹⁸⁰ Suet. *Vesp.* 7.2, *auctoritas et quasi maiestas quaedam ut scilicet inopinato et adhuc novo principi deerat*, "authority and a certain imperial dignity, as it were, were in short supply for the unexpected and still new emperor".

¹⁸¹ Tac. *Hist.* 4.40.

¹⁸² Suet. *Galb.* 11; Plut. *Galb.* 7.2; Dio 63.29.6.

legitimate *princeps*.¹⁸³ The mainly positive assessments of Galba in Plutarch and Dio probably follow fairly closely the Flavian line. Otho is a different and more difficult proposition. The post-Flavian tradition represents him as a Neronian degenerate, implicated in the murder of Agrippina, involved in a controversial *menage-a-trois* with Nero and Poppaea Sabina, and even as Nero's lover, a man motivated by pique to assassinate Galba, and who primarily saw the office of *princeps* as an opportunity to indulge himself.¹⁸⁴ But there are curious admiring tendencies in the accounts of his life, too: admiration of his uncharacteristic rigour and discipline in provincial administration, and above all comments on the nobility of his suicide, undertaken to spare the Roman people further civil war.¹⁸⁵ Plutarch even claims that Otho's death was more noble than Cato's and Scipio's, as they killed themselves when they had no further military prospects, but Otho took his own life for the sake of peace when he still had the resources to continue fighting.¹⁸⁶ How many of these traditions about Otho existed in the reign of Vespasian is hard to ascertain, but the oscillation between admiration and denigration so characteristic of our accounts of that emperor may owe something to the awkward place he occupied in the Flavian narrative.¹⁸⁷ On the one hand Vespasian, as the avenger of Galba, could scarcely show public honours to Galba's assassin, and Otho's memory was not rehabilitated under the Flavians. However, loyalty to Otho and hatred of his supplanter was probably the main reason why the Danubian legions revolted against Vitellius and effectively handed Vespasian his victory.¹⁸⁸ It is in this context that we should probably

¹⁸³ Gagé (1952) 301-313 cites some examples of Vespasianic celebration of Galba, especially in the West, where Galba likely remained popular. See also Ramage (1983) 209 for Vespasian's extensive invocation of Galba's numismatic output.

¹⁸⁴ Poppaea intrigue: Plut. *Galb.* 19.2-3, Suet. *Otho* 3.1, Tac. *Hist.* 1.13, *Ann.* 13.45; Nero's lover: Suet. *Otho* 2.2; Agrippina: Suet. *Otho* 3.1; pique: Suet. *Otho* 5.1, Dio 64.5.2; use of position for self-indulgence: Tac. *Hist.* 1.22. Juvenal mocks Otho's effeminacy at *Sat.* 2.99-109.

¹⁸⁵ Provincial government: Suet. *Otho* 3.2; suicide: Dio 64.14-15, Plut. *Otho* 13.2, Suet. *Otho* 9-11, Tac. *Hist.* 2.46-49.

¹⁸⁶ Plut. *Otho* 13.2. For the same verdict, see Mart. 6.32.

¹⁸⁷ Ferrill (1965).

¹⁸⁸ Tac. *Hist.* 2.85; Homo (1949) 84-5.

locate the story that Vespasian was able to produce letters supposedly sent to him by Otho in his last days, inviting Vespasian to come to his aid against Vitellius.¹⁸⁹ Blanket denigration of Otho would have been unwise on the part of an emperor who was effectively installed on the throne by soldiers loyal to Otho's memory. Vespasian, trimming brazenly and magnificently, seems to have wanted to present himself simultaneously as the avenger of Galba and as the avenger of Galba's assassin.

Vitellius is much more straightforward: he is universally and almost unremittingly condemned by all the sources. For Vespasian's coup to be legitimate, the emperor against whom he declared war needed to be painted in the darkest possible tones. His gluttony, drunkenness, cruelty and inconstant nature are highlighted in every source, in lurid detail by some.¹⁹⁰ It is interesting to note that Vitellius, like Otho, is sometimes connected with the memory of Nero in the sources, and we should remember the intensity which Nero was denigrated under Vespasian, who presented himself as effectively the anti-type of the last Julio-Claudian.¹⁹¹ The "official view" of 69 during the reign of Vespasian was most likely as a sort of good-bad-bad-good chiasmus. The year began and ended with two broadly good emperors, both anti-Neros, elderly veterans with solid military credentials, a strong dose of old Republican *severitas* and undeserved reputations for stinginess, Galba and Vespasian himself. Between these two figures came two petty Neros, pleasure-seekers, gluttons, drunkards and sexual deviants whose extravagances ruined the state. Only the Othonian sympathies of the Danube legions necessitated the complication of this straightforward polarity, leading to the conception of Otho as a mixed character who hid

¹⁸⁹ Suet. *Vesp.* 6.4.

¹⁹⁰ To select a few instances from a large catalogue, see Dio 64.4.2, 65.1-4; Suet. *Vit.* 13-14; Tac. *Hist.* 2.90. Keitel (2007) discusses Tacitean denigration of Vitellius.

¹⁹¹ Nero connections: Suet. *Vit.* 11.2; Tac. *Hist.* 2.71; Dio 65.4. See Champlin (2003) 7-9 on the connections between Nero's memory and the images of the emperors of 69.

his worst excesses from the troops and the provinces and was, *in extremis*, capable of worthy self-sacrifice.

With the exception of the *Jewish War* (whose presentation of the Year of the Four Emperors will be examined in Section 5.1.3 below), all of our narratives of Vespasian's decision to initiate civil war and the actual course of the campaign come from later authors; therefore although some somewhat speculative and tentative suggestions can be advanced about the civil war narratives which circulated in Flavian Rome, certainty is precluded by the lack of contemporary *testimonia*. One of the greatest difficulties which the civil war is likely to have presented to Vespasian in terms of political messaging was the need to counter the inevitable impression that he launched his campaign out of a desire for power, thus privileging his own ambition over the security of the *res publica*. Judging from the later sources, it seems likely that pro-Flavian presentations of these events after 69 conceptualised Vespasian as a reluctant saviour figure, motivated by the abuses of Vitellius and the urging of others to intervene in events. All of our sources contain material which to some degree emphasises the reluctance of Vespasian to initiate a civil war; furthermore, they allocate a significant degree of influence to Vespasian's allies and associates, especially Licinius Mucianus and Titus, in overcoming his reluctance and persuading him to initiate a *coup*.¹⁹² This all serves to distance Vespasian from responsibility for initiating civil war, and thus to absolve him of the charge of destroying the peace of the state for the sake of ambition. A further distancing strategy is the pre-eminent role attributed in our narratives to the legions and prefect of Egypt in this episode. Tacitus and Suetonius are clear that it was the soldiers of Egypt, not Judaea, who took the

¹⁹² Reluctance: Suet. *Vesp.* 6.1; Dio 64.8.3; Tac. *Hist.* 2.74-5. Role of Mucianus and Titus; Tac. *Hist.* 2.76; Dio 64.8.3. Mucianus: *PIR*² L.216.

initiative in saluting Vespasian as emperor, prompted by the Egyptian prefect Ti. Julius Alexander.¹⁹³ Alexander persuaded his legions to declare for Vespasian on 1st July; the Judaeae legions followed suit on 3rd July, and the cities and legions of Syria under Mucianus' auspices somewhat later.¹⁹⁴ We have clear contemporary evidence that, in Vespasian's reign, Alexander's pre-eminent role in initiating the Flavian *coup* was acknowledged and advertised. Vespasian himself commemorated at Rome the importance of Egypt to his accession, first by spending the night before his triumphal procession in the Iseum Campestre, Rome's most celebrated Egyptian temple, and then by representing that same temple on coin issues from 71.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, Vespasian's decision to take July 1st, the date of the Alexandrian acclamation, as his *dies imperii* grants further prominence to Alexander's intervention.¹⁹⁶ All of this emphasises that Vespasian did not initiate war for his own sake or even, really, on his own initiative; at the same time, the simultaneous universal denigration of Vitellius makes it clear that Vespasian's reluctant intervention was ultimately justified, and that the Roman world has benefitted from the overthrow of a tyrant.

The Flavian campaign itself presented Vespasian with further problems. Although Vespasian deputised the Syrian governor Mucianus to lead the Flavian invasion of Italy,

¹⁹³ Alexander: *PIR*² I.139; Turner (1954); Bengtson (1981) 49-50.

¹⁹⁴ Tac. *Hist.* 2.79 for the dates; Suetonius (*Vesp.* 6.2) gives the same sequence of salutations (Egypt, Judaea, Syria, then the Moesian legions) but he inserts a bizarre complication here. He claims that the first soldiers to swear allegiance to Vespasian were actually a detachment of 2,000 Othonian loyalists from three Danubian legions, who took the oath soon after the Vitellian victory at Bedriacum and the suicide of Otho. These renegades soon repented their choice and switched their loyalty to Vitellius; but it was news of this development which reached Egypt and encouraged Alexander to administer the oath to Vespasian to his legions! This odd yarn need not detain us long. If we want to speculate as to Suetonius' unique source for this tale, we may posit the biographer's own father Laetus, who fought for Otho in the 13th Legion stationed in Pannonia (Suet. *Otho* 10), as the story looks like an attempt to attribute the initiative for the Vespasianic coup to the Danubian, rather than Eastern, armies. However, the rather negative motivation which Suetonius gives to the soldiers for their sudden enthusiasm for Vespasian, that they wished to avoid punishment for looting in the vicinity of Aquileia, perhaps argues against this. Dio (65.9.2), like Josephus, has Vespasian hailed emperor by the legions of Judaea, with no mention of Egypt. However, the brief and confused nature of the epitomes at this point means that we cannot have too much faith that Dio's narrative is accurately preserved therein.

¹⁹⁵ Triumph: *BJ* 7.123; coins: *BMC* 2 Vespasian 572†, 659†. On Flavian interest in the Iseum Campestre, see Rouillet (1972) 30-35. On the importance of Egypt to Vespasian, see Takács (1995) 272-275.

¹⁹⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 2.79; Suet. *Vesp.* 6.3.

his plan was forestalled by the decisive intervention of Antonius Primus, legate of the Seventh Legion in Pannonia, who usurped control of a sizeable force from the Danubian frontier in the name of the Flavian cause and marched into Italy ahead of Mucianus' force.¹⁹⁷ Primus' advance resulted in one highly controversial episode, the destruction of the Roman colony of Cremona by the Flavian army. Furthermore, Flavian partisans in Rome, in support of Vespasian's brother Sabinus and son Domitian, were involved in street-fighting in the city which resulted in the destruction by fire of Rome's principal temple, the Capitolium. This event could easily have generated a good deal of religious fear on the part of the citizens at Rome (Tacitus has rebellious druids in the northern provinces seeing in it evidence of the imminent end of Roman power), and perhaps also provoked some odium against the new dynasty, especially if the destruction was believed to be the work of the Flavian partisans (Tacitus calls the burning of the Capitol the greatest crime in Roman history).¹⁹⁸ Once in power, those supportive of the new dynasty would need to address these problems arising from the inescapably controversial scenario of a Roman invasion of Italy.

Cremona was problematic. Tacitus paints a grim picture of a Roman town which had capitulated being sacked by a Roman army as if it were a barbarian stronghold taken by force, in violation of the conventions of war.¹⁹⁹ Responsibility in Tacitus' narrative is elusive. The Flavian soldiers long to burn the city, suspecting its inhabitants of being Vitellian sympathisers who had materially supported their enemies at Bedriacum. Their general, Antonius Primus, at first restrains them, but his ambiguous comments about the town, the earlier indications that the Flavian leaders had given to the troops that Cremona would be their reward for victory at Bedriacum and an overheard and misunderstood

¹⁹⁷ Wellesley (1975) 129-133. Primus: *PIR*² A.866.

¹⁹⁸ Druids: Tac. *Hist.* 4.54; crime: Tac. *Hist.* 3.72.1.

¹⁹⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 3.1-35.

exchange in a bath-house lead the troops to believe that they have permission to loot, which they do for four days (with no indication that Primus tried to stop them).²⁰⁰ Dio, like Tacitus, has Cremona submit, and Primus accepts its submission.²⁰¹ However, the Flavian soldiers attack the city, apparently unordered by their general, although in mitigation Dio avers that the worst of the damage was done not by Flavians but by survivors of the Vitellian forces.²⁰² In both of these sources the responsibility of Antonius Primus for the sack is not entirely clear-cut; while Tacitus attributes some responsibility to the Flavian general, both authors present the soldiers themselves and their ungovernable desire for plunder and revenge as the driving force behind the episode. In addition to these later accounts, we are, thanks to Tacitus, in the unusual position of being able to examine how two Flavian-period historians besides Josephus treated the sack of Cremona. When narrating a controversial detail about the second battle of Bedriacum, that the Flavian leaders had offered Cremona's spoils to the flagging troops as an incentive for them to fight better, Tacitus records the opinions of two of his Flavian-period predecessors.²⁰³ According to Pliny the Elder (a known close associate and admirer of the Flavians), Antonius Primus himself had devised this idea.²⁰⁴ On the other hand Vipstanus Messalla attributed this dastardly offer to the influential freedman Hormus.²⁰⁵ The difference in perpetrator is less significant than the fact that both of these authors attributed the sack of Cremona to deliberate policy by the *leaders* of this renegade Flavian army, allowing the soldiers recourse to the perennial excuse that they were just following orders. Thus contemporary Flavian authors seem keen to stress the responsibility of the leaders of

²⁰⁰ For the deep ambivalences in Tacitus' portrait of Primus, see Dorey (1958); Shotter (1977); Ash (1999) 147-165.

²⁰¹ Dio 65.14.4.

²⁰² Dio 65.15.1-2.

²⁰³ Tac. *Hist.* 3.28.

²⁰⁴ Pliny: *F.R.Hist.* 80.

²⁰⁵ Messalla: *F.R.Hist.* 86.

Primus' Flavian army, while the later sources, while not exculpating the leadership entirely, are more willing to blame the Flavian soldiers themselves.

Blame being attached to leaders rather than soldiers is what seems to be in evidence in terms of the response of the regime itself to the problem of Cremona. We have no record of any punishments or reprisals against Flavian soldiers for atrocities performed at their hands during the civil war. Instead, Vespasian sought to scapegoat the commanders, to transfer responsibility for the crimes of the troops onto their leaders. Antonius Primus made an especially easy scapegoat considering the strong initiative which he showed in joining the Flavian cause and his apparent disregard for the orders of both Vespasian and Mucianus.²⁰⁶ Once in Rome, Mucianus cannily sidelined Primus, who went to Vespasian in Alexandria in pursuit of the rewards he thought were his due. On realising that the new emperor had no intention of rewarding him at all, Primus withdrew into what we might assume was a bitter retirement to his hometown of Toulouse.²⁰⁷

Regarding the Capitol, the near-unanimous agreement of all our later sources (and Pliny the Elder, writing in Vespasian's reign) strongly suggests how this event was communicated in the Flavian period. All of our sources except Tacitus unambiguously apportion responsibility for the burning of the temple to the Vitellian, rather than the Flavian, combatants.²⁰⁸ Suetonius even goes so far as to depict Vitellius ordering the destruction of the Capitol.²⁰⁹ Tacitus (*Hist.* 3.71) says that the question of responsibility for the fire was disputed, but that the more common tradition in his day was that the Flavians started it. This is a remarkable claim, if true, as surely the majority of sources available to Tacitus would have dated from the Flavian period. However, given the

²⁰⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 3.8, 52. Wellesley (1975) 129-133.

²⁰⁷ Tac. *Hist.* 4.11, 4.39, 4.80; Homo (1949) 196; Nicols (1978) 138; Levick (1999) 52-3; Morgan (2006) 267-8; Nicols (2016) 64. For Primus in Toulouse, see Mart. 9.99, 10.23.

²⁰⁸ Suet. *Vit.* 15.3, Plin. *HN* 34.38; Dio 65.17.3.

²⁰⁹ Suet. *Vit.* 15.3.

obvious inconvenience of this for the Flavian narrative, and given Tacitus' explicit intention of counteracting sycophantic Flavian historiographical traditions in the *Histories*, this seems likely to be a rejection rather than a reflection of the predominant narrative of the Flavian regime, a conscious act of revisionism on Tacitus' part.²¹⁰ Thus it seems likely that Vespasian and those around him exculpated themselves for the blame for Cremona by scapegoating the conveniently independent-minded Antonius Primus, and for the destruction of the Capitol by pinning the blame squarely on the wicked Vitellian foe.

So much for the human elements of Vespasian's accession. It is clear from the dense cluster of omen-stories which surround the figure of Vespasian that appeals to the gods and divine providence also played some part in the pro-Flavian conception of the establishment of the dynasty. Table 1 below presents an overview of all the Flavian *omina imperii* recorded in the sources.

Table 1: Manifestations of divine support for Vespasian in the classical historians

Number	References	Sign
1.1	Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 5.6; Tac. <i>Hist.</i> 2.78	Vespasian consults Ba'al Carmelus on Mt. Carmel. (Suet.) Lots are cast, the response indicates that whatever Vespasian plans will come to pass; (Tac.) the priest Basilides proclaims that Vespasian's plans will prosper.
1.2	Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 4.5; Tac. <i>Hist.</i> 5.13 (c.f. <i>BJ</i> 6.312-3)	An ancient Eastern prophecy claims that a world-ruler would arise from Judaea. This prophecy relates to Vespasian, who launched his bid for power from that country. Suet. says this was a widespread belief in the East; Tac. specifies that it is found in the ancient priestly writings of the Jews.
1.3	Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 5.6; Dio 65.1.4 (c.f. <i>BJ</i> 3.351-4, 3.399-408)	A noble Jewish prisoner, Josephus, prophesies that Vespasian will become emperor.

²¹⁰ Tac. *Hist.* 1.1; 2.101.

1.4	Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 7.3	Directed by soothsayers, some priests of “Minerva” (Athene Alea) at Tegea in the Peloponnese dig up an ancient vase, on which is depicted a figure with Vespasian’s face.
1.5	Suet. <i>Tit.</i> 5.1	Returning to Judaea from an aborted journey to Rome to congratulate the emperor Galba on his accession, Titus visits the oracle of Paphian Aphrodite on Cyprus. He receives an oracular response confirming his and his father’s imperial destinies.
1.6	Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 5.5; Dio 65.1.3	While in Greece with Nero just prior to being sent to Judaea, Vespasian dreams that good fortune will come to him and his family when Nero next has a tooth extracted. The next morning, he learns that this has taken place.
1.7	Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 7.2; Tac. <i>Hist.</i> 4.81; Dio 65.8.1	In Alexandria, two disabled citizens, prompted by dreams of the god Serapis, approach Vespasian for healing. Reluctantly Vespasian heals one, a blind man, by spitting in his eyes, and the other, who has a withered hand (Tac., Dio) or a crippled leg (Suet.), by touching the relevant limb with his foot.
1.8	Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 7.1; Tac. <i>Hist.</i> 4.82	Vespasian visits the temple of Serapis in Alexandria. There, he has a miraculous visitation from Basilides, who was (Suet.) a freedman or (Tac.) one of the leading men of Egypt, and whom Vespasian knows is far away. (Tac.) The significance lies in Basilides’ name (“son of the king”); (Suet.) Basilides invests Vespasian with the tokens of Pharaonic rule.
1.9	Dio 65.8.1	The Nile floods to coincide with Vespasian’s entrance into the city of Alexandria.
1.10	Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 5.2	An oak tree on Vespasian’s father’s estate gives out three branches, each one representing the fate of one of the three children of Vespasian’s father. Vespasian’s branch is like a tree in itself.
1.11	Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 5.4; Tac. <i>Hist.</i> 2.78; Dio 65.1.2	A cypress tree on Vespasian’s grandfather’s estate is miraculously torn up from its roots, but the next day has risen again and is stronger than before. (Tac.) Soothsayers interpret this as a sign of the family’s future greatness.
1.12	Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 5.4; Dio 65.1.2	A stray dog bursts into Vespasian’s dining room while he is dining and drops a human hand at Vespasian’s feet.
1.13	Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 5.4; Dio 65.1.2	A plough-ox breaks free of its yoke and bursts into Vespasian’s house while he is dining. It falls prostrate at Vespasian’s feet.
1.14	Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 5.3; Dio 59.12.3	As aedile, Vespasian displeases the emperor Caligula by failing to keep the streets of Rome clean. Caligula orders mud from the streets to be dumped into his toga. This foreshadows the soil of Italy coming under Vespasian’s protection.
1.15	Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 5.7; Dio 65.1.3	In the last days of his reign, Nero dreams that he should take the sacred chariot of Jupiter Capitolinus to Vespasian’s house.
1.16	Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 5.7	Two eagles (representing Otho and Vitellius) fight over the battlefield at Bedriacum. “Vitellius” is victorious, but then a third eagle (Vespasian) flies in from the east and drives the victor away.

1.17	Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 5.7; Tac. <i>Hist.</i> 1.86	During the year of civil war, a statue of Julius Caesar at Rome turns east of its own accord to face Vespasian.
1.18	Dio 64.8.1	In Vitellius' reign two suns appear at the same time, one in the west (Vitellius) pale and weak, the other in the east (Vespasian) strong and bright.
1.19	Tac. <i>Hist.</i> 1.86; Dio 64.8.2	During the reign of Vitellius, assorted signs that the gods of Rome have abandoned the Capitol are reported.

A preliminary word is necessary about the provenance and circulation of these anecdotes. The usual opinion in the scholarship is that such stories were actively promoted in the fabled “Flavian propaganda”, as narratives emanating from the emperors or their circle for consumption by their subjects.²¹¹ This assumption deserves to be problematised in two ways. First, the truth of the matter is that, since all of the relevant sources except Josephus are post-Flavian, we cannot even say with confidence whether any given one of these stories actually circulated during the reign of Vespasian or whether it was rather a later tradition (Pliny’s *Natural History* is entirely silent on these stories). Second, even those stories that were contemporary were not necessarily regime propaganda, as such tales can emerge from below as easily as from above, as popular traditions which help to explain the extraordinary *fortuna* of Vespasian and to enable his subjects to justify and naturalise the powers he wielded over them. I will deal with this issue as it arises on a case-by-case basis: here I simply want to distance myself from the near-universal assumption that, when considering such material, we are looking at the products of regime apologists close to Vespasian himself.

²¹¹ Lattimore (1934); Scott (1936) 2-7; Homo (1949) 65-67; Waters (1962); Henrichs (1968); Fears (1977) 171-174; Darwall-Smith (1996) 140-142; Levick (1999) 67-69; Eve (2008) 1-12. In some respects, the approach of Luke (2010), who argues that the form of the Alexandrian miracles found in Suetonius dates from the reign of Domitian rather than Vespasian, is an advance: although Luke still assumes that the stories were regime propaganda, he at least recognises that this does not have to mean that they were Vespasian’s propaganda.

Broadly speaking, the omens reported in classical sources can be divided into two regional categories: omens from the East, which occurred around the time of the Jewish Revolt or Vespasian's residence in Alexandria (1.1-1.9), and omens from the West (1.10-1.19). These two categories can be further broken down. In the Eastern category, we find a set of regionally diverse omens concerning some of the great gods of the Roman East, ostensibly including the Jewish God (1.1-1.6), and a distinct cluster of omens involving Vespasian's stay in Alexandria and the Egyptian gods, especially Serapis (1.7-1.9). Likewise, the Western omens either take place early in Vespasian's life (1.10-1.14), or in and around the period of the civil war itself (1.15-1.19). There is some external contemporary evidence to suggest that the notion of Vespasian's divine election, specifically by the gods of Egypt, was officially encouraged during Vespasian's stay in the city of Alexandria. *P. Fouad* 1.8 appears to contain a transcript of a ceremony held in the Alexandrian hippodrome to celebrate Vespasian's arrival in the city, presided over by Ti. Julius Alexander. Although badly mutilated, what remains of the papyrus clearly presents Vespasian as particularly close to the local deities: he is described, like Alexander, as the son of Ammon.²¹² Further, a Vespasianic-period innovation in Alexandrian coinage was to depict the famous statue of Serapis from his Alexandrian temple on the reverse of coins bearing the emperor's portrait: that statue's close association with healing, and particularly with the healing touch of the god's foot (clearly alluded to in Vespasian's own purported healing miracle, 1.7), means that this image can perhaps be explained as a reference to the emperor's own healing exploits.²¹³ This, together with Tacitus' affirmation that he was aware of people alive in his own day who claimed to have witnessed Vespasian's short-lived career as a faith-healer, conspires to suggest that the stories of the healing miracles, at least, are based on some actual historical episode, and one which was subsequently promoted locally on

²¹² McCrum and Woodhead (1961) p 38, no. 41, l. 16. See Bengtson (1979) 51-52.

²¹³ Poole (1873), nos. 258-259. Note also that, of the examples of sculptural images of the foot of Serapis from Alexandria discussed by Dow and Upson (1944), the earliest (Number 4) dates to the Flavian period.

coin issues.²¹⁴ At any rate, the papyrus clearly illustrates that, while resident in Egypt, Vespasian genuinely was presented to the populace as closely connected to the local gods, perhaps to ensure the support of this crucial city and province. The other Eastern miracles are harder to pin down. Taken together they combine to create the impression of a sort of coalition of some of the great gods of the East (in addition to Serapis, we find Ba'al, Cypriot Aphrodite, Athene Alea and perhaps the Jewish God) all declaring their support for Vespasian's bid for power, but doubts about the provenance and degree of official promotion of these wonder-stories means that it is hard to estimate the extent to which such a narrative was created systematically (in particular the episode involving a miraculous archaeological discovery at Tegea, 1.4, looks like a local Tegean tradition rather than a narrative devised from on high). When recounting the oracular response of Ba'al Carmelus (1.1), Tacitus emphasises the effect that the story had specifically on the soldiers; perhaps the best guess is that Vespasian presented himself as the elect of the Egyptian gods to the people of that province and as the elect of other powerful regional divinities to his soldiers in Syria and Palestine, but this is necessarily rather tentative.²¹⁵

Harder to ascertain is the extent to which these stories about the *omina imperii* circulated at Rome, where they do not appear to have been officially commemorated. Without at this stage engaging in detailed consideration of the contents, Josephus' *Jewish War*, our contemporary witness, becomes useful here. Three times Josephus notes in passing the existence of other signs and wonders which betoken Vespasian's imperial destiny besides the ones he himself recounts (it is unfortunate that Josephus' lack of specificity means that we cannot even speculate about which of the omen stories in the later source he had in

²¹⁴ Tac. *Hist.* 4.81.

²¹⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 2.78. Morgan (1996) discusses Tacitus' emphasis on the oracle as appealing specifically to the soldiers.

mind).²¹⁶ This attestation, coming in a text which was written under Vespasian, demonstrates that some omen stories were already circulating under that emperor, and that Josephus knows some of these stories, and the fact that they are mentioned in a text which was written to be presented to Vespasian suggests that he knew about these stories too and at the very least did not object to their circulation. We can perhaps press this further by noting that Josephus' first audience for the Greek *Jewish War* was based in Rome, and in these passages Josephus feels no need to elaborate on or describe the omen stories he mentions in passing, evidence, perhaps, that such stories were well-known not only in the East but also in Rome itself. But the spread of stories about backing from the gods of the East would not have been entirely unproblematic for Vespasian at home. It is well-known that, in pursuit of legitimacy, Vespasian modelled his commemoration of Judaea to some extent on how Augustus commemorated Actium; unfortunately for him, historical parallels can have multiple referents, and not all conceivable points of this comparison would have been helpful to Vespasian.²¹⁷ In particular, if one wants to draw parallels with Actium, one must take care to ensure that one is on the right side of that conflict. Vespasian supervised his bid for the throne from Alexandria, the home base of Antony and Cleopatra rather than of Augustus. He attacked, rather than defended, Rome, and to make matters worse his elder son was engaged in a high-profile love affair with a glamorous Cleopatra-like Eastern queen, Julia Berenice. One only has to recall the depiction of the battle of Actium on the shield of Aeneas in the eighth book of Virgil, where Augustus and the gods of Rome overpower Antony and the monstrosities worshipped in Egypt, to see why the image of an emperor made in Alexandria with the backing of Serapis could have presented Vespasian with problems once he was back in Rome.²¹⁸ It is perhaps in this context that we should situate the second category of omens, western omens, many of which are

²¹⁶ *BJ* 1.23; 3.404; 4.623.

²¹⁷ Flavians and the example of Actium: Beard (2003) 557; Lovatt (2016) 364.

²¹⁸ Virg. *Aen.* 8.671-713.

strongly rooted in Italy. At the very least, Vespasian at his arrival in Rome had a pressing need to demonstrate that the gods of Italy agreed with those of the East that he should be emperor, and these stories clearly achieve that.²¹⁹ Of course we do not actually know which of the western omens were current under Vespasian, and which of those were in any sense officially promoted. However, we can note that stories like these would have served a definite and beneficial purpose from Vespasian's perspective, and further that several of them seem to be closely based on omens vouchsafed to Augustus; given the extent to which Vespasian's public image was Augustan, this may lead us to suspect some degree of official encouragement of some of these stories.²²⁰ Furthermore, several of the omens seem to contain implications which would have been strongly favourable to Vespasian's specific needs at the outset of his reign. 1.17 hints at Vespasian as the preferred choice of Julius Caesar, a founding figure of the previous dynasty, and thus suggests that Vespasian was not a usurper but a legitimate continuator of the Julio-Claudian line, and 1.15 highlights Capitoline Jupiter's desire for the Flavian accession, a useful notion if, as Tacitus suggests, some blame for the burning of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus had come to be associated with the Flavian faction.²²¹ Overall, although it is beyond our abilities to reconstruct precisely which *omina imperii* stories were circulating in Rome during Vespasian's principate based on the available evidence, I tentatively propose a two-stage process in the development of the idea of Vespasian as the elect of the gods: first Vespasian and his circle actively promoted such claims in Egypt, and perhaps in the East more generally; then later, after his accession, other stories with a more marked western and Italian flavour began to circulate which were at least knowingly tolerated by the regime.

²¹⁹ Gagé (1959) 75; Waters (1962) 209.

²²⁰ Compare especially Suet. *Aug.* 94.11 with number 1.11 above, and 96.1 with number 1.16 above. Levick (1999) 6.

²²¹ Tac. *Hist.* 3.71; 78-79.

The incipient regime's insistent stress on its Judaeae victories has been extensively-studied, and is often recognised as another aspect of the Flavians' bid for legitimacy. Just as Augustus had presented his victory over Antony at Actium as a foreign conquest and a victory over the Egyptians, so the Flavians apparently recognised the need to displace attention from their problematic victory over other Romans in 69 by stressing a more acceptable foreign victory, and the suppression of the Jewish Revolt served this purpose admirably.²²² The first great celebration of the Jewish victory was of course the Flavian triumph in 71, described by Josephus, mentioned by Pliny and depicted on the inner relief panels and exterior attic-storey reliefs of the extant Arch of Titus.²²³ Without wishing to pre-empt the discussion of the triumphal procession in Josephus, one point about this extraordinary event can be stressed here, its unconventionality. Modern scholarship on triumphal processions has tended to emphasise that overly legalistic views of triumphs, which focus on the requirements for awarding triumphal processions, are probably misguided: in fact a great flexibility of practice is in evidence in the history of the triumph, and the supposed requirements which a general was expected to have passed in order to be awarded a triumph in the Republican period were as often flouted as honoured.²²⁴

However, we can still consider triumphs in terms of adherence to tradition, and on such a perspective the Flavian triumph seems strikingly novel on at least two counts. In the first place, triumphs were not usually celebrated for the suppression of provincial revolts (no triumph was celebrated for the suppression of Boudicca, for instance, or more pertinently of Civilis and Classicus under Vespasian). There was clearly a close association between

²²² See e.g. Schiavini (1989) 308-317; Edwards (1992) 301-306; Levick (1999) 71; Noreña (2003); Millar (2005); Ash (2014) 144-5; Lovatt (2016) 364; Tuck (2016) 111-112.

²²³ Plin. *HN* 12.54. Josephus' depiction will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6 below. Arch of Titus relief panels: Pfanner (1980) 44-55; attic frieze: Pfanner (1980) 82-90.

²²⁴ Brennan (1996) 316-320; Beard (2007) 72-106, 206-214, 299.

the celebration of a triumph and the extension of Roman rule over new peoples and territories, something which the suppression of the Jewish Revolt (the re-imposition of Roman rule over an area in which it had broken down) was manifestly not.²²⁵ Indeed, the Jewish war is consistently misrepresented as a foreign conquest across numerous media in the reign of Vespasian, not only in the triumph, but in the extension of the *pomerium* which accompanied the dedication of the Templum Pacis in 75 (an event plausibly connected in the scholarship to the Judaeian war), and in the fact that the many coins issued in commemoration of the defeat of the Jews represent the defeated province as newly-conquered barbarian territory.²²⁶ A second way in which the Flavian triumph was unusual was in its personnel, specifically the spectacle of two *triumphatores* celebrating a joint triumph. Steve Mason has suggested that the triumph really belonged to the victor, Titus, and that Vespasian, in inserting himself into his son's parade, stole Titus' glory.²²⁷ To me, it seems conversely that this was really Vespasian's event and that Titus' inclusion was contrary to custom. As Mason himself notes, the question of who got to actually celebrate a triumph in the Principate was rarely straightforwardly fair, with emperors, as holders of *auspicium* and overriding *imperium*, often celebrating triumphs for victories won for them by their *legati*.²²⁸ The exception to this is the case of imperial princes destined for the succession, who are sometimes permitted to triumph as a mark of their status, and perhaps as a result of their having held an independent command.²²⁹ On the last point, Mary Beard is right to urge caution in general, as we usually do not have detailed information on the precise legal status of princes who triumph; however, this caveat does not apply in the

²²⁵ The association between triumphing and extending the boundaries of Roman rule is made explicit in Plin. *HN* 7.117. On emperors usually playing down provincial revolts, see Woolf (2011) 33. On the unusualness of the Flavian triumph in this respect, see Millar (2005) 102, Goodman (2007) 438-444.

²²⁶ *Pomerium*: Noreña (2003) 37-38; coins: Cody (2003).

²²⁷ Mason (2016a) 22.

²²⁸ Mason (2016a) 12. On the importance of *imperium* and *auspicium*, see Versnel (1970) 164-195; Wallace-Hadrill (1993) 35; Beard (2007) 297-299. The emperor's monopolisation of triumphs from the reign of Augustus on: Campbell (1984) 348-362; Brunt (1990b) 447; Beard (2007) 295-305.

²²⁹ On triumphs as a marker of heirs, see Beard (2007) 296-7. On the possibility of independent commands for princes, see Brunt (1990) 447-8; Richardson (1991) 8.

case of Titus, as the inscription from the Circus Maximus Arch of Titus is wholly explicit in attesting that Titus fought under his father's *auspiciis*.²³⁰ Thus, contrary to Mason, conventional practice would suggest that it is the participation of the subordinate general Titus, not the commander-in-chief Vespasian, which is unusual in the Flavian triumph: perhaps the new emperor is having his cake and eating it here, using the triumph to burnish his own military credentials while simultaneously demonstrating his clear intention with regard to the succession by having Titus participate fully as *triumphator*. But at any rate, what is clearly highly unusual is the fact of the joint triumph: H. S. Versnel is able to cite a small handful of precedents from the Republican period, but most of them are questionable and the only certain case would seem to be the joint triumph of Marius and Catulus in 101 BCE.²³¹ Thus in terms of convention and precedent, the Flavian triumph of 71 was, in these two crucial respects, highly unusual.

However spectacular it may have been, a triumphal procession was a transitory phenomenon: in order to solidify the centrality of Judaea to the Flavian legitimization narrative, other, more permanent modes of commemoration were required.²³² All through the reign of Vespasian until 78, endless variations of coin-types commemorating the crushing of the Revolt circulated in Rome (and the *JUDAEA CAPTA* issues would be revived under Titus), alongside coin issues with triumphal motifs acting as a reminder of the triumph itself.²³³ Vespasian's building programme also referenced Judaea heavily. The Templum Pacis prominently displayed the Jerusalem treasures; the ever-rising Colosseum served as a reminder of the ruin of the Temple, according to its inscription as reconstructed by Alföldy, which marked the structure out as being constructed *ex*

²³⁰ Beard (2007) 299. *CIL* 6.944 = *ILS* 264, *praeceptis patr[is] consiliisq(ue) et auspiciis*, a *testimonium* which somewhat undercuts Saulnier's conclusion that "le double triomphe de 71 suffit à indiquer son pleine autorité dans la guerre" (1989, 549). Note also that Tacitus tells us that Germanicus was awarded a triumph for victories won while fighting under Tiberius' auspices (*Ann.* 2.41).

²³¹ Versnel (1970) 167 n.7.

²³² Hölscher (2006); Ash (2014) 144.

²³³ E.g. *BMC* 2 Vespasian 31 (70); 532 (71); 736§ (78).

manubiis, and because of the statue of a *triumphator* which was set up above the main entrance.²³⁴ Certainly Flavian but harder to date is the *Arcus ad Isis*, a structure depicted on the Domitianic-period Haterius relief. If this is Vespasianic, it clearly contains more Judaeian referencing: a frieze depicted running just below the attic storey of the arch contains representations of vanquished and bound barbarian captives, both male and female, between trophies and Victories and palm trees, an iconographic repertoire instantly recognisable from the *JUDAEA CAPTA* coins.²³⁵ Responsive to these regime-backed modes of commemoration, literary authors appear to have rushed to commemorate the regime achievement, if Josephus' description of the plethora of pre-*Jewish War* histories of the Revolt in the preface to his own work is anything more than historiographical convention.²³⁶ Thus in addition to dazzling the city with a remarkable victory procession, Vespasian ensured that the importance of the family's achievement in Judaea was left in no doubt, flooding the city of Rome with persistent references to that achievement in a variety of media, and making permanent the message of the transitory parade.

The “theological” content of Flavian messaging about Judaea amid all these regime-sponsored commemorations of the Revolt merits examination. The post-70 Flavian theological narrative about Judaea (as has been well established by numerous scholars) was clear and uncompromising: the Jewish God was an enemy of Rome, and an enemy who had been crushed by the broad *consensus deorum* which supported Rome and Vespasian. YHWH had failed to protect his people and been defeated and discredited to the point where he no longer merited, and was no longer permitted to receive, public

²³⁴ Templum Pacis: Kleiner (1992) 181; Darwall-Smith (1996) 55-68; Levick (1999) 126-127; Noreña (2003), Packer (2003) 170-172; Millar (2005) 109-113; Chapman (2009); Gallia (2016) 153; Inscription: Alföldy (1995). The *triumphator* statue is clearly visible on coins depicting the Colosseum minted under Titus (e.g. *BMC* 2 Titus 71) and on the Haterius relief, on which see Kleiner (1992) 196-197.

²³⁵ Hart (1952) 180-181. More generally on the Judaeian elements in the Flavian building programme, see Edwards (1992) esp. 301-306; Gallia (2016).

²³⁶ *BJ* 1.1-2, 6-8.

cult.²³⁷ The striking decision not to rebuild the Temple, as well as the closure of the “renegade” Jewish temple at Leontopolis in Egypt soon after the Revolt, makes this very clear.²³⁸ After 70, the Jewish God is effectively demoted in the Roman religious world-order: while his worship was never outlawed, he has been essentially degraded from the ranks of those deities who could receive public cult, a particularly stark indignity for a deity who, if Philo is to be believed, had previously even received imperial sponsorship, in that the emperors paid for the daily imperial sacrifices at Jerusalem.²³⁹ In addition to this, the fact that Jews who were no longer able to send their contributions to the Temple were suddenly required to pay an annual tax whose revenues went to the Temple of Capitoline Jupiter in Rome suggests the god of Jerusalem’s submission to the god of Rome.²⁴⁰ Magness and Schmidt both argue that the Temple spoils’ position in the triumphal procession also has a theological resonance, indicating the submission of the defeated Jewish god.²⁴¹ Taken together, this all suggests that the Flavians promoted a triumphalist theological reading of the suppression of the Jewish Revolt which highlighted the subordination of the troublesome god of Jerusalem to an authoritative imperial Roman pantheon. When connected with the parallel narratives of the divine election of the dynasty, we seem to arrive at an understanding of the Revolt as the defeat of God at the hands of the gods, effected through the agency of their elect representatives on earth, the Flavian Dynasty.

²³⁷ Schwier (1989) esp. 202-330; Goodman (1994) 331-332; Magness (2008); Goodman (2007) 452-4, noting also (449) the “special prejudice against the Jews” detectable in much post-70 Flavian representation. On the end of Jewish public cult under Vespasian, see Rives (2005), esp. 153-154.

²³⁸ Leontopolis: *BJ* 7.421-436.

²³⁹ Philo, *Leg.* 157, 317. Josephus (*C.Ap* 2.77) contradicts this, claiming that the costs of the daily sacrifices were met by the Jews.

²⁴⁰ *BJ* 7.218. On the tax, see Goodman (1989); Schwier (1989) 327-330; Goodman (2005). For some of its longer-term religious implications, see Heemstra (2010).

²⁴¹ Magness (2008) 209; Schmidt (2010) 5-6.

Moving beyond the establishment of the regime's legitimacy, what can be said about the image of the character of Vespasian which is in evidence during his reign? Clearly the focus on his and his son's achievements in Judaea already lends the *princeps* a certain militaristic character, and the notion of Vespasian as a competent and experienced warrior is stressed elsewhere, too. By far the most significant pre-Judaeian military achievements of Vespasian involved his record as legate of *legio II Augusta* during the Claudian conquest of Britain. Vespasian played an important role in that expedition. His legion acquitted itself very creditably at the battle to cross a river traditionally identified as the Medway in the first stages of the campaign; while it is unclear whether *legio II Augusta* was present with Claudius himself at the sack of Camulodunum, which Claudian propaganda presented as the culmination of the conquest of the island, in the aftermath of that battle he was given an independent command by Aulus Plautius to subjugate the British peoples living in what are today the Home Counties and the West Country.²⁴² His campaign resulted in the pacification of much of Hampshire, Dorset and beyond, including the Isle of Wight, and formed a crucial part of the post-Camulodunum phase of the conquest, not only greatly expanding the area under Roman control but also protecting the ever-extending supply lines of the main force as it pushed north into the Midlands. This important operation was conducted with much energy and competence by Vespasian, and Suetonius claims that he subjugated two powerful nations and captured more than twenty British strongholds, in addition to the Isle of Wight.²⁴³ The importance of his contribution was fully recognised by Claudius, who rewarded him on his return to Rome with *ornamenta triumphalia*, a suffect consulship and two priesthoods.²⁴⁴ Vespasian's British exploits are celebrated in one work of Vespasianic literature, if Tim Stover's redating of

²⁴² Suet. *Vesp.* 4; Dio 60.21; Tac. *Agr.* 13.3. On Vespasian in Britain, see Homo (1949) 22-24; Wachter (1978) 31-32; Frere (1987) 50-59; Salway (1993) 63-70; Richmond (rev. Todd) (1995) 23-24; Peddie (1998) 82-84, 130-163; Levick (1999) 15-19; Mattingly (2006) 96-99.

²⁴³ Suet. *Vesp.* 4.1.

²⁴⁴ Suet. *Vesp.* 4.2.

Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* to Vespasian's reign is correct; if not, then its appearance in a work of Domitianic literature demonstrates, along with the equally exaggerated mention of the British command in Silius' *Punica*, that the memory of Vespasian's earlier successes remained alive through the Flavian period.²⁴⁵ Beyond references to Vespasian's specific record, emphasis on his experience and competence in military affairs is clearly evident elsewhere. Although only one coin type specifically uses the word *virtus* (in the conventional pairing *HONOS ET VIRTUS*), the incessant flood of types celebrating the suppression of Judaea and the triumph, as well as numerous *VICTORIA*-types (*victoria* was the reward of *virtus* and / or *felicitas*) clearly show the emperor being presented in terms of martial courage.²⁴⁶

In terms of less militaristic aspects of the imperial image, a soteriological dimension is also evident in some dynastic image-promotion, no doubt related to the notion of Vespasian as the reluctant saviour in the civil war, as discussed above. Vespasian's frequent *SALUS* issues, though ambiguous in meaning, seem to hint at this connection, as do his *ROMA RESURGENS* coins, depicting Vespasian helping the stricken personified Rome back onto its feet; in literature, the contemporary author Pliny also depicts Vespasian as a world-saviour.²⁴⁷ Ever since Augustus had received the *corona civica* after Actium, the notion of emperors saving the lives of their fellow-citizens had been an

²⁴⁵ Stover (2012) 7-26; also Taylor (1994). Sil. *Pun.* 3.598; Val. Flacc. 1.7-9. Both poets exaggerate in that they seem to suggest that Vespasian conquered Caledonia. Of course, *Caledonia* may be being used figuratively, as a metonym for Britain as a whole; nonetheless, both passages create the unfortunate literal impression that Vespasian had campaigned in a region he had never even visited. Alternatively, Braund (1996, 150-151) argues that the poets were referring in these passages not to the Claudian conquest but to the campaigns in Caledonia in Vespasian's reign.

²⁴⁶ *Honos et Virtus*: BMC 2 Vespasian 530 (note Vespasian's restoration of the Temple of Honos and Virtus, attested at Plin. *HN* 35.120); Judaea types are incessant: see (e.g.) BMC 2 Vespasian 167 (*JUDAEA CAPTA*); 264 (triumph); 63 (*VICTORIA*). For more on Vespasian's militaristic self-presentation, see Millar (2005); Boyle (2003) 15-16; Cody (2003). On the relationship between *fortuna*, *virtus* and *victoria*, see Weinstock (1971) 112-127.

²⁴⁷ *SALUS* issues: see (e.g.) BMC 2 Vespasian 87-9, 105. The ambiguity in *SALUS AUG.* coins is whether the *salus* commemorates the safety of the emperor, or the safety which prevails under the emperor. This ambiguity is perhaps deliberate. See Weinstock (1971) 171-174. *ROMA RESURGENS*: (e.g.) BMC 2 Vespasian 425. Plin. *HN* 2.18 (*salus* also suggested by Pliny's description of Vespasian's reign as *salutaris* at 3.341).

important element in imperial ideology, and coins issued early in Vespasian's reign depict the crown of oak-leaves and the legend *OB CIVES SERVATOS*, in imitation of Augustan issues.²⁴⁸ The emperor's relationship with the divine, often considered under the heading of *pietas*, is typically another important element of imperial self-presentation.²⁴⁹ Vespasian's *pietas* and status as the recipient of the blessings of the gods or fortune (*felicitas*) are signalled in a number of ways in the sources from his reign: in his construction or refurbishment of a number of temples at Rome, the coin issues which commemorate those refurbishments, his *FORTUNA* coins, his association with *felicitas* (hinted at, though not asserted specifically for Vespasian, on his *FELICITAS PUBLICA* coins), and no doubt also in the very many *omina imperii* which came to be attached to his name, discussed earlier in this section.²⁵⁰ Generosity was another crucial imperial virtue and function. While *LIBERALITAS* coins were not struck under Vespasian, his *ANNONA* issues (insofar as they relate to the continued operation of the corn-dole) may relate to this virtue, as may those which commemorate his building projects, and certainly his *CONGIARIUM* issues.²⁵¹ Imperial *liberalitas* appears to have been a pressing concern under Vespasian: the paltry donative Mucianus paid his troops, the stringent cash-raising measures imposed on the cities of the East in 69 as well as his necessarily relatively harsh taxation policies seem to have given Vespasian an enduring reputation for rather un-

²⁴⁸ *BMC 2*. Vespasian 44†, c.f. *BMC 1* Augustus 134, 139, 140, 147. On soteriological elements of the Augustan principate, see Weinstock (1971) 163-164; Wallace-Hadrill (1993) 14-15; for a senatorial expression of the salvific character of the emperor, see lines 160-165 of the *S.C. de Cn. Pisone Patre* (Griffin 1997 253).

²⁴⁹ *Pietas* could govern relations with other people as well as with gods, but always implied an attitude of proper behaviour *in the sight of* the divine. For the range of possible implications of *pietas* as a virtue, with earlier bibliography, see Noreña (2001) 158-9.

²⁵⁰ *Fortuna*: (e.g.) *BMC 2* Vespasian 7, 145, also various *FORTUNA AUG.* and *FORTUNA REDUX* issues. *FELICITAS PUBLICA*: *BMC 2* Vespasian 269. Note also the numerous *PROVIDENTIA* issues, which may denote either the *providentia* of Vespasian, or the *providentia* of the divine watching over Vespasian (e.g. *BMC 2* Vespasian 713†). On the nexus between *pietas*, *felicitas* and (sometimes) *victoria*, see Charlesworth (1943); Béranger (1953) 154-155; Fears (1977) 90-92; Kuntze (1985) 65-70.

²⁵¹ *ANNONA*: (e.g.) *BMC 2* Vespasian 290-298, 730-731; *CONGIARIUM*: *BMC 2* Vespasian 629.

imperial parsimony.²⁵² The recent fate of Galba illustrated what might befall an emperor with such a reputation. Although not strictly concerning donatives or handouts, evidence suggests that Vespasian did promote other forms of imperial generosity. The contemporary Pliny celebrates Vespasian's generosity with reference to his liberal granting of Latin rights in Spain, and by glorifying his prestige building project, the Templum Pacis; Suetonius' appreciation of Vespasian's generosity to scholars and performers may also reflect another way in which Vespasian tried to lose his reputation for thrift.²⁵³

Vespasian's affability and humility form another important part of the emperor's image. Humility was an important part of the desirable imperial virtue of *civilitas*. *Civilitas* was not a virtue promoted on coins by Vespasian or any of his predecessors, but a number of aspects of Vespasian's public *persona*, such as an emphasis on his humble roots and his approachability and friendliness can be said to demonstrate facets of this virtue.²⁵⁴

Regarding those humble roots, Suetonius' biography paints the picture of a man wholly at ease with his non-aristocratic pedigree, and records numerous anecdotes depicting the emperor's public acceptance of his *humilitas generis ac nominis* ("lowliness of family and name"); his disdain for sycophantic antiquarians who tried to invent false family histories for him; his frequent visits to his grandparents' Sabine farm, even while emperor; his acceptance of a snooty consul's correction of his rustic pronunciation of the word *plaustra*.²⁵⁵ A number of the *omina imperii* connected with the emperor's early life have a

²⁵² Levick (1999) 95-106.

²⁵³ Plin. *HN* 3.30, 5.20, 36.102; Suet. *Vesp.* 18-19.1.

²⁵⁴ Approachability and friendliness: Suet. *Vesp.* 21-22. On the imperial virtue of *civilitas*, see especially Wallace-Hadrill (1982).

²⁵⁵ Quotation: Suet. *Vesp.* 4.2. False pedigrees: Suet. *Vesp.* 12.1. Grandparents' farm: Suet. *Vesp.* 2.1. Pronunciation: Suet. *Vesp.* 22. Jones (1984) 2 stresses the fact that Vespasian's upbringing in fact seems to have been relatively privileged, and sees the notion of Flavian humility as an invention of "Flavian propaganda".

rather downhome character.²⁵⁶ Suetonius reports that Vespasian not only admitted his family's lack of prestige, but even advertised it.²⁵⁷ The coin record may preserve a glimpse of that advertisement, in the flurry of coin-types from 77-78 CE depicting Italian agricultural themes.²⁵⁸

We turn now from representations of Vespasian himself to broader dynastic representation. It seems to have been clear from the very start that the new world order was a family business, and much Flavian representation is insistently dynastic in nature. Some later sources preserve anecdotes which indicate that this was not entirely uncontroversial. Perhaps attracted by the recent innovation of Galba (imposed by necessity though it had been) of adopting an heir from outside the family, some members of the Senate objected to the reversion to intra-familial succession, prompting Vespasian to proclaim in public that either his son would succeed him or nobody would.²⁵⁹ Certainly, the privileged position of both Titus and Domitian in the state could not reasonably be in doubt. Writing under Vespasian, Pliny pairs Vespasian and Titus together as *imperatores*.²⁶⁰ This is technically correct, in that both men had been hailed *imperator* by their armies (Josephus records Vespasian's salutation at *BJ* 4.601 and Titus' at *BJ* 6.316), but in using this distinctly imperial term in the plural, Pliny emphasises both the difference between the imperial pair and all other living individuals, and also their proximity to each other in status and power. The celebration of a triumph by an imperial prince must clearly have signalled to all of Rome that Titus was the designated successor; likewise,

²⁵⁶ Table 1, pp. 79-81 above, nos. 10, 11, 12, 13.

²⁵⁷ Suet. *Vesp.* 12.

²⁵⁸ See Mattingly, *BMC* 2 xli. Mattingly suggests that the sudden appearance of a range of rustic types suggests topicality, and speculates that, rather than referring to Vespasian's country origins, these coins refer on the Augustan model to a programme of agrarian reform which escapes mention in the literary sources.

²⁵⁹ Suet. *Vesp.* 25; Dio 66.12.1. On this, see Crook (1955) 170-171; Southern (1997) 124-125; Levick (1999) 79-94 (esp. 88-89); Dészpa (2016) 173.

²⁶⁰ Plin. *HN praef.* 1, 3.66, 7.162. Josephus also refers to the pair together as ἀντοκράτορες (*BJ* 6.341).

Domitian's prominent position riding a horse alongside the *triumphatores*, a role more usually played by imperial princes at triumphs, must surely have marked him out as the third man in the state.²⁶¹ Titus held seven ordinary consulships under, and always alongside, his father. Domitian held one ordinary and five suffect consulships well below the normal age limit, and both held the position of *principes iuventutis*, a mark of successor status since the days of Gaius and Lucius Caesar.²⁶² This strong insistence on dynasty was further emphasised on the money: T. R. Stevenson has demonstrated the unprecedented focus on the succession to be seen in Vespasian's numismatic output.²⁶³ While Titus was never co-ruler, he was nevertheless clearly his father's junior partner in office, holding far more political responsibility than any other individual in Rome besides Vespasian.²⁶⁴ Domitian, in turn, was the spare to Titus' heir, eclipsing in importance everybody in Rome except for his father and brother.²⁶⁵

In the reign of his father, Titus' image was scarcely less militaristic than that of Vespasian. This is symbolised above all by the celebration of the double triumph in 71. Its grant, together with the decision to celebrate the triumph concurrently with Vespasian, signalled both that Titus was unquestionably the designated heir and that he was cut from the same cloth as his warrior-emperor father. Under Vespasian, coins bearing Titus' image as Caesar were issued which bore predominantly militaristic images on the reverse: *VICTORIA AUGUSTA*, the triumph and other symbols of the suppression of Judaea.²⁶⁶ In the literary record, Pliny's preface cites Titus' triumph first among his accomplishments, as the greatest of them all, and celebrates Titus' relationship to Pliny in militarising terms,

²⁶¹ *BJ* 7.152. On heirs riding horses in triumphs, see Suet. *Tib.* 6.4.

²⁶² On the importance of this designation for marking out the succession, see *RG* 14; Tac. *Ann.* 1.3; Suet. *Cal.* 15; Boyle (2003) 5; Wood (2016) 131.

²⁶³ Stevenson (2010) 189-192.

²⁶⁴ Homo (1949) 185; Jones (1984) 79-87; Jones (1996) 18; Levick (1999) 185-187.

²⁶⁵ Jones (1984) 118-119.

²⁶⁶ Victoria: e.g. *BMC* 2 Vespasian 81 and 82; triumph: e.g. 370; suppression of Judaea: e.g. 369, 430.

as *contubernium*.²⁶⁷ One may further suspect that the unnecessary reference to Jerusalem as a “tomb” or “funeral pyre” (*bustum*) at *HN* 5.73, while not mentioning Titus specifically, was meant to remind readers of Pliny’s patron’s achievement, although this is perhaps a little tenuous. Valerius Flaccus alludes to another literary text which probably circulated under Vespasian and which was written by someone with even closer ties to Titus than Pliny and Josephus: Domitian himself, we are told, wrote a poem depicting *Solymo nigrantem pulvere fratrem / spargentemque faces et in omni turre furem* (“[his] brother, fouled with the dust of Jerusalem, hurling firebrands and raging all along the citadel”).²⁶⁸ If Suetonius is right that Domitian gave up his literary pursuits upon becoming emperor, then the most likely context for the production of the poem referred to here is the reign of Vespasian (certainly Pliny was aware of Domitian’s poetry at that time).²⁶⁹ If what Valerius writes is, as seems likely, a reference to a specific scene in Domitian’s work, then it seems that his focus was on his brother’s personal courage while actually fighting in the line. It may also be revealing to note that the only two anecdotes which Suetonius preserves of Titus at Jerusalem concern his personal prowess in combat, as an archer and horseman.²⁷⁰ Dio’s epitomator further informs us that Titus was wounded fighting at Jerusalem, so severely that his left arm would be impaired for the rest of his life.²⁷¹ If this later anecdotal repertoire reflects the sort of image of the heir which was promoted during Vespasian’s reign, then it would accord well with Pliny’s and Domitian’s emphasis on Titus’ warrior prowess. Thus it seems that in Vespasian’s reign Titus’

²⁶⁷ Plin. *HN praef.* 3.

²⁶⁸ Val. Flacc. 1.13-14.

²⁶⁹ Suet. *Dom.* 20.1; Plin. *HN praef.* 5. For further on Domitian’s poetic career, see Suet. *Dom.* 2.2; Mart. 5.5.7; Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.91; Bardon (1940) 281-283; Jones (1992) 12-13; Jones and Milns (2002) 125, 164.

²⁷⁰ Suet. *Tit.* 5.2, where Titus slays twelve enemy combatants at Jerusalem with arrows. This may be the same feat of archery recorded by Josephus at *BJ* 5.340-341, although Josephus gives no casualty figures. Also Suet. *Tit.* 4.3, where his horse is killed under him in combat in Galilee.

²⁷¹ Dio 65.5.1.

military accomplishment in Judaea was commemorated just as enthusiastically as his father's, but perhaps with more focus on Titus' personal courage and skill as a fighter.

Some aspects of Titus' broader "virtue profile" under Vespasian can also be discerned. The preface to Pliny's *Natural History* stresses Titus' pleasantness and companionability, his ability to win affection, as well as his kindness, political experience, service to the *res publica*, intelligence, eloquence and familial devotion.²⁷² More "officially", we have a selection of coins issued from the Rome mint under Vespasian bearing Titus' image as Caesar on the obverse. These coins present a smaller array of virtues and states than those found on the personification issues with Vespasian himself on the obverse. On both silver and bronze, *PAX* and *VICTORIA* predominate, reflective of Titus' military reputation, and perhaps above all commemorative of his efforts in the later stages of the suppression of the Jewish Revolt.²⁷³ We also find *FORTUNA AUGUSTI* and *FORTUNA REDUX* (illustrating Titus' close relationship with divine good fortune); *AETERNITAS*, *SPES* and *TUTELA* (suggestive of Titus' succession, the latter depicting the goddess nursing two children, possibly Titus and Domitian), *ANNOA*, *CONGIARIUM* and *CERES* (suggestive of *providentia* and *liberalitas*), *AEQUITAS* (a quality probably exclusively concerned with minting practices rather than justice more broadly stated), *PROVIDENTIA* and *CONCORDIA*.²⁷⁴

However, it seems that such official acts of image management may have been promoted against a backdrop of unease about Titus in his father's reign, and later sources claim that his reputation was far from spotless at the time. Under Vespasian, says Suetonius, Titus had an evil reputation for *saevitia*, encouraged by his father's decision to appoint his son

²⁷² *HN Praef.* See also Tac. *Hist.* 5.1. On Pliny's preface, see Alfonsi (1983); Sinclair (2003).

²⁷³ E.g. BMC 2 Vespasian 80, 111, 310, 633, 709 (all *PAX*); 92, 312*, 637, 645, 742 (all *VICTORIA*).

²⁷⁴ E.g. BMC 2 Vespasian 152†, 667 (*FORTUNA*); 302 (*AETERNITAS*); 728 (*SPES*); 596 (*TUTELA AUGUSTI*); 316-320 (*ANNOA*); 629 (*CONGIARIUM*); 321 (*CERES*); 638*, 671† (*AEQUITAS*); 642† (*PROVIDENTIA*); 669 (*CONCORDIA*). For *AEQUITAS* as referring to the operations of the mint, see Wallace-Hadrill (1981b).

praetorian prefect, because of the bullying and underhand tactics which Titus employed while holding that office.²⁷⁵ We should note that Suetonius' biography can be suspected of exaggeration: in particular, his apparent desire to present Titus and Domitian as a contrasting pair encourages him to depict Titus as an emperor who started out with a poor reputation but soon showed himself virtuous, in contrast to Domitian, who started out in high esteem but showed himself to be vicious.²⁷⁶ However, Suetonius is not alone: Tacitus also records image problems dating to this period.²⁷⁷ It seems that the ostensible cruelty which Titus displayed as praetorian prefect, combined with signs of greed, unbecoming debauchery and youthful artistic interests, projected the image of a second Nero.²⁷⁸ Certainly this product of the Julio-Claudian court was easily distinguishable from his father, raised away from the metropolis in the Sabine hill-country.²⁷⁹ Both of these sources emphasise the rapidity with which Titus' reputation improved once on the throne, perhaps suggestive of a concerted effort at rebranding which may have begun in the later years of Vespasian.²⁸⁰ A contributory reason for his unpopularity seems to have been the extraordinary degree of controversy which his romantic relationship with the Herodian queen Julia Berenice stirred up in Rome. Berenice ended up being dismissed from Rome towards the end of Vespasian's reign; it looks like she returned when Titus was emperor, only to be dismissed again (or at least denied access to Titus).²⁸¹ Both Tacitus and Suetonius make it clear that the drastic improvement in Titus' public image at Rome was in no small part down to his repudiation of the queen.²⁸² Dio mentions Cynics denouncing Berenice and her relationship with Titus in the public theatres; a rather opaque sentence in

²⁷⁵ Suet. *Tit.* 6.1-7.1.

²⁷⁶ Mirroring of Titus and Domitian: Jones (1979) 7; Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 142; Jones (1984) 115; Southern (1997) 24-33.

²⁷⁷ Tac. *Hist.* 2.2. More on Titus' image problem in Bengtson (1979) 157-159.

²⁷⁸ Suet. *Tit.* 6-7.1; Tac. *Hist.* 2.2.

²⁷⁹ Titus' courtly education: Suet. *Tit.* 2.

²⁸⁰ Suet. *Tit.* 7.2; Dio 65.18.2. On rebranding, see Levi (1954); Yavetz (1975) 428-429.

²⁸¹ Suet. *Tit.* 7.2; Dio 65.15.3-5; 65.18.2; Crook (1951); Waters (1962) 216; Rogers (1980); Braund (1984); Jones (1984) 61-63; Vasta (2007).

²⁸² Tac. *Hist.* 5.1; Suet. *Tit.* 7.2.

Quintilian seems to show her exercising undue influence in Roman law-courts during her residence at the capital in 75-79; the nasty rumours of incest reported by both Josephus and Juvenal are perhaps indicative of the sort of reputation which Berenice enjoyed at Rome.²⁸³ Furthermore, later sources likewise claim that intra-familial relations between the three Flavians were not entirely smooth, and that at times Titus' behaviour was a source of tension, especially in 70-71, when Vespasian was in Rome and Titus in the East. Suetonius avers that the length of Titus' stay in the East seemed suspect to some at Rome.²⁸⁴ Likewise, the same author claims that Titus' rather Pharaonic behaviour in Egypt alarmed his father.²⁸⁵

Domitian likewise appears to have enjoyed a troubled reputation during Vespasian's reign. It seems clear from the number of magistracies and privileges he held that there can be no truth to the idea that Domitian was somehow "punished" by Vespasian by being denied prominence in public life.²⁸⁶ However, a number of traditions in the later sources are suggestive of tensions between Domitian, his father and his brother.²⁸⁷ Some of these stories concern Domitian's activities at the very outset of the reign. Suetonius claims that Domitian behaved so imperiously after being hailed Caesar in 69 and given the praetorship for the following year that Vespasian expressed surprise that his son allowed him to remain emperor, and Tacitus that Titus had to mitigate his father's fury at Domitian's high-handed behaviour in Rome.²⁸⁸ As we shall see in the next section, Domitian's contribution to the establishment of the dynasty during the chaos of 69 would come to be

²⁸³ Cynics: Dio 65.15.5; Courts: Quint. *Inst.* 4.1.19. On this passage, see Young-Widmaier (2002). Incest: *AJ* 20.145-146; Juv. 6.155-160. On Berenice, see Macurdy (1935); Crook (1951); Mireaux (1951); Jordan (1974); Rodgers (1980); Levi (1983) 165-166; Krieger (1997).

²⁸⁴ Suet. *Tit.* 5.2-3.

²⁸⁵ Suet. *Tit.* 5.3.

²⁸⁶ Homo (1949) 218. Jones (1979) 8-11 refutes this notion effectively. The sources of this idea are Suet. *Dom.* 2.1 and Dio 65.9.3-5, on Domitian's supposed retirement under Vespasian. See also Southern (1997) 24-33; Levick (1999) 188-191.

²⁸⁷ Suet. *Tit.* 9.3; Suet. *Dom.* 2.1-3; Dio 65.2.3, 66.26.2; Tac. *Hist.* 4.52.

²⁸⁸ Suet. *Dom.* 1.3; Tac. *Hist.* 4.52.

extensively commemorated in Domitian's own reign, but our later sources claim that, in reality, it did not amount to much: present on the Capitol with Flavius Sabinus, Domitian was able to escape in disguise before fire consumed the sanctuary.²⁸⁹ Limited commemoration of this episode was permitted under Vespasian in the form of Domitian's small shrine of Jupiter Conservator, and the *Capitolini caelestia carmina belli* ("divine poems of the Capitoline War") which Martial attributes to Domitian probably concerned these events.²⁹⁰ In 70, before his father's return, Domitian had travelled to Gaul with the intent of suppressing the ongoing Civilis and Classicus revolt, although the prompt intervention of the legate Petillius Cerialis meant that Domitian's intervention was ultimately not required.²⁹¹ In fact it seems clear from later sources that this expedition was rather controversial in its day, and seems to have displeased Vespasian. Sources written after Domitian's death tell us that Domitian never progressed beyond Lugdunum, and that his perception that Mucianus was trying to deny him glory led him to attempt to persuade Petillius Cerialis to surrender his army to him, and perhaps even inspired treasonous designs against Vespasian.²⁹² Of course there may well be a large admixture of posthumous vilification here, but nonetheless this unanimity powerfully suggests that something was amiss, and in particular that Domitian was in some way in conflict with or operating without the consent of his father or Mucianus. This suspicion is strengthened by the absolute silence of all literary, numismatic, artistic and epigraphic sources from the reigns of Titus and Vespasian on the younger son's Gaullish adventure. Likewise, later in his father's reign, young Domitian (ever eager to gain a military record, perhaps to help him emerge from his brother's shadow) would apparently repeatedly agitate, with no

²⁸⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 3.74; Suet. *Dom.* 1.2; Dio 64.17.

²⁹⁰ Shrine: Jones (1992) 14; on Jupiter Conservator, see Darwall-Smith (1996) 110. On the episode and its commemoration under both Vespasian and Domitian, see Southern (1997) 17-19; Wiseman (1978); Wellesley (1981). *Caelestia carmina*: Mart. 5.5.7.

²⁹¹ Cerialis: *PIR*² P.260.

²⁹² Tac. *Hist.* 4.85-6; Suet. *Dom.* 2; Dio 64.3, 65.9. On this episode in Domitian's life, see Southern (1997) 20-21; Jones (1992) 16-18.

success, for a command against the Alani in support of the Parthian king.²⁹³ But however much truth may be in these later stories, Domitian evidently enjoyed a position of rare eminence in Rome in his father's reign; his relative youth, however, meant that he was always destined to be overshadowed by his brother, who was clearly promoted ahead of him in the succession.

3.2: Aspects of the dynastic image under Domitian

Upon accession in 81 after the unexpected early death of his older brother, one of Domitian's principal problems was a lack of military experience.²⁹⁴ It was not until 84 that he was able to make a name for himself as a general. Bereft of meaningful accomplishments in this field, Domitian at the outset of his reign had little option but to reach back to broader dynastic legitimising strategies, meaning that, initially at least, the memory of Vespasian and Titus and their achievements remained of pressing importance in regime representation. The establishment of the dynasty was commemorated in several ways by Domitian in Rome: his reconstruction of the temple of Isis and Serapis honoured the Egyptian gods who had helped promote the family to the Principate, Serapis by endorsing his father's bid for power in Alexandria and Isis by "saving" Domitian himself from the Vitellian assault on the Capitoline; his construction of the Temple of Jupiter Custos (much grander than the shrine of Jupiter Conservator he had built in his father's reign) referenced the same foundational episode; one of the celebrated Domitianic reliefs from the Palazzo della Cancelleria may depict Domitian welcoming Vespasian to Rome from the East, emphasising the former's role in stabilising the new regime at its very

²⁹³ Suet. *Dom.* 2.2.

²⁹⁴ Jones (1979) 12-13.

outset.²⁹⁵ Domitian's focus on dynasty as source of legitimacy is best expressed in his construction of the Temple of the Gens Flavia on the Quirinal.²⁹⁶ In addition to deifying his brother, he also added his cult to the Temple of Vespasian in the Forum, and built another cult centre, the Porticus Divorum, to his father and brother in the Campus Martius.²⁹⁷ Considering the centrality of Judaea to Flavian dynastic legitimacy, it is unsurprising to see the Revolt return as a focus of interest under the younger Flavian brother. Thus both of the arches completed during his reign in honour of Titus refer unambiguously to the Revolt. Domitian briefly resuscitated the practice of striking *JUDAEA CAPTA* coins in 85 (perhaps to commemorate the completion of the Arch of Titus), collected the moneys owed to the *fiscus Iudaicus* with especial and visible vigour, and added to the Colosseum, a building which, because of its inscription, was inextricably associated with the crushing of the Jews.²⁹⁸ Most striking of all are the two relief panels on the Arch of Titus, which depict scenes from the Flavian triumphal procession whose correspondences with Josephus' narrative are quite pronounced.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁵ Temple of Isis and Serapis: see Darwall-Smith (1996) 139-153; Beard (2007) 95. Jupiter Custos: Jones (1992) 88; Darwall-Smith (1996) 110-115; Cancellaria reliefs: the reading outlined above is the traditional interpretation proposed by Magi (1945), and followed by Toynbee (1957) 4; Darwall-Smith (1996) 172-177; Henderson (2003). In contrast, Marianne Bergmann (1981) concluded, from a close examination of the head of "Vespasian", that the relief had in fact been re-cut in the reign of Nerva, that it originally represented an *adventus* of Domitian, whose head was subsequently re-carved as that of his father, and that the young man Magi identified as Domitian was someone else. This interpretation, which would render this relief irrelevant to the question of Domitian's emphasis on his own contribution to dynastic stability in Vespasian's reign, is followed by Kleiner (1992) 191-192, Hekster (2015) 101-102 and Wood (2016, 132-134), and challenged by Ritter (1982) and Meyer (2011) 174-180.

²⁹⁶ Temple of Gens Flavia: Jones (1992) 87-88; Darwall-Smith (1996) 159-165. Coarelli (in Steinby 1995 368-369) has tentatively identified the podium and nymphaeum in the grounds of the Carabinieri barracks on Via Venti Settembre, near the Piazza della Repubblica, as the remains of the temple.

²⁹⁷ Jones (1984) 143; Jones (1992) 87. However, the striking dearth of numismatic representations of Vespasian from all stages of Domitian's reign should be noted as a discordant trend amid all this dynastic commemoration (Hekster 2015 57).

²⁹⁸ *JUDAEA CAPTA* issue: BMC 2 Domitian 328; *Fiscus Iudaicus*: Suet. *Dom.* 12.2; Colosseum: Alföldi (1995).

²⁹⁹ See Pfanner (1980) 44-55 for the relief panels. For Domitian's buildings in general, see Jones (1984) 82-94; Darwall-Smith (1996) 101-252. More on the apparently increasingly anti-Jewish tendencies under Domitian in Smallwood (1956); Sterling (1991) 299-302; Jones (1992) 117-119; Southern (1997) 114-115; Overman (2002) 217-218 and Goodman (2007) 464-468.

Thus Domitian, in his early years as *princeps*, was highly respectful of the memory of Vespasian and Titus and ensured that their achievements remained to some degree topical. However, this is not the full story. There are some indications of emulousness on the younger Flavian's part, an insistence that the new ruler's achievements should be seen as superior to those of his predecessors. In literature, this is most clearly manifested in Silius Italicus' prophecy of Jupiter in the *Punica*.³⁰⁰ This might be dismissed as a necessary consequence of Silius' epic structure: his prophecy is a rehabilitation (and updating) of Virgil's Augustan epic teleology, and such a formulation will necessarily result in the "present" ruler being the apex of history.³⁰¹ However, such supersessionist conceptions can be found in other Domitianic poets too.³⁰² Domitianic poets treat the deification of Domitian's predecessors not so much as the reward for their virtues and achievements as a demonstration of the emperor's familial *pietas*: it was *Domitian* who made them gods.³⁰³ Suetonius claims that Domitian boasted in the Senate that he had given the empire to his father, presumably a reference to his activities in Rome in 69.³⁰⁴ Even in the building programme one might suspect such Domitianic self-assertion: it must surely be significant that Domitian opted to locate the Templum Gentis Flaviae in the house where he himself had been born.³⁰⁵

This picture of Domitian as preeminent over his predecessors is perhaps reflected in his increasingly extravagant post-accession commemoration of his early activities in Vespasian's reign, which as we have seen in the last section were passed over mostly in silence while his father was alive. Already we have noted some of the ways in which

³⁰⁰ Sil. *Pun.* 3.594-629. Note the introductory address to Domitian at 607: *at tu transcendes, Germanice, facta tuorum* ("but you, Germanicus, will surpass the deeds of your kin").

³⁰¹ Evans (2003) 269; Bessone (2013) 100.

³⁰² Superiority of Domitian over Vespasian and Titus: Mart. 2.5-6; Stat. *Silv.* 4.1.33; 4.3.130-137.

³⁰³ Mart. 14.124; Stat. *Theb.* 1.31; (possibly) Val. Flacc. 1.15-21. Note also Quintilian's celebration of Domitian's *pietas* at *Inst.* 3.7.9, on which see Roche (2009) 378-9. It is notable that Velleius also uses the deification of Augustus as proof of Tiberius' *pietas* (2.126).

³⁰⁴ Suet. *Dom.* 13.1.

³⁰⁵ Mart. 9.20; on the significance, see D'Ambra (1993) 40.

Domitian's activities in 69, and specifically his "defence" of the Capitol, came to be emphasised in his own reign. In addition to what has already been cited, we may note a great deal of literary hyperbole clustering around the subject, with Statius going so far as to claim that Domitian had fought in defence of Jupiter.³⁰⁶ Similarly, his often-derided "war" against Civilis and Classicus comes to be hymned to the stars in contemporary literature, with Silius in particular claiming that Domitian's achievements against the Batavians were more impressive than Titus' campaigns against the Jews.³⁰⁷ Martial even congratulates Domitian on willingly relinquishing power to his father in 69 after he had been "ruling" in Rome, which carries a distinct echo of Suetonius' claim that Domitian boasted in the Senate of this very thing.³⁰⁸ This seems to represent effectively a revaluation of history, with episodes which were, under Vespasian and Titus, largely passed over in silence or (in the case of Domitian's escape from the Capitol) allowed only limited commemoration, and which in later sources attract suspicions of malfeasance or division, suddenly being transformed into great exploits illustrating the youthful promise of the *princeps*, the greatest of the Flavians. But, as important as these early signs of promise seem to have become, they come to be vastly overshadowed in the extant record of imperial representation as soon as Domitian begins to achieve his own military successes on the Rhine and the Danube from 84 on.³⁰⁹

Just like his father and brother, Domitian emphasised militarism in his self-presentation. His virtue-coins emphasise the military virtues much less heavily, in fact, than was the case with Vespasian, but looking beyond the virtue-coins at his overall numismatic output the military bias is everywhere evident, in the incessant *GERMANIA CAPTA* types, for

³⁰⁶ Stat. *Silv.* 1.1.79-81; *Theb.* 1.19-20; Sil. *Pun.* 3.609-610; Mart. 9.101.13. At *Silv.* 5.3.195-204, Statius mentions that his own father had written a poem on this episode.

³⁰⁷ Sil. *Pun.* 3.607-608; for the same judgement, see Mart. 2.2.3-6.

³⁰⁸ Mart. 9.101.15-16; Suet. *Dom.* 13.1.

³⁰⁹ For Domitian's wars, see Jones (1992) 126-159.

instance, and (as Mattingly notes) in the fact that the emperor's patron deity Minerva, ubiquitous on Domitianic coins, is always represented in her warrior aspect.³¹⁰ (We may also note that even the Domitianic-period representation of Minerva on the Arachne relief from the Forum Transitorium, where we really might expect to see the goddess in her "domestic" role as Minerva Ergane, depicts her in warrior dress).³¹¹ The ubiquity of the honorary name Germanicus in Domitianic poetry (the standard name by which the emperor is addressed), as well as the frequent references, direct and indirect, to Domitian's Northern campaigns in the poets and Frontinus' decision to include his emperor as an *exemplum* of strategic practice alongside the great generals of old all attest to Domitian's apparent eagerness to be considered a great warrior and conqueror.³¹² One of the most remarkable artistic productions of the reign, the enormous equestrian statue set up in the Forum, described so memorably by Statius, is similarly bellicose.³¹³ Although Domitian shows every sign of wanting to be seen to outstrip both his father and his brother, in the final analysis he remains dependent on themes of imperial representation which they had developed and refined, stressing above all his qualities as a general and a warrior, always the default iconographic vocabulary of Flavian power.

³¹⁰ Domitian's personification-coins, almost entirely restricted to bronzes, present a smaller array of personifications than his father's, but with a much more even spread, without the heavy preponderance of the militaristic *PAX* and *VICTORIA*. *GERMANIA CAPTA* and related types are very heavily promoted from 85 to the end of the reign (e.g. *BMC* 2 Domitian 82*, 92, 125, 294, 300 etc.) Mattingly on Minerva: *BMC* 2.lxxxv-lxxxvi (see also Bengtson 1979 265).

³¹¹ D'Ambra (1993) 116-119, and Figs. 57 and 58; see also Kleiner (1992) 192-194.

³¹² Frontinus: *Str.* 1.3.10, 2.3.23, 2.11.7. We might note the increase in the interest (compared to their Latin predecessors) of the Domitianic epicists in the peoples of the North, including specifically peoples whom Domitian had campaigned against, as a further tribute to his military prowess: see (e.g.) Val. Flacc. 6.122; Sil. *Pun.* 1.324-6, 3.616-7; Stat. *Theb.* 3.351-354.

³¹³ Stat. *Silv.* 1.1.

Chapter 4: *The Jewish War*: Audience, Structure and Date

This chapter will explore three questions relating to the *Jewish War* of considerable importance to this investigation. First it will address the problem of the work's intended **audience**. This matters because this thesis is an investigation into political communication in the work, and our interpretation of any act of communication is necessarily guided by our understanding of who the message is for. Next, the work's **structure** will be analysed: this will serve as a salutary reminder that, despite the specific focus of this inquiry, representation of the Flavian dynasty is only one aspect of the *Jewish War*, and a broader understanding of how Josephus organises and structures his analysis of the failure of the Revolt will help us to perceive what role he makes the Flavians play in his project as a whole. Finally, attention will be paid to the problem of the **date** of the work. As was shown in the previous chapter, the representational priorities of the dynasty changed over the period of Flavian rule, and so it is of prime importance to establish when Josephus was writing in order to perceive how what he writes relates to the precise context in which he was working.

4.1. Audience

As the product of an author with a hybrid cultural identity, and as a treatment of a historical episode which might appeal to a wide range of interested readerships, the question of the *War*'s intended audience merits some consideration. In the work's preface, Josephus himself is not entirely consistent. At *BJ* 1.3, he states that he wishes to provide an account of the recent upheavals in Judaea τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν ("to those under the rule of the Romans"), which apparently envisages a broad and predominantly

provincial readership. Also at *BJ* 3.107, after his description of the Roman army, Josephus writes that he has discussed that topic at length εἰς τε παραμυθίαν τῶν κεχειρωμένων καὶ εἰς ἀποτροπὴν τῶν νεωτεριζόντων (“in order to console those who have been defeated [*by the Romans*] and to deter those who would rebel”), perhaps similarly suggestive of a broad intended provincial readership. However, elsewhere in the preface Josephus tells us explicitly that he is writing for Greeks and such Romans as were not directly engaged in the conflict: apparently Josephus’ intended audience also encompassed a Roman readership, and that is hardly surprising given that his immediate audience, in Rome, would largely have comprised educated, Greek-reading Romans.³¹⁴ The question is further complicated by the fact that Josephus also writes in the preface that he is either “translating” or “adapting” (μεταβαλὼν) an earlier text written in Aramaic, which was explicitly written τοῖς ἄνω βαρβάροις (“for the barbarians in the interior”).³¹⁵ It seems most reasonable to me to assume at best a very loose connection between the lost Aramaic precursor and the extant Greek version. As will become clear throughout this thesis, the *Jewish War* engages profoundly with Greek historiographical traditions and generic conventions, to a degree unlikely to be found in a work of Aramaic literature.³¹⁶ Josephus must surely have realised that a straight translation of a “barbarian” text would have been unlikely to have much appeal for the educated Greek and Roman readers he claims to be targeting at *BJ* 1.6; his thoroughgoing Hellenisation of the lost original must have been so extensive as to constitute a significant rewrite.³¹⁷ On balance, it is best not to split hairs on questions of Josephus’ audience. I see absolutely no reason not to believe Josephus when

³¹⁴ *BJ* 1.6.

³¹⁵ *BJ* 1.3.

³¹⁶ This will emerge throughout the discussion of the *Jewish War* in Chapters 5 and 6 below. For an examination of the formal features of classical historiography in evidence in Josephus, see Villalba i Varneda (1986).

³¹⁷ The same conclusion is reached by Martin Goodman, in his introduction to Martin Hammond’s translation of the *Jewish War* (2017, xxviii), “it [*the Aramaic version*] is unlikely to have borne much similarity to the Greek version, which bears too many specifically Greek historiographical traits.” See also Hata (1975-76).

he claims to be aiming to appeal to educated Greek and Roman readers (note here Steve Mason's demonstration of the fact that Josephus frequently explains specifically "Jewish" elements in his narrative, but assumes an extensive familiarity with Roman history and culture throughout).³¹⁸ However, he must also surely have been conscious of the fact that a work of the nature of the *Jewish War* was likely to appeal to educated, Greek-literate Jewish readers too, and indeed a number of studies into Josephus' allusions to Jewish literary tradition have proved highly fruitful, suggesting that he is not just conscious of the possibility of such a readership but actively catering to it.³¹⁹ In this thesis, I will take seriously Josephus' claim to be writing for Greek and Roman readers, but I will also discuss, where it seems relevant, aspects of Josephus' narrative which may resonate differently for another likely intended audience, educated Jewish readers familiar with a different canon of authoritative texts.³²⁰

4.2. Structure

An examination of the "architecture" of the *Jewish War* as a whole is highly revealing. Classical historians often put a great deal of care into architectural aspects of their work, and understandably so: questions of selection and omission, the organisation of events, symmetries and echoes between different parts of the work and the apportioning of material into books and blocks of books reveal fundamental things about how the author directs his readers to experience the events narrated, and about how the author connects and prioritises things and makes a comprehensible and rational narrative out of the chaos of raw events. Previous studies of the structure of the works of other classical historians

³¹⁸ Mason (2005b) 92-93; Curran (2011) 76-77.

³¹⁹ See for instance Ferda (2013) on Josephus and Jeremiah; Mason (1994) 178-190 on *Daniel* in the *Jewish War*; Nikiprowetzky (1971) 477-480, Price (1992) 156 n.23 and Mason (2016a) 120-121 on biblical analogues to the Cannibal Mary story in *BJ* 6.197-217.

³²⁰ Other arguments for a mixed audience include Cotton and Eck (2005) and Parente (2005).

have often been highly valuable, at times revelatory.³²¹ I shall argue that *BJ* 1-6 forms a tight, intricate and artfully-wrought structural unity, and that *BJ* 7, while demonstrating its own underlying structural principles, is essentially extraneous to this plan.

Two broad structuring principles can be detected operating simultaneously in *BJ* 1-6: the echoing of significant events at symmetrically-opposed points in the architecture of the work, as well as the division of the whole into three coherent “blocks” of two books each (see Figure 1 overleaf). I will consider symmetry first. *BJ* 6 ends on a naturally appropriate concluding moment, the final destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the forces under Titus’ command. However, this natural conclusion can be suggestively connected with the (rather unnatural) starting point of the narrative in *BJ* 1. When these two events are considered together, it is striking that *BJ* 1-6 is “book-ended” by Temple violations perpetrated by gentile occupiers of Judaea. Book 1 begins, otherwise inexplicably, with an account of the violation of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes.³²² I have previously argued that this strong mirroring of events is in fact for the purpose of contrasting the two episodes in a way which underlines one of the major aspects of Josephus’ analysis of the Revolt, the loss by the Jews of the favour of God: in the case of Antiochus, the Jews have God on their side (as the outcome of the events demonstrates), and thus the glorious revolt succeeds and Antiochus, a violator of God’s will and commandments, is vanquished by the insurgents. The situation is entirely reversed in *BJ* 6, where the Jews have lost the favour of God through the conduct of the rebels, and where the gentile aggressor is embodying and carrying out, not opposing, the will of God.³²³

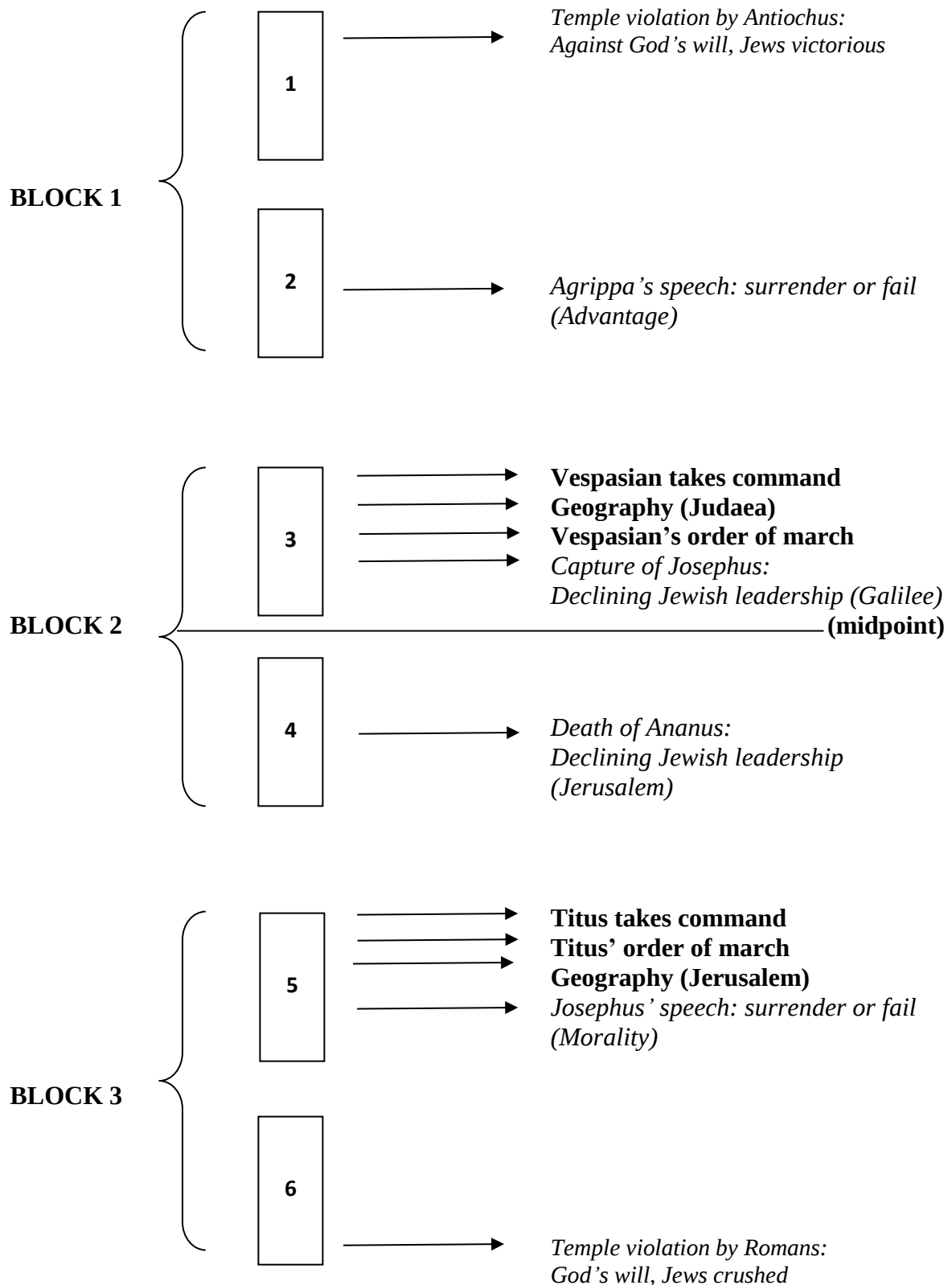
³²¹ See, for instance, Walsh (1974) 8-9 and Luce (1977), esp. 3-32, on Livy; Rich (2011), esp. 76-80, on Velleius.

³²² *BJ* 1.31-40.

³²³ Davies (2013) 81-83. Loss of God’s favour by the Jews: see (e.g.) *BJ* 2.455, 3.484, 4.366, 5.19, 6.38-41, Klawans (2012) 189-190.

Figure 1: The Structure of BJ 1-6.

Bold type = parallels between blocks; *Italic type* = symmetrical parallels around midpoint.



Blame, praise and the outcome are all strikingly inverted here, as is the bare sequence of events (in the case of Antiochus, a Temple violation precedes and provokes the revolt, whereas in the case of 70 a revolt precedes and provokes the Temple violation).³²⁴ This striking symmetry is echoed elsewhere, where other significant moments are placed in revealing symmetrical relationships to each other. For instance, the two longest speeches in *BJ* 1-6 (by some margin), those of Agrippa II at Jerusalem in 66 and of Josephus at Jerusalem in 70, are symmetrically positioned: Agrippa's speech comes roughly half-way through the second book (2.345-401), and that of Josephus about half-way through the penultimate book (5.362-419). It is important to note that the two speeches are both arguing the same thing, that those minded to rebel should surrender or risk extermination.³²⁵ It is also noteworthy that these two speeches focus heavily on the two different modes of deliberative oratory recognised by classical rhetoricians: Agrippa's speech is an "appeal to advantage", with its heavy focus on the practical, material consequences for the Jews of attempting to rebel against the irresistible and overwhelming might of Rome, while Josephus' speech is predominantly an "appeal to morality", with its focus on the transgressions of the rebels and consequent displeasure of God, and the need for repentance.³²⁶ Both speeches reach broadly the same conclusion: that unless the rebels make their peace with the God-backed Romans, they will be crushed. The force of this argument is enhanced by the varying rhetorical modes through which this same conclusion is reached, by the fact that the conclusion is broadly in agreement with the view of the situation Josephus articulates often in the authorial voice, by the fact that the gloomy

³²⁴ Note also that the concluding sentence of *BJ* 6 makes explicit reference to the violation under Antiochus, the event with which the narrative began.

³²⁵ On the comparability of these speeches, see Lindner (1972) 21-33; Price (1992) 190-191.

³²⁶ For these forms of deliberative oratory, with references, see Levene (1999) 206 ff. Price (2005, 114) further suggests that the different modes of these speeches reflect the different voices of their speakers: "the worldly Agrippa II argues from general history and the present demands of *Realpolitik*, while the deposed priest and self-styled prophet Josephus argues from divine signs and revelations in a historical sequence pertaining only to the Jews."

conditional predictions of Josephus and Agrippa come true, and not least by the symmetrical relationship between the two speeches, which thus serve as major, architecturally-aligned structural props to Josephus' underlying historical interpretation. Another incidence of significant symmetrical organisation may relate to the gradual deterioration of the Jewish rebel leadership, with the capture of Josephus (about half-way through Book 3) linked with the murder of Ananus at Jerusalem (about half-way through Book 4); thus first Galilee and then Jerusalem itself fall to the extremists.³²⁷

Alongside the symmetrical arrangement of key events, we find the division of *BJ* 1-6 into three blocks of two books each. Block 1 concerns events prior to the Revolt, and ends at a moment of Roman despair, the defeat of Cestius Gallus and the retreat of Roman forces from the region.³²⁸ Block 2 begins with the arrival of Vespasian and the improvement of Roman prospects, and covers Vespasian's campaigns in Galilee and elsewhere, concluding with his assumption of the purple. Block 3 begins with Titus, the new commander, resuming hostilities and marching up to Jerusalem to conclude the war. In common with the "present-bulge" characteristic of many classical histories, we see an increasing focus, both geographical and chronological, across these blocks, which results in escalating intensity and tension.³²⁹ Thus Block 1, running from 167 BCE to 66 CE, covers a period of about 230 years; Block 2 covers a period of roughly two years and nine months; Block 3, the campaigns of Titus, covers December 69 to September 70. In keeping with this increasing chronological focus, we also note an increasing geographical focus, with Block 2, although concentrating on Galilee, nevertheless depicting Vespasian's forces campaigning all around the region, including on the coastal plain, in Agrippa's kingdom,

³²⁷ Josephus: *BJ* 3.315-408. Ananus: *BJ* 4.319.

³²⁸ *BJ* 2.499-558.

³²⁹ "Present-bulge": Pitcher (2009) 122-123.

in Peraea and in Idumaea, as well as the Flavian campaigns in Italy.³³⁰ The focus of Block 3 is solely on the vicinity of Jerusalem, and the intensifying focus is emphasized by two geographical excursuses arranged in parallel within Blocks 2 and 3: close to the beginning of Block 2 comes a long geographical excursus on the wonders of the Judaeian region, and close to the beginning of Block 3 comes a long account of the city of Jerusalem.³³¹ Further structural markers are evident at the beginnings of Blocks 2 and 3. A little after the geographical excursus on Galilee, still near the beginning of Book 3, Josephus gives us a sketch of the marching order which accompanied Vespasian.³³² Similarly located in Book 5, near the beginning of Block 3, we find a parallel account of the marching order of the army under Titus.³³³ This clearly indicates parallelism between the opening phases of the two invasions, signalling also that we are entering a new part of the narrative.

Furthermore, in the Book 1 programmatic preface Josephus gives us further structural marking by introducing the final push against the Jewish rebels under Titus' command with the words "Titus launched an invasion of the land for a second time" (Τίτος δεύτερον εἰς τὴν χώραν ἐνέβαλεν), clearly separating off the content of Block 3 from the preceding block.³³⁴ The importance of this statement would seem to be primarily as a structural marker, as it is not in fact accurate: Josephus describes, both in the programmatic preface and in the narrative in Book 2, the first post-Revolt Roman invasion of Judaea, under the command of the Syrian legate Cestius Gallus.³³⁵ This must surely make Titus' intervention the third invasion, not the second. All of this encourages us to view the material covered in Books 5 and 6 as structurally distinct from that covered in Books 3 and 4, and the numerous specific parallels at key points of the transition between

³³⁰ *BJ* 3.289-315, 408-542, 4.550-555, 633-655.

³³¹ Judaea: *BJ* 3.35-58; Jerusalem: *BJ* 5.135-247.

³³² *BJ* 3.115-126.

³³³ *BJ* 5.47-49.

³³⁴ *BJ* 1.25.

³³⁵ *BJ* 1.20, 2.500-555.

blocks serve to mesh the whole work together in an overarching narrative of ever-increasing focus, grimness and intensity.³³⁶

Before leaving this question, a few more words about the close of Book 6 as a suitable ending for the work as a whole are needed. The strong closural elements in this ending are marked: Josephus concludes with a narrative of a highly dramatic episode, frequently foreshadowed both implicitly and explicitly throughout the work, the destruction of the Temple, and with a chronological synopsis situating the destruction in the broader sweep of the history of Judaism and the Temple, which prominently mentions Antiochus Epiphanes' defilement of the Temple, the episode with which Josephus' narrative opened in Book 1.³³⁷ Thus biblical prophecy is fulfilled, Josephus' theological historiographical schema has been completed, and no further narrative is necessary. Of course strong closure is not always necessary and desirable; history never really reaches conclusive and satisfying end-points, and historians may well wish to avoid creating the trite impression that the last word on their subject has been written. However, it is worth noting that the *Jewish War* is a history of a very specific type, a war monograph, and paying attention to how such narratives typically conclude in the Graeco-Roman tradition, to see whether strong or weak closure would be more generically appropriate for the *Jewish War*.

We are regrettably short of *comparanda* here. The great model Thucydides famously ends on an incomplete sentence, and thus doubts about whether or not Book 8 ends where the author wanted it to end prohibit us from appealing to that text. Roman parallels are similarly problematic: Caesar's *Civil War* is quite possibly unfinished, and the last (incompletely-preserved) book of the *Gallic War* was a posthumous addition by Aulus

³³⁶ On the increasing darkness of tone of *BJ* 1-6, which mirrors the ever-intensifying focus discussed above, see Mason (2016a) 426.

³³⁷ *BJ* 6.435-442. On strong and weak closure in classical literature, see Fowler (1989), esp. 78-82, 116-117 (on historiography) and Levene (1992) 53-54. For cautionary remarks about how (our assumptions about) the *telos* of a historiographical work affect how we read it, see Henderson (1989) 66-75, and also Greithlin (2014).

Hirtius.³³⁸ However, two sophisticated ancient readers of historiography, Polybius and Cicero, both associate the monographic form with completeness and closure: Polybius' critique of monographs is precisely that they are closed narratives which do not connect their contents to wider historical phenomena, and Cicero sees the relatively limited and self-sufficient scope of the monograph as making it particularly suited to the proposed account of his consulship by Lucceius.³³⁹ Sallust's two extant monographs differ in closural style: *Catiline* closes strongly, with the death of the eponymous antagonist and gloomy reflections on the brutality of civil war.³⁴⁰ *Jugurtha* closes much less strongly, not even narrating the death of the king, and ending with Marius' assumption of the consulship and an ironic reference to future events outside the scope of the book itself.³⁴¹ As D. S. Levene has argued, the *Jugurtha* is a somewhat unmonographic monograph; it continually diminishes the importance of its own subject, refers to events beyond the scope of the work, and suggests that the only reason why the Jugurthine War is worthy of remembrance is because of its implications for other, external and more intrinsically worthwhile subjects, such as the decline of Roman morality, the intensification of faction-strife, and the careers of Marius and Sulla.³⁴² Sallust demonstrates that Polybius' objections to the monographic form need not be valid, that it was possible to write a monograph which retained a sense of proportion, and which strove unusually hard to connect its limited subject to history on a broader scale. None of this seems to be true for Josephus: far from playing down the importance of his own war he strongly insists on the importance of the subject.³⁴³ The *Bellum Iudaicum* and the *Bellum Iugurthinum* have very different agendas and very different attitudes to their own subject matter, and Josephus

³³⁸ Suet. *Iul.* 56.

³³⁹ Polyb. 3.32; Cic. *Fam.* 5.12, esp. 2.

³⁴⁰ Sall. *Cat.* 60-61.

³⁴¹ Sall. *Iug.* 114.

³⁴² Levene (1992); also Pelling (2002b) 371-372.

³⁴³ *BJ* 1.4-5.

appears to be much closer to the type of monographist lamented by Polybius and extolled by Cicero, an author who creates strong satisfying closure on their chosen brief slice of history. This is all in contrast to another type of history, that of works dealing with a specified period of years, like the works of Polybius or Xenophon's *Hellenica*, where strong closure is not necessary or perhaps even desirable: history marches on, and space must be left for a continuator. It appears that strong and satisfying closure was most appropriate to and characteristic of the kind of work that Josephus was writing and, while he was never a prisoner of artistic convention, this is a point in favour of the ending of Book 6 as the original ending of the work.

Thus the structure of *BJ* 1-6 is coherent, well-signposted and makes a substantial contribution to both the tone and nature of the work: it constantly ramps up the tension, drawing the reader's eye ever closer to the ruins of the Temple; it suggests both a progressive improvement in the quality of Roman leadership and a progressive decline in rebel leadership; it uses symmetrical echoes (which cut across but also work with the tripartite "blocking" structure) to emphasize key points in Josephus' historical analysis through implicitly paired speeches; and it amply illustrates the consequences of the loss of God's favour on the Jewish people between 165 BCE and 70 CE. It is not immediately clear how Book 7 can fit into this structure comfortably: the distinct and self-contained structure of that work can be considered now.

The seventh book of the *Jewish War* appears somewhat chaotically unstructured. This is partly because of the sudden breakdown of the tendency in *BJ* 1-6 towards ever-increasing geographical and temporal focus. While *BJ* 5-6 focuses exclusively on a period of several months at one site, *BJ* 7 gives us a narrative whose datable elements extend over a period

of five years, and whose geographical range sprawls from Gaul in the west to Media in the east.³⁴⁴ Added to this is a corresponding collapse of thematic focus, with Josephus giving us a significant amount of material which appears to have no real connection to his main theme of the revolt in Judaea, a lack of focus which is uncharacteristic of the rest of the *Jewish War*.³⁴⁵ However, closer reading does reveal an organising principle behind the book. The book can broadly be divided into two unequal parts, each of which concerns the post-70 fate and actions of a group which has been significant throughout the earlier books. The first part (1-162) is primarily concerned with the movements and actions of the senior representatives of the Flavian Dynasty (including, for the first time in the work, significant attention being paid to Domitian). The second, longer section (163-453, rounded out by some very perfunctory concluding remarks at 454-455) focuses on the fate of those rebels who remained under arms and militant after the destruction of Jerusalem. These two large sections can each be further subdivided into two. The “dynastic” portion of the book first covers the individual movements of the Flavian dynasts, Titus in the East, Vespasian in Italy and Rome, and Domitian in the West (1-120), before going on to recount how they act in concert, as a unified dynasty, once reunited at Rome, with a particular focus on two significant acts of Judaeian commemoration, the triumph and the construction of the Templum Pacis (121-162). This shows us the processes of establishment and legitimation which solidified the ascendancy of the new dynasty; once the Flavians are securely in power, Josephus turns to those stubborn enemies of the Roman order, the Jewish rebels who did not admit defeat after 70. Once again, a two-way division is in evidence. 163-406 describes the subjugation of the remaining rebel outposts in Judaea, including and culminating in the famous Masada episode. The final major

³⁴⁴ Gaul: *BJ* 7.75-88. Media: *BJ* 7.245-291.

³⁴⁵ Digressions: the woes of the Jews of Antioch (43-62); the Sarmatian raids into Moesia (89-95); Vespasian’s annexation of Commagene (219-243); the incursion of the Alani into Media (244-252).

section (407-453) deals with those rebels who fled Judaea and went elsewhere, first the *sicarii* in Egypt and then Jonathan in Cyrene. The narrative proper ends with the execution of Jonathan and the divine punishment of his unlikely accomplice, the Roman governor Catullus, representing the extinguishing of the final embers of the revolt which has been the work's chief theme. Honora Chapman has suggested a slightly different and broader key theme for the second "rebel" section of the book. She argues that what these chapters give us is "a concentrated selection of several case studies of Roman imperialism in action", and demonstrates specifically that those subjects of Rome who accept the futility of revolt and submit to Rome will have a future (like Antiochus of Commagene and the Jewish rebels at Machaerus), whereas those who persist in revolt can expect only annihilation (like the *sicarii* on Masada).³⁴⁶ This seems persuasive, and this more expansive understanding of the theme has the advantage that it can provide an explanation for the inclusion of the story of the annexation of Commagene (though not the Alanic invasion of Media), but Josephus' strong focus on the Jewish rebels and his explicit statements that he is describing the repression of the remnants of the revolt means that this section of the book seems to be animated by a narrower objective, too.³⁴⁷ It is perhaps best to see the second portion of *BJ* 7 as a demonstration of the irresistibility of Rome's power over her subjects, but also more narrowly as a testimony that the menaces of Jewish rebel ideology and activity have been completely eradicated.

This seems to me to be the best accounting of the overall shape of the *Jewish War*.

However, Steve Mason has recently attempted to argue for the essential structural unity of the whole of the *Jewish War*, including Book 7, by identifying a series of precise symmetrical echoes clustering around the central point, half-way through Book 4.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ Chapman (2007a) 88-89, quotation from page 99.

³⁴⁷ *BJ* 1.29; 7.408.

³⁴⁸ Mason (2016a) 99-101; the same model is sketched rather more briefly in Mason (2007) 237-238.

Mason's central point is the murder of the "moderate" rebel leaders Ananus and Jesus, which Josephus opines in the authorial voice was the beginning of the end for Jerusalem.³⁴⁹ This certainly seems like strong marking of a structurally significant point in the narrative, and it is easy to see why Mason endows it with such importance in his reading of the structure of the *Jewish War*. However, it is not quite as straightforward as this. Josephus cannot seem to make up his mind about when the crucial tipping-point of the war was, and other episodes are similarly marked out as being critically decisive elsewhere in the *War*.³⁵⁰ It is not clear why one critical point should be preferred over the other moments explicitly marked as such. Mason bolsters his parsing of the *War*'s structure by identifying a series of symmetrical echoes across the whole work (including Book 7), arguing from these parallels that Josephus "gave the *War*'s seven volumes a consciously proportionate structure."³⁵¹ But on examination, most of Mason's listed parallels are not convincing. His claim that Josephus' mention of Antiochus Epiphanes at 7.219-44 echoes his account of the Maccabean revolt at 1.31-40 is undermined by the fact that the Antiochus Epiphanes discussed in Book 7 is the dynast of Commagene, not the Seleucid king (note the definite reference to the Seleucid Antiochus at 6.436, surely a much better parallel to the Book 1 reference). His pairing of the speech of Agrippa in Book 2 with that of Titus to the defeated rebel leaders in Book 6 says very little, when a much closer parallel (the speech of Josephus in Book 5, which, as discussed above, overlaps substantially in content and analytical bent with that of Agrippa) is available in Book 5.³⁵² Mason draws attention to two scenes, one in Book 2 and one in Book 6, when people (in the earlier incident Jews, in the later incident Romans) are trapped by fire on the

³⁴⁹ *BJ* 4.318.

³⁵⁰ The end of the imperial sacrifices (2.409) are marked in a similar way. So too is the anarchy under the Roman procurator Albinus, which we are told indicated τὰ σπέρματα τῆς μελλούσης ἀλώσεως ("the seeds of the coming destruction") at 2.276. At 7.327, Eleazar ben Yair states that the mind of God was already intent on destroying the city from the outbreak of the Revolt.

³⁵¹ Mason (2016a) 101.

³⁵² Agrippa speech: *BJ* 2.345-401; Josephus' speech: *BJ* 5.362-419; Titus' speech: *BJ* 6.323-353.

roof of the Temple colonnades and die in five ways.³⁵³ The scenes are certainly reminiscent of one another, but in fact in the second episode the Romans are only depicted dying in four ways: there is no mention of Roman survivors being unable to fight and being cut down by their enemies in the second passage, as there is in the first. Moreover, one of the ways in which Roman soldiers “die” in the second passage in fact appears to be non-lethal: they jump down to their own side of the colonnade and break their arms and legs. This particular pairing highlights another question which arises from many of Mason’s supposed symmetrical parallels: what would be the point of creating such echoes? Mason argues that such symmetrical structuring aids both memory and comprehension, but how is the reader’s comprehension of the narrative helped by the last-discussed example? Other parallels raise this same question. Can readers really be expected to remember or notice that, when Josephus mentions the “many sacrifices” at the Passover festival towards the end of Book 6, his only previous mention of this was towards the beginning of Book 2?³⁵⁴ Or that his only usages of the word “Mede” occur in Books 1 and 7?³⁵⁵ How is the reader’s comprehension of the material or perception of the underlying structures of thought facilitated by these sorts of highly specific and wholly nugatory parallels? Mason’s unified structural analysis of Books 1-7 seems often to be based on questionable parallels to begin with, and to hold no real explanatory power for discerning how the architecture of the work relates to or illuminates the emotional and analytical thrust of the narrative. The structure described earlier in this chapter and outlined in Figure 1 above, which paints in broader but more easily perceptible strokes and which can clearly demonstrate how Josephus’ structural choices are integral to the tone and movement of the work as a whole, thus seems preferable. And this structural schema

³⁵³ Mason provides incorrect references for these scenes (*BJ* 2.229-230, 405 and 6.233). The real references are *BJ* 2.49-50 and 6.180-181.

³⁵⁴ *BJ* 2.10; 6.423.

³⁵⁵ *BJ* 1.50, 62; 7.244-246.

emphasises not the unity of *BJ* 1-7, but the unity of *BJ* 1-6 and the apparent independence and detachability of the final book.

Thus it seems most reasonable to conclude that *BJ* 1-6 has a distinct and self-contained structure, to which Book 7, although demonstrating its own underlying architectural coherence, does not belong. Far from being incidental to the structure of the *Jewish War*, the Flavians are integral at the level of structure, and Josephus uses them to mark highly significant moments in the developing plan of the work. In Books 1-6, Vespasian's assumption of the command against the Jews marks the transition from the first to the second block, and also the moment when the fortunes of war shift from the previously successful Jews to the Romans; Titus' "second invasion" marks the beginning of the end for the rebels, on the one hand ushering in a glorious Roman success, but on the other inaugurating the darkest and most intense and atrocity-laden portion of the narrative. In Book 7, the Flavians and the consolidation of their position as the imperial dynasty are in fact the main theme of the first of the two major sections of the book. The structural disjunction between the careful and artfully-wrought structure of Books 1-6 and the apparently extraneous and independent Book 7 is of course insufficient on its own to prove that Book 7 was not part of the original plan and was added at a later date. However, such a hypothesis would be compatible with the structure outlined here, and this should be borne in mind during the discussion of the date of the *Jewish War* which follows.

4.3. Date

The most significant debate concerning the date of the *Jewish War* centres around the composition of Book 7, but some preliminary consideration needs to be paid to the date of

Books 1-6 too, as this is not an entirely uncomplicated question. The *termini* for the date of the *Jewish War* at first glance seem relatively straightforward. The *terminus post quem* would appear to be 75 CE, as the latest dateable event in the work is the dedication of the Templum Pacis at Rome, which Dio dates to that year.³⁵⁶ The *terminus ante quem* would be the death of Vespasian in June 79, because of comments Josephus makes in the *Vita* and *Against Apion* to the effect that he presented the work to Vespasian and Titus.³⁵⁷ Thus the work was completed between 75 and 79 CE. However, neither of these limits is entirely secure, meaning that, while the date of *BJ* 7 is especially problematic, some remarks are needed about the date of the rest of the work too.

It should immediately be apparent that the *terminus post quem* is vulnerable, since the mention of the dedication of the Templum Pacis comes in the seventh book, and if (as many suspect) that book was a later addition, then this passage cannot help us to fix the date of *BJ* 1-6. Even without this securely dated anchor point, however, a *terminus post quem* of roughly 75 seems reasonable. Josephus did not arrive in Rome until 71; he tells us that before writing the *Jewish War* in Greek, he produced an account of the Revolt in Aramaic.³⁵⁸ The *Jewish War*, even if just books 1-6 are considered, was clearly a significant literary endeavour, particularly for an author whose first language was not Greek. Thus we should expect a few years between resettlement in Rome and “publication”, to allow first for the creation of the Aramaic text and then for the laborious task of authoring the Greek account. 75, I suggest, feels about right for this.

The problems with the *terminus ante quem* are rather more complex. In the first place the comments about presenting the text to Vespasian need not be decisive, as it is possible that Vespasian saw only versions of individual books rather than the whole work (this was

³⁵⁶ *BJ* 7.158; Dio 66.15.

³⁵⁷ *C.Ap.* 1.50-51; *V.*361.

³⁵⁸ *BJ* 1.3.

certainly the case with Agrippa II, as Josephus himself makes clear).³⁵⁹ Moreover, Josephus records that it was Titus, and Titus alone, who signed the work and arranged for its further copying; the *BJ* is often seen to be considerably more laudatory towards Titus than Vespasian; and Titus and not Vespasian is mentioned in the preface to Book 1, all of which may suggest that these books in their final form belong to the reign of Titus rather than Vespasian.³⁶⁰ Furthermore, certain arguments about the treatment in *BJ* 4 of the Vitellian turncoat and Flavian favourite A. Caecina Alienus may also lead us to prefer a date after the death of Vespasian.

These arguments in favour of a date under Titus are not overly persuasive. As Menahem Stern noted, there were very good reasons why Titus should be a focus of particular attention in the work, and also why he rather than his father should be the one to bless the work with imperial approval: the glory for the capture of Jerusalem belonged particularly to him, and there is no sign that his father ever denied this.³⁶¹ Indeed, Vespasian's legitimacy depended to some extent on his dynasty, and extravagant praise of Titus would in no way have been inappropriate for a Vespasianic context.³⁶² Moreover, the young Titus is known to have had strong literary interests, something that cannot be said for his father, so his personal interest in facilitating publication is also comprehensible under Vespasian.³⁶³ Regarding the idea that Vespasian may have seen some but not all of the work, it is worth turning our attention to a passage not usually discussed with reference to this question, from a couple of sections earlier in the *Vita* than the passage usually discussed, V.361. At V.359, Josephus (addressing his rival Justus of Tiberias) writes:

³⁵⁹ V. 366.

³⁶⁰ Titus' approval: V. 363. Titus in preface: *BJ* 1.10. For these arguments, see Cohen (1979) 83-86; D. Schwartz (2011) 331.

³⁶¹ Stern (1987) 72.

³⁶² 95-96.

³⁶³ Literary interests: Suet. *Tit.* 3.2. Regarding the mention of Titus alone in the preface, we may note that this is also true of the preface to Pliny's *Natural History*, a text which was certainly made public under Vespasian.

εἰ δὲ θαρρεῖς ἄμεινον ἀπάντων συγγεγραμέναι, διὰ τί ζώντων
Οὔεσπασιανοῦ καὶ Τίτου τῶν αὐτοκρατόρων τῶν τὸν πόλεμον
κατεργασαμένων καὶ βασιλέως Ἀγρίππα περιόντος ἔτι καὶ τῶν ἐκ γένους
αὐτοῦ πάντων, ἀνδρῶν τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς παιδείας ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἠκόντων, τὴν
ἱστορίαν οὐκ ἔφερεις εἰς μέσον;

If you are brazen enough to claim that you have written better than all the
others, then why did you not bring out your history publicly [ἔφερεις εἰς
μέσον: see LSJ μέσος III.b] while Vespasian and Titus, the generals who
won that war, were still alive, as well as King Agrippa and all the members
of his family, who have attained the highest degree of Greek learning?

The force of this rhetorical question is clearly to contrast the devious Justus, waiting to
avoid having his lies exposed by Flavian and Herodian testimony, with Josephus; it seems
hard to believe that Josephus could have written this unless it were known that his account
of the war was already publicly circulating while *both* Vespasian and Titus lived.

Crucially, the phrase εἰς μέσον seems clearly to refer to public circulation rather than the
submission of draft sections or private recitations of parts of the work, as was the case
between Josephus and Agrippa: Josephus is specifically saying that he, unlike Justus,
published his account of the war while both Vespasian and Titus were alive. Thus there
are no compelling reasons which necessitate the conclusion that *BJ* 1-6 was published
under Titus, and such a conclusion would appear to work against the explicit claims made
by Josephus himself.

A. Caecina Alienus (*PIR*² C.99) complicates matters. Caecina had been given a key
military command in the Vitellian defence of Italy against the Flavian incursion led by
Antonius Primus. He tried to engineer a defection of his forces to the Flavian side, but his

troops imprisoned him instead and remained loyal to Vitellius. After Bedriacum, Primus sent Caecina to Vespasian, who received him warmly and treated him with honour. We hear nothing else about him until his death, very late in Vespasian's reign. Titus, acting as his father's praetorian prefect, invited him to dinner and, at the end of the meal, had him put to death, on variously attested pretexts.³⁶⁴ Josephus' sketch of this man and his defection is at *BJ* 4.633-644.³⁶⁵ Caecina's relevance to the dating debate is in the ostensibly pejorative nature of Josephus' portrayal. To Tacitus, Caecina was a sort of litmus test for the quality of a Flavian historian, and he criticises Flavian writers who put a positive spin on Caecina's conduct in order to please the imperial family.³⁶⁶ Thus it seems from Tacitus that Caecina was effectively "untouchable" until his death at the hands of Titus, and therefore Josephus' treatment of him would not have been possible until after he died. Caecina's death can be dated from Dio's epitomator Xiphilinus' comment (66.3.2) that it happened at about the same time as the execution of the Gaullish rebel leader Flavius Sabinus, and Tacitus (*Hist.* 2.67) claims that Sabinus hid for nine years after the suppression of the revolt of Classicus, thus giving us a date for his execution of 79. Given that Vespasian died in June of that year, this means that, as an absolute maximum, there could only have been a six-month window under Vespasian in which this passage of *BJ* 4 could have been written. This pushes us so far back into Vespasian's reign that some scholars have seen it as an indication that the reign of Titus should be preferred.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁴ For his death, see Suet. *Tit.* 6.2, who claims that Titus found on Caecina's person the text of a treasonous speech which he hoped to deliver to the troops; Dio 66.16, who claims that Titus knew that Caecina had already won the support of some of the soldiers and that his *putsch* was imminent; and (less plausibly) the epitomator of Aurelius Victor (*Epit de Caes.* 10.4) who claims that Titus believed that Caecina had raped his "wife" Berenice.

³⁶⁵ See also Tac. *Hist.* 2.99-101, 3.13-14, 31.

³⁶⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 2.101. It is interesting to note that the tone of Josephus' account is sufficient to show that he was not among the writers whom Tacitus had in mind when castigating Flavian obsequiousness.

³⁶⁷ Cohen (1979) 85-86; Attridge (1984) 192; Jones (2002) 113; D. Schwartz (2011) 312. Rajak (2002, 195) accepts this, but still places the work at the end of Vespasian's reign.

However, this argument is problematic for two reasons. In the first place, the date of Caecina's death is not absolutely secure. As T. D. Barnes has noted, if Tacitus is (as usual) counting inclusively when discussing Sabinus' period of hiding, this would in fact give us the year 78 for Caecina's death, which (given that we cannot be any more precise) significantly expands the limits of the window of opportunity from six to eighteen months.³⁶⁸ Moreover, the proposition that Caecina was untouchable under Vespasian seems to derive entirely from Tacitus' comments about Flavian historiography, and it is not always recognised that Tacitus has an agenda here: he would clearly stand to gain from the denigration of the Flavian predecessors whose works he hopes to supersede with *The Histories*. The silence of our sources on Caecina between his defection and his execution suggests that he was far from a central figure in Vespasian's Rome, and indeed his last attested office is a suffect consulship in 69, a Vitellian appointment. Whatever *beneficia* Vespasian may have conferred upon him do not appear to have included political preferment.³⁶⁹ It is possible that we have been duped by Tacitus' rhetorical posturing into believing that Caecina was closer to the regime than he really was, and it is perfectly conceivable that the sort of denigration we find in *BJ* 4 would not have provoked Vespasian's ire at all.³⁷⁰ At any rate, the arguments about Caecina do not seem strong enough to warrant ignoring Josephus' own testimony, that some version of a Greek account of the Jewish War written by him was circulating by the death of Vespasian; while authorship under Titus is not out of the question, in this thesis I will regard the balance of probabilities as suggesting that *BJ* 1-6 was a product of the last years of the reign of Vespasian.

³⁶⁸ Barnes (2005) 138.

³⁶⁹ Morgan (2006) 267-268 presents Caecina as being sidelined in Rome after the Flavian accession, like Antonius Primus.

³⁷⁰ If it is denigration: Levick, in *F.R.Hist* vol. 1 532 n.60, judges that "there is nothing in Josephus that amounts to a denunciation".

In considering the date of *BJ* 7, I will first survey and assess four particularly important arguments (concerning the preface to *BJ* 1, the identification of Josephus' Catullus, the treatment of Domitian in *BJ* 7 and questions of Greek prose style), before concluding with some consideration of the questions of Josephus' possible motives for expanding his text under Domitian.

1. The programmatic preface

The programmatic preface at *BJ* 1.19-29 has furnished the bases for a number of arguments about the composition of *BJ* 7. The summary of the contents of that book, which is substantially briefer than the summary of any other part of the work, can be quoted in full.

καὶ ὥς Ῥωμαῖοι μὲν ἐπεξῆλθον τὰ λείψανα τοῦ πολέμου καὶ τὰ ἐρύματα τῶν
χωρίων καθεῖλον, Τίτος δὲ πᾶσαν ἐπελθὼν τὴν χώραν κατεστήσατο, τὴν τε
ὑποστροφὴν αὐτοῦ τὴν εἰς Ἰταλίαν καὶ τὸν θρίαμβον.

...and [*I will describe*] how the Romans completed the remaining tasks of the war and destroyed the strongholds of the country districts, and how Titus, touring the whole region, set it in order, and his return to Italy and the triumph.

(*BJ*. 1.29)

Depending on one's perspective, the problem with this summary is either that it ends too early or that it ends too late. On the one hand, the fact that it ends with the triumph (the narrative of which concludes at *BJ* 7.157) has suggested to some commentators that this point marked the ending of an original version of *BJ* 7, and that the work was later

expanded under Domitian.³⁷¹ On the other hand, the fact that the programmatic preface contains reference to any material at all from *BJ* 7 may seem to rule out the possibility that that book could have been a later addition, and to demonstrate that Book 7 was an integral part of the work from the outset.

Ambiguities about the referents of the synopsis in *BJ* 1.29 complicate any attempt to object that it ends too early. The fact that the preface concludes with the triumph of Titus does not necessarily mean that this will be the latest event in the narrative proper: Josephus elsewhere in the preface displaces the order of events in the later narrative for rhetorical purposes.³⁷² The phrase ἐπεξηλθον τὰ λείψανα τοῦ πολέμου καὶ τὰ ἐρύματα τῶν χωρίων καθεῖλον would seem best to signify not the brief account of the demolition of the remains of Jerusalem at *BJ* 7.1-4, but rather the reduction of the Upper City and the capture of Simon bar Gioras, and the later destruction of the strongholds of the Sicarii scattered throughout the country, including the famous Masada narrative (note that the Romans destroy the fortifications or strongholds τῶν χωρίων, “of the country districts”, not of the city). Temporal sequence is distorted here: the crushing of the remains of the Jerusalem rebellion occurs before the triumph narrative, but the campaigns of Bassus and Flavius Silva occur after it in Book 7.³⁷³ This means that the two “set-piece” narratives of Book 7, the triumph and Masada, are both accounted for in the preface, and what remains missing from Book 7 is a miscellany of somewhat tangential material, such as the account of the reduction of Commagene, the disturbances in Alexandria and Cyrene, and the odd tale of Catullus and Jonathan. Josephus’ “table of contents” can elsewhere be shown to omit some material from the narrative in *BJ* 1-6; most strikingly, about half of Book 2,

³⁷¹ D. Schwartz (2011), esp. 335. S. Schwartz (1986, 377-8) follows the same logic, although his rather different identification of the events referred to in the preface means that his earlier version of *BJ* 7, written under Titus, ends at 406 rather than 157.

³⁷² Examples cited at S. Schwartz (1986) 377.

³⁷³ S. Schwartz (1986) 378, with references.

covering the years from 6 to 66 CE, is omitted.³⁷⁴ Thus Josephus' brief summary of the contents of Book 7 can be argued to include all of the most important material in the book, and to be in line with his practice elsewhere in the preface of omitting mention of less essential and well-integrated material. The prologue cannot then be used to reconstruct the contents of a hypothetical lost *ur-text* of *BJ* 7, subsequently expanded and redacted into that book's present form.³⁷⁵

As for the idea that references to content from Book 7 in the prologue to Book 1 indicate that Book 7 was always a part of the *Jewish War*, it could be argued that the addition of a new book to an already "published" text would necessitate additions to an existing preface to take the new material into account. Such later editorial activity cannot, of course, be proved, but nonetheless parallels from other literary works show that this procedure was followed by other classical historians when they expanded works, which demonstrates at least the possibility of the present *BJ* preface being such a "second edition". The works of Polybius, Livy and Ammianus all show signs of a change of the planned scope of the work, and the changes are all indicated in redrafted prefaces.³⁷⁶ Clearly what holds good for Polybius, Livy and Ammianus could also apply to Josephus, and surely any author with an ounce of literary sensitivity would recognise the need to amend a programmatic preface in the light of substantial revisions or additions. We cannot prove that *BJ* 1.29 was a later addition to bring the preface in line with the incorporation of Book 7, but it is eminently possible, and that possibility leads to a rather negative conclusion: we cannot use the contents of Josephus' programmatic preface to determine anything about the date of composition of *Jewish War* 7.

³⁷⁴ McLaren (1998) 78-9, with other examples cited there.

³⁷⁵ This is to pass over the obvious argument against a version of *BJ* 7 ending at 157: that such a book would be abnormally and unacceptably short. Additionally, the stylistic uniformity of Book 7 suggests its authorship as a unit, just as the stylistic discrepancies between 7 and 1-6 suggest that the two are distinct; on this, see sub-section 4 below.

³⁷⁶ Polybius: 3.1.9 (c.f. 1.3), on which see Davidson (2009) 125. Livy: 1 *praef.* 4. On this, see Walsh (1961) 9; Luce (1977) 7-8; Kraus (1994) 7-8. Ammianus: Kraus and Woodman (1997) 54.

2. The identification of Catullus

The second key argument involves the identity of Catullus, the corrupt governor of Crete-Cyrenaica who colluded with the *sicarius* Jonathan in the malicious prosecutions of wealthy Alexandrian and Roman Jews, including Josephus, and whose story is told at *BJ* 7.437-453. Ritterling (1927, 29) suggested that this individual should be identified as L. Valerius Catullus Messallinus (*PIR*² V.57), the high-born, blind Neronian *delator* who flourished under the Flavians, becoming a close associate of Domitian during the latter's reign. Ritterling did not discuss the significance of this identification for the dating of *BJ* 7, but it was picked up and considered at length by Seth Schwartz (1986), who makes it a major element in his argument for multiple revisions of the *Jewish War*. Schwartz notes that Josephus describes Catullus' death (*BJ* 7.452-3), and that Tacitus depicts Catullus Messallinus as alive in 94 (*Agr.* 45). The conclusion is straightforward: at the earliest, Book 7 dates to the very last years of Domitian's principate.³⁷⁷ In fact, Schwartz goes further: overt condemnation of Catullus Messallinus would not have been tolerated in Domitian's lifetime, and therefore the Catullus episode must have been a *post-Domitianic* addition.³⁷⁸

Of course, all of this stands or falls with the identification, and this identification has been comprehensively dismissed by Hannah Cotton and Werner Eck.³⁷⁹ Not all of their arguments are watertight, but they do enough to demonstrate that Josephus' Catullus

³⁷⁷ Schwartz (1986) 375-6.

³⁷⁸ On this point one can very legitimately wonder whether Josephus' exuberant praises of Domitian's heroism in *BJ* 7, to be discussed in the next sub-section, could really have been a feature of a text subjected to Nervan or Trajanic redaction, given the universal denigration of Domitian following his assassination.

³⁷⁹ Cotton and Eck (2005), 46-48.

simply cannot have been Catullus Messallinus.³⁸⁰ This removes an important argument for Domitianic (or even later) authorship of Book 7, but not the only argument. Josephus' Catullus, in reality an as yet unidentified individual who may have been related to Catullus Messallinus but cannot have been him, can tell us nothing about when Book 7 was written.

3. The treatment of Domitian

Perhaps the single passage in the book which most strongly suggests a Domitianic date is 7.75-88, Josephus' effusive account of Domitian's activities in Gaul at the time of the revolts of Civilis and Classicus in 70. The contents of this passage will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 below, but for now it is enough to note that the strong contrast between Josephus and the other accounts of this affair (discussed in section 3.1, 101) has strongly suggested to some scholars that this passage was written under Domitian.³⁸¹

Mary Beard has objected that it is "preposterous" to assume that overt praise of Domitian requires a Domitianic date.³⁸² This is fair, in general, but considering the precise nature of that overt praise can take us further than this unsupportable assumption. We saw in the discussion of this episode in the last chapter that it seems to have benefitted from some degree of historical revisionism under Domitian, that an escapade of the young Domitian which was passed over in silence in Vespasian's lifetime and was perhaps somewhat embarrassing suddenly emerges as the subject of quite extravagant commemoration in Domitianic poetry.³⁸³ Josephus' fulsome praises of Domitian, terrifying the rebels by his

³⁸⁰ In particular the very attractive argument that Catullus Messallinus cannot have been governor of Crete and Cyrenaica in 72 while also holding the ordinary consulship in 73 (entering the consulship *in absentia* does not seem to have been possible for non-imperials) is vitiated by the fact that the date of Catullus' governorship need not have been 72, as D. Schwartz (2011, 347) notes. However, their other arguments, that the governorship of Crete is too lowly an office to fit into Catullus Messallinus' *cursus* at this point, and that Josephus would not regard a death twenty years after the events narrated as "not long after", seem persuasive.

³⁸¹ Other accounts: Tac. *Hist.* 4.85-6; Suet. *Dom.* 2; Dio 64.3, 65.9. Scholars: Cohen (1979) 87; Attridge (1984) 193; S. Schwartz (1986) 378-9.

³⁸² Beard (2003) 547.

³⁸³ 102-105.

mere proximity, would seem to fit the revisionist context of the reign of Domitian better than the reign of Vespasian, otherwise as far as is known entirely silent on this episode, not least because Josephus' version could be read as disrespectful to the achievement of the highly influential senator (and probable Flavian kinsman) Q. Petillius Cerialis, who really ended the revolt.³⁸⁴ This passage of *BJ* 7 at least seems to make the most sense as a Domitianic addition.

4. Stylistic factors

A long-observed and frequently-mentioned factor in the debate is the perceptible change in prose style from *BJ* 1-6 to 7.³⁸⁵ 1-6 are stylistically coherent books, written in relatively elegant and lightly Atticising prose; the style of 7 is rather more free-form, heterogeneous and akin to the later books of the *Antiquities*. This change is so striking that it alone led Thackeray and Cohen to conclude that Book 7 was composed as a unity and separately from the earlier books, against those who would argue for multiple redactions or for parts of the book being originally written alongside 1-6, before being expanded later under Domitian.³⁸⁶

Several attempts have been made to go beyond these rather impressionistic sentiments and to move in the direction of stylometric analysis, which can be a valuable aid to resolving questions of authorship. Regrettably, the most comprehensive stylometric analysis of Josephus omits Book 7 entirely, precisely because of the concerns about its date, although

³⁸⁴ Beard (2003) 549: "at worst, [*Josephus*] is inventing the victory of a Flavian prince out of the hard work of his lieutenants."

³⁸⁵ Thackeray (1929) 35; Shutt (1961) 31; Attridge (1984) 193; and Cohen (1979) 87, where the author explicitly rejects Weber's hypothesis that Book 7 was written in two separate instalments on stylistic grounds.

³⁸⁶ See previous note.

its author does suggest that stylometrics could be a way of solving this problem.³⁸⁷

Nevertheless, other studies have been attempted. J. S. Ward deploys stylometric techniques to ascertain the degree of Latin versus Aramaic influence on Josephus' Greek, concluding that Latin influence increases and Aramaic influence decreases over time. One does not need to accept Ward's broader conclusions about Latin and Aramaic in order to acknowledge that he appears to have identified fairly solid markers of late Josephan Greek ("Latinisms") and of early Josephan Greek ("Aramaisms"), and that on his analysis Book 7 is unusual on a number of measures. For instance, *BJ* 7 shows an unusual preference for using the accusative to signify temporal duration, with three occurrences in Book 7 alone; there are only two occurrences in the entirety of *BJ* 1-6, but 109 in the later works.

Similarly, *BJ* 7 is the only book of the *War* which uses the genitive to indicate time within which, but this construction occurs thirteen times in the later works.³⁸⁸ Likewise, Redondo has noted the much greater incidence of temporal $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ in Book 7 in contrast to 1-6.³⁸⁹ In a broad attempt to use crasis and elision as indicators of authorship in a number of Greek texts, Morton and Michaelson find no statistically significant difference in these features between the individual books of *War* 1-6, but they find such a difference between these books and 7, where the numbers are much closer to those for the *Antiquities*.³⁹⁰ Of course, these features of prose style represent stylistic tics, of the sort which authors can naturally fall into over the course of writing. However, the fact that Josephus falls into so many different tics simultaneously at the beginning of *BJ* 7 suggests some kind of disconnect between that book and what has come before, as does the book's idiosyncratic vocabulary.³⁹¹ These studies may be partial and piecemeal, but they seem to confirm what

³⁸⁷ Williams (1992), see 25 n.7 on the exclusion of *BJ* 7, and 202-3 on the possibility of stylometrics contributing to this debate.

³⁸⁸ Ward (2007), esp. 647-648.

³⁸⁹ Redondo (2000) 430.

³⁹⁰ Morton and Michaelson (1973), 41-43, with Table 9 (page 52).

³⁹¹ Vocabulary: Feldman (1975).

readers of the *Jewish War* have long intuited: that Book 7 (and all of Book 7) is recognisably stylistically different from Books 1-6, and is stylistically closer to the kind of Greek which Josephus was writing about twenty years later, during the period of the composition of the later books of the *Jewish Antiquities* in the reign of Domitian.

Motivations

If *BJ* 7 really was a product of the reign of Domitian, then the question that remains is why. What motivated Josephus to return to a work completed up to twenty years earlier, which ended on a decisive and significant moment, and to damage the tight narrative structure he had created by appending a new book? Given the diversity of Book 7's contents, it would not be possible within the compass of this discussion to account for the inclusion of every element in the book. However, I hope to argue that there are comprehensible reasons why Josephus may have been drawn to the themes of some of the contents of Book 7 in Domitian's Rome. Obviously, a certain and definitive statement of the reasons why Josephus may have added Book 7 at a later date is beyond our capabilities. However, all that is required here is to show that such a decision would at least have been comprehensible.

Perhaps the most straightforward reason why a historian may decide to continue a previously-completed narrative is simply that they decide that there is more of the story to tell. If *Jewish War* 1-6 was originally a complete and self-contained narrative, then it would follow the "Flavian line" on Judaea quite closely in one respect. The return to Rome of Titus after the fall of Jerusalem, the garrisoning of the city and the imposition of Roman provincial administrative structures at that time, the celebration of the Triumph in 71 and the immediate minting of *CAPTA*-type coins all suggest that, as far as Flavian

political messaging was concerned, the suppression of Jewish revolt was concluded at the destruction of Jerusalem; a Vespasianic edition of *BJ* 1-6 would endorse that view. However, in reality, the suppression of the Revolt was not over in 70: Jewish anti-Roman agitation continued, and it not only continued in Judaea but (perhaps more alarmingly) spread to the Diaspora too. This alone may have given Josephus the impetus to decide to continue his story, and perhaps (considering the apparent intensification of anti-Jewish prejudice under Domitian) to emphasise that, with the prosecution of the *sicarius* Jonathan after his agitations in Cyrene, the Jewish rebel movement now really had been eradicated.³⁹² Certainly the two stand-out episodes in Book 7, the triumph and Masada, make for inherently attractive subject matter, offering Josephus the chance to create elaborate and rhetorically-ambitious showpiece narratives, which may in and of itself be a reason to decide to attempt them.³⁹³ The triumph was perhaps newly topical under Domitian considering, as discussed above, the emphasis on the achievements of Vespasian and Titus at the beginning of Domitian's reign, and especially given the creation of a major new regime monument in Josephus' home city which depicted scenes from that event, the Arch of Titus.³⁹⁴ In addition to its vivid and dramatic character, a number of scholars have suggested that the Masada narrative has possible contemporary political resonances, given the prominent "opposition" under Domitian and the topicality of the notion of suicide as an assertion of freedom among some members of the senatorial

³⁹² *BJ* 7.437-453.

³⁹³ Triumph: *BJ* 7.121-157; Masada: *BJ* 7.275-408.

³⁹⁴ 102-103 above. Chapman (2009, 11) suggests that Josephus' triumph account may have inspired the design of the reliefs on the Arch of Titus. If we accept a Domitianic date for *BJ* 7, however, it raises another intriguing possibility, that the account in the *Jewish War* is in fact inspired and informed by the Arch reliefs! This would certainly add another layer of representational complexity to an already mimetically-dense narrative (Josephus' account of the triumph in *BJ* 7 is a representation of a representation of a war which the author has already represented in Books 3-6, and which may contain within it implied representations of an artistic representation of the same representation of the war on a prominent contemporary monument).

elite.³⁹⁵ Furthermore, the material about Domitian's campaigns in Gaul would have permitted Josephus to rectify a "fault" with his earlier text after the unexpected accession of the younger Flavian, that his narrative was not sufficiently respectful to Domitian, who played no direct role in the suppression of the Jewish Revolt.³⁹⁶ Puzzles certainly remain: I find it impossible to conceive of a pressing reason for Josephus to add under Domitian (or indeed to write under Vespasian) extraneous material about wars in Moesia and Media.³⁹⁷ Nevertheless, a great deal of material in this work can be explained as *plausibly* Domitianic and, while none of this can be demonstrated beyond doubt, it provides a conceivable context in which Domitianic composition (strongly suggested by the arguments outlined earlier in this chapter) makes sense.

It remains to consider two passages which might be awkward for the hypothesis that Book 7 is a later addition, both passages comprising cross-references from within Books 1-6 to content in Book 7. The first is at *BJ* 1.33, from Josephus' account of the history of Judaea in the late Hellenistic period:

ὁ δ' ἀρχιερεὺς Ὀνίας πρὸς Πτολεμαῖον διαφυγὼν καὶ παρ' αὐτοῦ λαβὼν
τόπον ἐν τῇ Ἡλιοπολίτῃ νομῷ πολίχνην τε τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις ἀπεικασμένην
καὶ ναὸν ἔκτισεν ὅμοιον· περὶ ὧν αὖθις κατὰ χώραν δηλώσομεν.

The high priest Onias fled to Ptolemy and received from him a territory in the Heliopolitan nome, where he founded a small community on the model

³⁹⁵ Opposition: MacMullen (1966) 1-95; Bengtson (1979) 226-239; Rutledge (2009); Murphy (2004) 122-128. On Masada and Roman suicide, see Vidal-Naquet (1978) 5-6; Ladouceur (1980) 253-6; Cohen (1982b); Ladouceur (1987) 98-101; Newell (1989). Shaye Cohen (1982b) suggests another motivation for adding the Masada account in the reign of Domitian: a desire to please the general Flavius Silva (*PIR*² F.368), the victor of Masada. However, Silva is given so little prominence in the narrative that a desire to flatter him must have been, at best, a subsidiary motivation which cannot be said to animate the whole account.

³⁹⁶ *BJ* 7.75-88.

³⁹⁷ *BJ* 7.89-95, 244-251.

of Jerusalem and a temple: I shall speak more about this later at a different point.

This reference is picked up again at *BJ* 7.421-432. Here, Josephus gives a much more detailed account of the foundation of the temple, and concludes with the notice that Vespasian ordered its closure. It may be noted here, however, that the final clause of the quoted sentence above could easily be an addition in a putative second edition of the *Jewish War*. In Book 1, the information about the Leontopolis temple is scarcely integral, and is presented merely as an aside during Josephus' account of the late Hellenistic history of Judaea. The Leontopolis temple acquires greater relevance in Book 7, because in this book Josephus begins to pay attention for the first time to dissent in the Diaspora and its consequences. The different focus in Book 7 justifies an account of the closure of the temple, enabling Josephus to give us a fuller account of its history, thus possibly motivating the addition of a cross-reference in the relevant part of Book 1 in recognition of the new scope of the book. The second cross-reference comes very close to the end of Book 6, at 6.433:

ἀπετίσατό γε μὴν ὁ θεὸς ἀμφοτέρους ἀξίως, καὶ Ἰωάννης μὲν λιμώττων μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐν τοῖς ὑπονόμοις ἦν πολλάκις ὑπερηφάνησε παρὰ Ῥωμαίων δεξιὰν λαβεῖν ἰκέτευσε, Σίμων δὲ πολλὰ διαμαχήσας πρὸς τὴν ἀνάγκην, ὥς διὰ τῶν ἐξῆς δηλώσομεν, αὐτὸν παραδίδωσιν.

But God punished them both as they deserved, and John, starving alongside his brothers in the sewers, begged to receive from the Romans that mercy which he had often rejected, while Simon, having fought against his fate a great deal, surrendered himself, as we will relate in its correct place.

This detail is picked up later at BJ 7.25-36. This cross-reference would seem to be a more serious obstacle than the first one: it means that, if the original *Jewish War* really did end at the climax of Book 6, then the two charismatic antagonists John and Simon remained at large at the work's close. However, even this is not insuperable. What is worth noting is that the passage quoted above (with the clause ὥς διὰ τῶν ἐξῆς δηλώσομεν removed as a later addition) in fact contains all the information the reader needs to know about John's and Simon's arrest, and the next chapter of BJ 6 goes on to tell us their subsequent fates, John held as a prisoner and Simon executed at the triumph. Thus by the end of Book 6, the reader in fact has been provided with everything necessary for closure in terms of the fates of the two principal antagonists. If Book 7 is a later addition, then perhaps it was Simon's starring role as the "enemy king" in Josephus' account of the triumph which encouraged him to include more details on the circumstances of their apprehension.³⁹⁸ Thus neither of these cross-references is decisive evidence that Book 7 was a part of the original design of the *Jewish War*, and both could easily be minor amendments in a revised second edition.

Conclusions

Overall, this section has argued that, on balance of probabilities, BJ 1-6 was most likely a product of the last years of the reign of Vespasian. Neither the contents of the Book 1 preface nor the (bogus) identification of Josephus' Catullus as Catullus Messallinus can contribute anything to our understanding of the composition of BJ 7. However, both stylistic and structural considerations strongly suggest that BJ 7 (and *all* of BJ 7) was a later addition to the work, and the treatment of Domitian implies that the best context for the composition of that book was in the reign of that emperor. While not all of Book 7's

³⁹⁸ BJ 7.153-5.

content is entirely explicable as relevant under Domitian, enough is to make the later addition of the book comprehensible, and neither of the earlier cross-references precludes this possibility. Of course, none of this is definite proof, and certainty about the original scope of the work is not possible. In this thesis, I will stop short of concluding that Book 7 was definitely a Domitianic-period addition. However, I will regard this hypothesis as extremely viable. Thus I will discuss Book 7 in Chapter 6, separately from the rest of the work in Chapter 5, and in addition to attending to how that book relates to the rest of the work I will aim to remain sensitive to its possible resonances in a specifically Domitianic context.

Chapter 5: The Flavians in *Jewish War* 1-6

Informed by the understanding of political expression in Flavian Rome outlined in Chapter 2 and the landscape of contemporary regime representation investigated in Chapter 3, the following two chapters will consider the representation of members of the Flavian family in Josephus' *Jewish War*. This chapter will consider first the representation of Vespasian (5.1), then Titus (5.2), then Domitian (5.3) in *BJ* 1-6. The presentation of Vespasian and Titus will each be discussed under four thematic sub-headings; because of the very minor role which Domitian plays in these books, his representation will be considered in a single short section.

5.1. Vespasian in *BJ* 1-6

5.1.1: Vespasian as Military Commander

Given the nature and subject-matter of the *Jewish War*, it is entirely predictable that a large part of the presentation of both Vespasian and Titus in that work would concern their capabilities and achievements as military commanders. This military focus in itself accords well with what we have seen of the image of both of these figures in Flavian Rome.³⁹⁹ In the words with which Josephus introduces his emperor as a character in the narrative, Vespasian was, according to the political messaging which obtained during his reign, ἄνδρα ταῖς ἀπὸ νεότητος στρατείαις ἐγγεγηρακότα (“a man who, starting out in his youth, had grown old on campaigns”).⁴⁰⁰ Clearly Josephus' focus on Vespasian's competence as a general is wholly congruent with much of the messaging about the emperor to which he will have been exposed while living in Vespasian's Rome.

³⁹⁹ 91-92, 96-98.

⁴⁰⁰ *BJ* 3.4.

Josephus immediately establishes Vespasian's military credibility at the outset of *Jewish War* 3, Vespasian's first appearance as a character, with a brief retrospective of his pre-Judaean military accomplishments at the moment of his appointment to the Judaean command:

μόνον εὕρισκει Οὐεσπασιανὸν ταῖς χρεῖαις ἀναλογοῦντα καὶ τηλικούτου πολέμου μέγεθος ἀναδέξασθαι δυνάμενον, ἄνδρα ταῖς ἀπὸ νεότητος στρατείαις ἐγγεγηρακότα καὶ προειρηνεύσαντα μὲν πάλαι Ῥωμαίοις τὴν ἐσπέραν ὑπὸ Γερμανῶν ταρασσομένην, προσκτησάμενον δὲ τοῖς ὅπλοις Βρεττανίαν τέως λανθάνουσαν, ὅθεν αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ πατρὶ Κλαυδίῳ παρέσχε χωρὶς ἰδρῶτος ἰδίου θρίαμβον καταγαγεῖν.

He [Nero] found only Vespasian equal to what was needed and strong enough to bear the weight of so great a conflict, a man who, starting out as a youth, had grown old on campaigns, who had long ago pre-emptively pacified the West for the Romans when it was being disturbed by the Germans, and who had obtained under arms Britain, which had for so long evaded conquest, and thus provided for Nero's own father Claudius the opportunity to lead a triumph with no effort on his own part.

(BJ 3.4-5)

This is a strong and clear introduction, which can leave the reader in no doubt as to Josephus' broad assessment of Vespasian's tried and tested military credentials. It is also a passage characterised by blatant exaggeration. The German disturbances first mentioned appear to refer to Vespasian's brief posting to the Second Legion on the Rhine, just a few months before that legion and its legate were allocated to the British campaign in 43, a posting during which no military activity on Vespasian's part is recorded in any other

source.⁴⁰¹ The reference to Vespasian's stint in Britain is also hyperbolic. We have already examined Vespasian's role in the British campaign, and found that he made a creditable contribution, but one which came to be exaggerated in Flavian literature.⁴⁰² However important his role in those events may have been, it is a gross exaggeration (and somewhat disrespectful to the achievements of Aulus Plautius) for Josephus to claim that Vespasian alone gained possession of Britain on Claudius' behalf, and Josephus' statement that Claudius celebrated his triumph without any effort on his own part disregards the fact that Claudius did travel briefly to Britain, where he was at least nominally in charge of the assault on Camulodunum.⁴⁰³ It is clear that Josephus wants his readers immediately to recognise and believe in Vespasian's assured competence and solid military credentials, even at the cost of grossly overstating the future emperor's record.

The impression of Vespasian as general in Galilee is, overall, one of solid and assured professionalism. Most of his actions follow the prescriptions of good strategic and tactical practice, as recommended in Graeco-Roman military handbooks or in the historiographical tradition. He pays attention to choosing suitable locations for camps, including for sieges; he extracts intelligence from prisoners; he displays his military forces in order to inspire fear in the enemy and give them a chance to surrender; he is solicitous for the safety of his men and does not expose them to unnecessary risks; he consoles his men with rhetoric after a reverse, and takes steps to replenish his depleted strength; he holds councils of his officers before major engagements and pays attention to the advice he receives; *in extremis*, he fights in the line personally.⁴⁰⁴ The long sequence of stratagems and counter-

⁴⁰¹ See Homo (1949) 22; Levick (1999) 15. Josephus' Greek may acknowledge this with his use of the word προειρηνεύσαντα, a *hapax legomenon* which seems to imply the pacification of a region before any military activity is necessary.

⁴⁰² 91-92.

⁴⁰³ Dio 60.21.2-4. Suet. *Claud.* 17 records the journey, with no mention of Camulodunum.

⁴⁰⁴ Attention to favourable positions: *BJ* 3.146, 4.11, c.f. Frontin. *Str.* 2.2.1-14; intelligence from prisoners: *BJ* 3.317-322, c.f. Frontin. *Str.* 1.2.1-9, Caesar *BCiv.* 1.66; display of Roman force: *BJ* 3.127-8, 136, c.f. Onasander 28; *cura* for safety of troops: *BJ* 3.209-210, 4.30-32, c.f. Xen. *Eq. mag.* 62, Frontin. *Str.* 4.6.1-3,

stratagems which Vespasian and Josephus deploy against each other at Jotapata is largely conventional too, despite Josephus' occasional bids to burnish his own credibility by claiming to have invented a stock counter-siege technique.⁴⁰⁵ Although it is clear that every one of these courses of action can be justified and positively exemplified with reference to the technical and historical literature of the time, not all of them are unambiguously positive in such literature, and that ambiguity potentially creates a space for a latent critique of Vespasian's performance on Josephus' part. However, it does not seem to me that anything in this material constitutes serious criticism. The idea that Vespasian's concern for his soldiers rendered him not a cautious but a timid commander may certainly have occurred to ancient readers.⁴⁰⁶ However, we should note that *cura* for the troops is cited as a positive virtue not only in technical manuals but also in historiography, and indeed Caesar boasts that he is so concerned for his soldiers that he even willingly passes up on opportunities to acquire significant tactical advantages out of concern for his men's safety.⁴⁰⁷ It is perhaps the case that how this quality is assessed depends on the outcome of the campaign: Nicias merits criticism because his caution or timidity contributed to the Athenian failure on Sicily, whereas Caesar can praise himself

Thuc. 1.63, Caesar *BGall.* 6.34, *BCiv.* 1.72; consolatory rhetoric after reverse: *BJ* 3.283-4, 4.39-48, c.f. Thuc. 2.87, Caesar, *BCiv.* 3.73; replenishing depleted resources: *BJ* 4.87-91; councils of war: *BJ* 3.161-164, 4.366-376, c.f. Onasander 3; fighting in the line: *BJ* 4.30-34, c.f. Frontin. *Str.* 2.8.12-13; Caesar *BGall.* 2.25, 5.38, 7.87-88, *BCiv.* 2.42. More broadly, on qualities of ideal Roman military leaders (many of which are identifiable in Josephus' Vespasian and Titus) see Coulston (2013) 10-14. For surveys of the military handbooks, which remain regrettably under-studied, see Campbell (1987) and Lendon (1999).

⁴⁰⁵ E.g. cushioning blows from rams: *BJ* 3.223, c.f. Frontin. *Str.* 32.3; dropping boulders on siege-works: *BJ* 3.165, c.f. Frontin. *Str.* 32.3; using fabric shields to shelter people building up walls: *BJ* 3.173, c.f. Frontin. *Str.* 32.9-10; destroying earthworks with fire: *BJ* 3.227, c.f. Frontin. *Str.* 33; deceiving the enemy by ostentatiously displaying a scarce resource: *BJ* 3.187, c.f. Frontin. *Str.* 3.15.1-6 (many of these devices are also repeated at Onasander 42). It is perhaps somewhat embarrassing for Vespasian that he was taken in by the last-mentioned trick, one of the oldest counter-siege stratagems in the book, which dates at least as far back as Herodotus (1.21-22). For fraudulent claims by Josephus to have invented well-established siege tactics, see *BJ* 3.190, 271, 277, with Cohen (1975) 95-96.

⁴⁰⁶ Thuc. 7.42 intimates the caution of Nicias in Sicily as timidity; this theme is much amplified in Plutarch's biography of the same figure (*Nic.* 2.4, 14, 16.8). See also the criticisms Tacitus lays against Suetonius Paulinus for his timidity at First Bedriacum in 69 (*Tac. Hist.* 2.25, with comments in Ash 2007), and Plutarch's criticism of the timidity of the Spartan general Clearchus at *Artax.* 8.3-6.

⁴⁰⁷ Xen. *Eq. mag.* 62; Frontin. *Str.* 4.6.1-3; Caesar *BGall.* 6.34; see also Polyb. 3.89.2, on Fabius Maximus Cunctator.

for demonstrating the same quality because it did not hamper his spectacular conquests in Gaul. Given Vespasian's evident success in Galilee, one suspects that the kinder interpretation of Vespasian's generalship would prevail among ancient readers. Another basis for criticism might be Vespasian's personal involvement in the fighting at Gamala in 68.⁴⁰⁸ The appropriateness of Roman generals fighting in person was a subject of contemporary controversy: in opposition to the positive comments of Josephus' contemporary Frontinus on commanders who fight in line to inspire their troops, we have the caution of the first-century Greek philosopher and author of a military manual Onasander, who advises against this at all costs because of the risk of the general's death and the effect that such an eventuality would have on morale.⁴⁰⁹ However, a long tradition of dynamic war-leaders fighting in the line, from Caesar at Alesia through Alexander and ultimately back to the *aristeiai* of the Homeric heroes, provides a positive context for such stories, and gives them their own appeal utterly distinct from the stern and sober advice of a technical manual.⁴¹⁰ To read Josephus' depiction of Vespasian's heroism and courage under fire at Gamala as a critique would be a stretch, perhaps overemphasising the authority and appeal of dry tactical manuals and neglecting the more romantic and dramatic elements of Graeco-Roman historical narratives. We should also note that Josephus is happy to depict himself personally fighting on a number of occasions at Jotapata, suggesting that we should not read such behaviour on Vespasian's part as recklessness.⁴¹¹ Ambiguity is always important, and we can certainly note that these

⁴⁰⁸ *BJ* 4.31-35. Stern (1987) 73-74.

⁴⁰⁹ Frontin. *Str.* 2.8.12-13; Onasander 33. McLaren (2005) 287 makes much of Titus' supposed recklessness while fighting in person in the *Jewish War*, although he supports this interpretation only with reference to Onasander and Plutarch's comment (*Pel.* 2.4) that generals are not required to fight like common soldiers.

⁴¹⁰ A commander fighting in person clearly could be presented as noble behaviour in historiography. For instance, Catiline receives (uncharacteristically) admiring comments from Sallust for his death fighting in person (*Sall. Cat.* 60.7, on which see Ash 2002 257-259). For other commanders in battle, see (e.g.) Polyb. 1.27.12, 2.1.8, 3.116.2-4; Suet. *Aug.* 10.4; Tac. *Ann.* 1.65; Caesar, *BCiv.* 2.42; Plin. *Pan.* 13. Note also that Trajan was happy to be depicted charging into action on his Column (Lepper and Frere 1988, 145-145 and plate LXXI).

⁴¹¹ *BJ* 3.151, 205, 234, 259-264.

aspects of Josephus' depiction of Vespasian as a general are capable of supporting less than flattering readings (and could therefore constitute doublespeak), but overall Vespasian's lapses of competence seem trifling, more than compensated for by other factors. It seems unlikely that Josephus wanted his readers to have anything other than a high assessment of Vespasian's technical capabilities as a leader of men.

However, technical competence was only one aspect of ancient generalship, which always had an ethical dimension too. There is perhaps slightly more substance to the claim that Vespasian displays elements of unbecoming cruelty in his conduct of the Galilean campaign.⁴¹² It is important, however, when assessing Vespasian's purported acts of cruelty, to assess them according to ancient rather than modern standards. He kills all males of military age in Gabara and enslaves the residents of surrounding towns; the first day of the taking of Jotapata sees indiscriminate slaughter, and on subsequent days (at Vespasian's orders) only women and children are spared; the extent of the slaughter of Jewish rebels at the naval confrontation on the Sea of Galilee sickens even the Roman perpetrators of that slaughter; the Romans, infuriated by heavy losses incurred due to structural collapses in the city, massacre the whole population of Gamala, except for two women who manage to hide and the many who kill themselves rather than be killed by the Romans.⁴¹³ However, none of this is out of keeping with the norms of Roman warfare. Vespasian grants rebel-held cities the opportunity to surrender. Those that do are spared, and those that do not are treated as custom dictates. Indeed, Vespasian even shows himself unusually merciful on this account in the case of Tiberias, a city in Agrippa II's kingdom

⁴¹² Stern (1987) 73-74.

⁴¹³ Gabara: *BJ* 3.132-4; Jotapata: *BJ* 3.329-338; Tarichaeae: *BJ* 3.530; Gamala: *BJ* 4.70-83. The Tarichaeae engagement appears to have been celebrated, in rather aggrandising terms, on the *VICTORIA NAVALIS* sestertius issued at Rome in 71 (*BMC* 2 Vespasian 597-599). Josephus gamely and perhaps with knowing bathos styles the engagement a ναυμαχία (*B.J.* 3.331), despite depicting a chaotic skirmish between σκεδίαι ("rafts") and σκάφη ("small boats") at *B.J.* 3.522-3.

which did not surrender; Vespasian allows himself to be persuaded that the revolt in the city was the work of outside troublemakers rather than the residents, whom he spares, receiving lavish praises for his mercy on Josephus' part.⁴¹⁴ To condemn any of this as cruelty seems to be to attempt to read Roman warfare through the lens of the Geneva Convention. However, two genuinely ethically problematic episodes remain. The first, the indiscriminate butchery of civilian refugees at the outset of the war, is attributed by Josephus not to Vespasian but to the military tribune Placidus, who at that point has an independent command.⁴¹⁵ The second, the most challenging aspect of Josephus' presentation of Vespasian as a military commander, concerns his ostensibly brutal and dishonest treatment of the defeated rebels at the city of Tarichaeae.⁴¹⁶

The reason for this narrative's difficulty is that it appears to show Vespasian breaching a promise of safe passage he made to a group of rebels who had surrendered. The breaking of such amnesties is generally portrayed in a very negative light in the historiographical tradition, including, elsewhere, by Josephus himself.⁴¹⁷ After the bloody naval engagement and the surrender of Tarichaeae, Vespasian separates the rebels from the residents. He is persuaded by the unanimous opinion of his officers in council that the rebels must be killed, but is unwilling to perform the executions on the spot in Tarichaeae. He is again, reluctantly, persuaded by his officers to give them false assurances of safe passage. The rebels are conducted to the stadium in Tiberias, where the old and useless are executed, and the rest enslaved and sent to work on Nero's canal at the Isthmus or handed over to Agrippa. It is to Josephus' credit that he unflinchingly portrays an episode which could clearly incur censure against Vespasian even when judged according to Roman ethical

⁴¹⁴ *B.J.* 3.453, 461.

⁴¹⁵ *B.J.* 3.110-111. On the identity of Placidus, see Mason (2016a) 361-362.

⁴¹⁶ *B.J.* 3.532-540, cited as latent critique of Vespasian at Mason (2016a) 125.

⁴¹⁷ E.g. Thuc. 1.126-128, 2.5.5-7, 3.36.2; Caesar *BCiv.* 1.85, 3.28; *BGall.* 5.38; Livy *Per* 49.7. At *BGall.* 4.13, Caesar has to defend himself for taking into captivity some German envoys who had come to him under truce. At *BJ* 2.450-456, Josephus vituperates the Jerusalem rebels for massacring a Roman garrison which had surrendered and received pledges that their lives would be spared. See also Onasander 37.3.

standards of warfare. However, we must take into account all of the devices which Josephus employs to minimise Vespasian's culpability here. At the outset, Vespasian takes care to ensure that only the authors of the revolt and not the innocent residents of the town are punished.⁴¹⁸ Both the decisions to kill and to deceive the rebels are attributed not to Vespasian but to his officers; they meet with some resistance when proposing this plan to him.⁴¹⁹ Furthermore, Josephus appears to endorse the judgement that the rebels did not deserve mercy and would represent a danger were they to be released.⁴²⁰ Finally, Josephus describes the terms under which Vespasian releases them as ἀμφίβολον ("ambiguous"), suggesting that Vespasian's action did not break the strict terms of his amnesty.⁴²¹ This is somewhat legalistic and sophistic, but nevertheless it removes a potential charge of impiety. On the one hand, it is instructive that, on the one occasion when Vespasian's conduct as a general is genuinely questionable by ancient standards, Josephus goes to such unusual lengths to exonerate him. We may remember here tendencies noted in our earlier survey of the two other extant contemporary historians of the early Principate, Velleius and Nicolaus, which found that awkward material about emperors could be included so long as the facts were related in a manner which showed sensitivity to that difficulty, and which aimed at minimising any reputational damage which that material might do.⁴²² Of course the other side of this is that we may suspect that all the ostentatious excuses might simply serve as a means to enable Josephus safely to depict this objectionable Vespasianic deception. We should further note this episode's strongly emphatic position, at the end of Book 3. On the face of it, there seems nothing about the capture of the small lakeside town of Tarichaeae which might justify this prominence. It is not the last town in the North to fall, nor is it even the last town in Agrippa's kingdom. Steve Mason's survey of book-

⁴¹⁸ *BJ* 3.532.

⁴¹⁹ *BJ* 3.532-3, 536.

⁴²⁰ *BJ* 3.534.

⁴²¹ *BJ* 3.537.

⁴²² 59-68.

length in the *Jewish War* shows that it would have been perfectly possible for Josephus to extend Book 3 up to the capture of Gamala or Gischala (which fulfil those requirements) and thus end on a rather more decisive event while still remaining well within the acceptable limits of book-length for the *Jewish War*.⁴²³ Moreover, everywhere else Josephus' books end strongly. Some conclude with a decisive event (Book 1 with the death of Herod, Book 6 with the destruction of Jerusalem), or on a "cliffhanger" building suspense for what follows (Book 2 with preparations for the imminent war, Book 5 with Titus' army moving up to the walls of the Temple) or, in one case, with a combination of the two (Book 4, ending on both Vespasian's establishment as emperor and the preparations for Titus' "second invasion" of Judaea). Josephus knows how to end a book effectively; perversely, the very weakness of the ending of Book 3 makes it stand out, as the only book in *BJ* 1-6 which ends with a whimper rather than a bang. Thus Josephus ends his book at this generally anticlimactic point, but crucially a point which emphasises Vespasian's faithlessness. It seems that, for all the ostentatious apologetics, Josephus was determined not only to relate this story but even to emphasise it by its placement within the work. This has serious implications for his characterisation of Vespasian overall.

In sum, Vespasian is hyperbolically introduced with a strong emphasis on his military competence, as a tested war-hero with the full confidence of his *princeps*, the pacifier of Germans and conqueror of Britain. His conduct of the Galilean campaign confirms expectations: he discharges his military responsibilities judiciously, effectively and in accordance with the precepts of history and technical expertise. While some aspects of his technical mastery of generalship are open to criticism, all can equally be justified with reference to literary tradition. On the ethical front, Vespasian conducts himself fully in line

⁴²³ Mason (2016a) 96. The Gamala account ends at *BJ* 4.83, and Gischala at 4.91.

with the conventions of ancient warfare on all but one occasion; in that case, Josephus does not flinch from depicting the offending episode, but equally goes out of his way, at least ostensibly, to minimise Vespasian's culpability in the eyes of his readers. With the exception of the hyperbolic summary of his early career and the praises of his mercy at Tiberias, one does not find overt flattery of Vespasian's performance as a general in the *Jewish War* (of the sort which Velleius lavishes on his accounts of Tiberius' generalship at, *inter alia*, 2.105); however, judged from his actions, there seems little doubt that Josephus' portrait of Vespasian is ostensibly very positive, and highly conducive to the needs of a *princeps* keen to promote himself as a warrior-emperor. So is this shameless panegyric, nauseating flattery, "Flavian propaganda"?

Josephus is an author with multiple apparent agendas. The need to present the Flavians in a broadly positive light was clearly one such agenda, as it was for every other author in the imperial circle in Flavian Rome. But what is striking is how many of his other tendencies appear to converge on this point, and to actively require that Vespasian's military competence should be stressed. Such a presentation is of use to Josephus' narrative structure in *BJ* 1-6, to his personal apologetic, and to strengthening his authority claims as a historian, in addition to suiting the requirements of the Flavian house. On the structural front, I argued in Chapter 4 (109-117) for a three-block division of *BJ* 1-6. The first block, Books 1-2, covers a period of Roman military and administrative failure, culminating in the outbreak of the Revolt and the most significant Jewish victory in the conflict, the rout of the legions of Cestius Gallus. Fortune then shifts in the second block towards the Roman recovery, signalled by both the improvement of Roman leadership under Vespasian and the subsequent deterioration in Jewish leadership with the defection of Josephus and the death of Ananus. This shift is signalled strongly at the very outset of Book 3 (the beginning of the second block), by Nero, who publicly proclaims that the

defeat of Cestius is attributable στρατηγῶν μὲν ῥασιτώνῃ (“to the carelessness of the generals”), and whose response to the situation is to appoint the highly competent Vespasian.⁴²⁴ Then comes Vespasian’s hyperbolic introduction, the exaggerated summary of his earlier career, signalling leadership of a different calibre to anything the Jewish rebels have hitherto faced.⁴²⁵ Vespasian’s competence thus becomes structurally necessary in charting the shifting fortune of the two sides in the Revolt, underscoring the narrative’s progression from Roman failure to Roman recovery.

The issues of personal apology and narrative authority are closely intertwined, because the nexus that binds Josephus the character to Josephus the narrator can never be completely severed in the reader’s mind, and Josephus himself makes something of this connection too. At the very outset of the work, Josephus criticises previous authors of histories of the Revolt on several grounds: they did not participate in the events, their histories are casually-compiled from mere hearsay, and they seek to flatter the Romans and denigrate the Jews. He then gives a brief autobiographical statement which shows that Josephus does not manifest those flaws: he is a learned Jew who will not traduce his own people, he observed the war personally from both sides, and he fought against the Romans.⁴²⁶ It is vital to note here the importance to his narrative authority that Josephus assigns to his practical experience of having fought the Romans in the Revolt: part of his claim to superiority over his predecessors is that they played no role in the events, whereas he held an active command. This contains shades of Polybian pragmatic history, Josephus as an experienced military man passing informed judgement on military affairs.⁴²⁷ But there is a

⁴²⁴ *BJ* 3.2.

⁴²⁵ *BJ* 3.4-5.

⁴²⁶ *BJ* 1.1-3.

⁴²⁷ Polyb. 12.25g, on the importance of experience in war for writing about war. Thucydides was also a participant-historian: like Josephus, he also made the fact that he had observed the war on both sides part of his claim to authority (5.26.5), but unlike Josephus he never explicitly cites his own military experience as *per se* a basis for authority, perhaps because he was aware of just how unimpressive his own stint as a general had been (4.104.4). On the “tradition of soldier-authors” in Graeco-Roman antiquity, see London

potential problem: Josephus' stint as a general in Galilee was, even judged by details derived from his own account of that command in the *Jewish War*, unimpressive. He spent much of his governorship squabbling with his rival rebel leader John of Gischala; the walls with which he fortified the strongholds of Galilee, and of which he writes with apparent pride, seem to have barely inconvenienced Vespasian; his sole serious confrontation with Roman forces, at Jotapata, ended in defeat.⁴²⁸ There is not much basis here for a claim to authoritative military expertise. But the disgrace of all this can be alleviated somewhat by emphasizing the quality of his opponent. There can be no shame in being defeated by an experienced and competent commander in the mould of Vespasian, particularly if (as Josephus wants us to think in his Jotapata narrative) he gave Vespasian a tough fight. Vespasian himself is shown to rate Josephus highly as a general on several occasions, even declaring that he believes that the Revolt would be finished if Josephus could only be captured.⁴²⁹ But this cannot be dismissed as pure vanity. A virtuous circle is being created here. The credibility and persuasiveness of Josephus' positive assessment of Vespasian's generalship is greatly enhanced by the reader's positive assessment of the generalship of the expert soldier-historian Josephus, since Josephus himself has foregrounded the importance of his practical experience to his authority. When Vespasian is made to praise Josephus' generalship, he is contributing to the authority of Josephus as historian to praise Vespasian's generalship. Just as Josephus mitigates his own failures by talking up the opposition, so our assessment of Josephus as a worthy opponent makes Vespasian's achievement in defeating him seem all the more noteworthy (note Josephus' comment at *BJ* 1.8, that writers who traduced the Jewish rebels as worthless opponents were actually showing disrespect to the achievements of

(1999) 275-6. Roth (2016, 709) has perhaps been swayed by Josephan rhetoric in declaring Josephus an author who should be taken seriously by Roman historians as "an *experienced* and critical writer on military affairs" (my emphasis). On Josephus' self-presentation as an ideal general, see Cohen (1979) 91-97.

⁴²⁸ John of Gischala: *BJ* 2.590-594, 614-646. Walls and other defensive measures: *BJ* 2.569-576.

⁴²⁹ *BJ* 3.143, 340, 348-9.

Vespasian and Titus in defeating them, a rhetorical move which Steve Mason designates the *argumentum ad Caesaris dignitatem*).⁴³⁰

Thus more than politically congenial flattery is at stake in this depiction of Vespasian's generalship. Josephus does indeed (with one partial exception) portray his deeds as commander in an unfailingly positive light; however, in so doing he reinforces the structure of his work and his interpretation of the progress of the Revolt, mitigates the reader's judgement of his own unimpressive performance as Galilean governor-general, and bolsters his narrative authority as a historian and his qualifications to pass judgement on military affairs and to write battle narratives competently. The point is that these tendencies are entirely and inextricably entangled with the propagandistic impulse towards flattery, but these tendencies are also entirely Josephus' own. Josephus' depiction of Vespasianic generalship highlights how the historian can skilfully knit together his own literary advantage with the needs of his patrons, and how viewing this material purely as propagandistic panegyric written to gratify Vespasian is to miss much of what is at stake.

5.1.2: Vespasian and the divine

Josephus' claims that Vespasian's rise to the Principate was predicted both in his own prophetic dreams and in Jewish scripture carry the clear connotation that God elevated Vespasian to supreme power.⁴³¹ This has attracted frequent comment in the scholarship; but less commonly noted has been the extraordinary coincidence of this idea with the great many stories circulating in the Graeco-Roman world about the divine election of the new

⁴³⁰ Mason (2005a) 258-9.

⁴³¹ *BJ* 6.312-313; 3.351-354; 3.399-408.

emperor.⁴³² As often, Josephus seems simultaneously to be alluding to Jewish tradition and to concepts likely to be more familiar to his Greek and Roman audience. I have already argued for a particular model of the wider circulation of *omina imperii* stories which lent divine legitimisation to Vespasian's rule: stories initially circulated in the East, to consolidate the support of the soldiers and the citizens of Vespasian's base in Alexandria, and then later omens with a more western and Italian feel emerged once Vespasian was securely in power.⁴³³ In this section I will turn to consider how Josephus' presentation of this issue relates to that broader context. Following this I will consider how familiarity with Jewish traditions about the divine election of gentile world-rulers might further nuance this aspect of Josephus' presentation of the emperor.

Table 2 collects all indications of divine support for Vespasian in the *Jewish War*. It can profitably be read alongside Table 1, 79-81 above, which examines similar stories from other classical sources. In considering these passages, I will discuss three types of material in turn, first the passing references Josephus makes to the *omina imperii*, then the divine tokens discussed in more detail by Josephus, specifically his own prophetic dreams and the idea that Vespasian's accession was predicted in Jewish scripture, and finally indications that God showed his favour to Vespasian by intervening in his battles against the Jewish rebels in Galilee and its environs.

⁴³² The bibliography on Josephus' prophecy and the oracle in Jewish scripture is large. See, for instance, Blenkinsopp (1974); Gray (1993) 35-79; Rajak (2002) 185-194; Kelley (2004).

⁴³³ 79-85.

Table 2: Manifestations of divine support for Vespasian in Josephus' *Jewish War*

Number	Reference	Sign
2.1	<i>BJ</i> 1.23; 3.404; 4.623	Unspecific references made to many other signs of divine approval of Vespasian's reign. 3.404 attributes all of these signs to the Jewish God.
2.2	<i>BJ</i> 6.312-313 (c.f. Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 4.5; Tac. <i>Hist.</i> 5.13)	An "ambiguous oracle" in Jewish scripture refers to a world-ruler arising from Judaea. The rebels believe that this figure will be Jewish; the prophecy actually relates to Vespasian.
2.3	<i>BJ</i> 3.351-354; 3.399-408; 4.622-626 (c.f. Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 5.6; Dio 65.1.4)	Josephus receives dreams full of disturbing imagery from God during the siege of Jotapata. Under divine inspiration and with the help of certain passages of scripture, Josephus understands that these dreams forecast, among other things, the rise of Vespasian to the position of <i>princeps</i> . When captured, Josephus makes this prediction to Vespasian, but it is not believed. When the prophecy has come to pass, Josephus is freed from captivity.
2.4	<i>BJ</i> 3.6	The Jewish God prompted Nero to send Vespasian to Judaea, as he was already working towards his accession.
2.5	<i>BJ</i> 3.293	God delivers the city of Jaffa to Vespasian's lieutenant Traianus (authorial judgement).
2.6	<i>BJ</i> 4.76	A miraculous (δαμόνιος) storm dooms the defenders of Gamala.

First, I will consider those passing references (2.1). One scholar has claimed that Josephus disregards the conventional Roman-style *omina imperii* of Vespasian entirely, but these passing references actually show that in fact Josephus was prepared to extend to the Flavians the courtesy of endorsing the validity, in unspecific terms, of whatever

contemporary stories were in circulation which cloaked Vespasian's accession in sanctity.⁴³⁴ But there is a caveat. At *Jewish War* 3.404, we read the following:

κατὰ μικρὸν δὲ εἰς πίστιν ὑπήγετο τοῦ θεοῦ διεγείροντος αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν
ἡγεμονίαν ἥδη καὶ τὰ σκῆπτρα δι' ἑτέρων σημείων προδεικνύοντος

But little by little he [*Vespasian*] was led to believe [*in Josephus' prophecy*],
as God was already inciting in him hopes of imperial power and foretelling
the sceptre through other signs.

This passage makes it absolutely clear that Josephus attributes these tokens of Vespasian's imperial destiny not to Serapis or Ba'al or Athene Alea, but to the Jewish God. Of course, one might observe, no disrespect need be intended here: how could Josephus have done otherwise, given his own religious stance? This may be merely a form of tribute being paid to Vespasian, a way of Josephus endorsing the legitimacy and authenticity of Vespasian's *omina* in a way which renders these stories acceptable within the limits of Judaism, an instantiation, perhaps, of Olivier Hekster's model of the imperial image promoted from the centre being appropriated and transformed in line with the expectations of provincial cultures.⁴³⁵ However, different readings are possible. We should recall that the Graeco-Roman theorists of safe criticism stressed that plausible deniability of malicious intent of this sort was essential in being able to pull off literary dissidence.⁴³⁶ Let us consider for a moment just how much discourtesy is involved in this ostensible courtesy to the Flavians. The post-70 Flavian theological narrative about Judaea (as shown in Chapter 3 above) was clear and uncompromising: the Jewish God was an enemy of Rome, and an enemy who had been crushed by the broad *consensus deorum* which

⁴³⁴ Luke (2010) 81.

⁴³⁵ Hekster (2015) 28-30.

⁴³⁶ Quint. *Inst.* 9.2.67, 69

supported Rome and Vespasian. YHWH had failed to protect his people and been defeated and discredited to the point where he no longer merited, and was no longer permitted to receive, public cult.⁴³⁷ Josephus' contention in the passage under consideration is therefore that the Flavian family's narrative about its own accession is wrong, and that they owe their position entirely to (from their perspective) the defeated, discredited and failed God of the Jews. So what is this passage, flattery or dissidence? Is it a courtesy to Vespasian, affirming within the acceptable parameters of Josephus' Judaism the validity of Vespasian's image as the elect of the divine? Or is it a gross discourtesy which undermines the Flavian narrative about both the crushing of the Jewish Revolt and the Flavian political ascendancy? Are these evaluative categories even applicable in such a case, when the courtesy does not simply mask the discourtesy but rather enables it to be expressed in the first place? Here the familiar paradigms for thinking about Josephus as a political commentator, either propagandist or dissident, seem inadequate.

When turning to consider two specifically Jewish "omens" of Vespasian's destiny, the tale of Josephus' own prophecy to Vespasian and the contention that Vespasian's accession was predicted in scripture (2.2 and 2.3), we immediately notice that both of these omens are recorded not only by Josephus but by our classical sources too, with Suetonius and Dio mentioning Josephus' prophecy and Suetonius and Tacitus mentioning the "ambiguous oracle" about the world-ruler arising from Judaea (1.2 and 1.3, p. 79). Some scholars take this multiple attestation as an indication that these omens, too, were disseminated in "Flavian propaganda", making Josephus not only the author of such propaganda but also the subject of material propagated by what Shaye Cohen has called (semi-seriously, one hopes) "the propaganda bureau of the new imperial family".⁴³⁸ This of course need not be the case: Josephus himself may be the (probably indirect) source for these later authors,

⁴³⁷ 89-90.

⁴³⁸ Cohen (1982a) 366; Franchet d'Espérey (1986) 3069-3072.

and moreover it seems difficult to accept that Vespasian, once in power, would want to propagate the idea that his accession was in any way backed by a deity whom he elsewhere presents as crushed, defeated and discredited. If Vespasian really wanted his subjects to believe that he owed his position to any extent to the god of the Jews, one might expect him to show that god rather more gratitude by, for instance, allowing his Temple to be rebuilt. In fact such stories can circulate quite independently of “Flavian propaganda”, and whether our classical authors found these stories in Josephus or in other sources, we need not and probably should not detect the hand of the propaganda bureau here.

Josephus’ prophecy, especially, is better understood as a Josephan rather than a Flavian narrative. Once again, we should note both the courtesy and discourtesy involved in this gesture, which agrees with the Flavian narrative that Vespasian’s election was in fulfilment of the will of heaven, but which strongly argues that the Jewish God, and only the Jewish God, lies behind it. Further, we should note the full range of prophetic messages included in Josephus’ dreams: the imminent doom of the Jews, the fate of the Roman sovereigns, and the fact that Fortune (*Tyche*) had passed entirely over to the Roman side.⁴³⁹ Josephus is here appropriating pro-Vespasianic narratives of divine election, claiming them wholly for the Jewish God, and associating them with the key underlying interpretative *topos* of the *Jewish War*, that God has abandoned the Jews because of the actions of the rebels and now favours the Romans in the war.⁴⁴⁰ Thus Josephus simultaneously pays tribute to popular narratives about Vespasian and the divine, while exploiting them to reinforce his own tendentious interpretation of the theology of the Revolt (at the same time, we note, as he exploits these prophetic dreams for his *apologia*

⁴³⁹ *BJ* 3.351, 354. On the connection between the rise of Vespasian and the failure of the Revolt in this prophecy, see Lindner (1972) 69.

⁴⁴⁰ Among many other expressions of this idea, see *BJ* 2.390-4; 3.293, 484; 4.366; 5.367-368; 6.38-41.

for his personal conduct at and after Jotapata).⁴⁴¹ In citing all of these elements together, Josephus weaves them into a single prophetic scheme: since some parts of this scheme have already been “proved” by history (the crushing of the Revolt and the elevation of Vespasian) it makes the less tangible, and more tendentious, elements (the theological doctrine of God’s abandonment of the Jewish rebels) seem self-evident and securely demonstrated too. It is, in sum, hard to say whether Josephus depicts this material in order to flatter Vespasian and confirm pro-Flavian notions of divine election, or in order to co-opt and deploy those pro-Flavian notions in the service of distinctly Josephan, rather than Flavian, tendencies. This passage excellently illustrates how Josephus is capable of serving more than one agenda in the same piece of text, and how he appropriates imperial narratives and repurposes them to serve his own ends.

Finally, there are two brief indications (2.5 and 2.6) that God personally aided Vespasian in his battles against the Jewish rebels (we may, depending on how we interpret the phrase *κατὰ τύχην* at *BJ* 3.327, be tempted to add the thick mist which fell over Jotapata on the day of the final Roman assault and considerably hampered the defenders). J. R. Fears draws a sharp distinction between *omina imperii* strictly speaking and signs of divine aid in battle, on the grounds that divine support for a Roman general need only imply the gods’ favour towards Rome rather than towards that general specifically; this is a fair observation, but I would maintain that, in a context in which claims of divine favour and election are elsewhere being made for an emperor, the idea of divine support in battle reinforces the impression that that individual is especially close and dear to the divine.⁴⁴² Thus these passages relate to Vespasian’s divine election and strengthen the impression of him as the elect of heaven. But, typically, they also further Josephus’ Jeremianic or

⁴⁴¹ Note particularly that it is these prophetic insights which ensure that, in defecting to the Roman camp, Josephus is not a *προδότης* (“traitor”) but God’s *διάκονος* (“servant”), as is explicitly stated at *BJ* 3.354. Sterling (1991) 236-237; Den Hollander (2014) 94-96.

⁴⁴² Fears (1977) 191-193.

Deuteronomistic reading of the Revolt; we know from elsewhere in the *Jewish War* that God has abandoned the Jews, and what we learn specifically from these passages and similar ones concerning Titus is that God has not only left the Jews to their fate, but that he is actively intervening in history to engineer their defeat, just as God takes up arms against Jerusalem alongside the Babylonians in *Lamentations* 2.⁴⁴³ Thus, once again, Josephus references and, as far as he can, endorses a popular narrative about the emperor, while simultaneously using this material to bolster his theological reading of the crushing of the Revolt and the fall of the Temple.

A complex picture of Josephus' stance is emerging here, and this picture is complicated further by the existence among Josephus' readership of those familiar with Jewish scriptures, and therefore susceptible to echoes and nuances largely invisible to the typical Greek or Roman reader. Startling though it may seem to some that Josephus depicts a gentile ruler as the instrument, and indeed as the elect, of God, there is solid biblical precedent for both aspects of this presentation. I will conclude this section by reading the divine aspects of Josephus' presentation of Vespasian from that perspective.

While there is no explicit direct comparison in the *Jewish War* between either Vespasian or Titus and Nebuchadnezzar, there can be no doubt that to readers versed in *2 Kings* and *Chronicles* this is the role which these two figures play in Josephus' biblically-allusive narrative, the gentile rulers who wage war against Israel with the backing of the Jewish God, and whose victories are a punishment against the Jewish people for their transgressions, culminating in the destruction of the Temple. However, while the idea of Nebuchadnezzar as the instrument of the divine will is frequently expressed in the Hebrew

⁴⁴³ Esp. Lam. 2:4-7.

Bible, there is no real sense in which Nebuchadnezzar is presented as God's elect, as someone who was raised up by God with a specific purpose, and whose career was helped by God in any significant way beyond those parts which directly concerned the oppression of the Judahites.⁴⁴⁴ In order to find a convincing parallel for a gentile elect of God in the Hebrew Bible we have to turn to another foreign world-ruler with a very different role to play in Jewish history, Cyrus II, founder of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, and (according to *2 Chronicles* and *Ezra*) the promulgator of an edict which allowed the exiled Judahites to return to their ancestral land and rebuild their Temple.⁴⁴⁵

The notion of the divine election of Cyrus is expressed in the part of the Book of Isaiah known as *Deutero-Isaiah* (Isa. 40-55), a product of the last decade of the Neo-Babylonian Empire or the early phase of Persian rule in Babylon.⁴⁴⁶ Cyrus, a contemporary or near-contemporary figure, is mentioned by name twice, and clearly referred to in a number of other places. He is in one instance referred to as מְשִׁיחוֹ, "his Messiah" (the "his" relating to YHWH), previously a title reserved for the divinely-elected Davidic rulers of the United Kingdom, Israel or Judah.⁴⁴⁷ Even more redolent of divine election, God on one occasion calls Cyrus בְּחִירִי, "my chosen".⁴⁴⁸ Throughout the work it is emphasized that God raised up Cyrus and helped him in his spectacular military campaigns, going far beyond the very specific and targeted aid which he had given to Nebuchadnezzar.⁴⁴⁹ A number of scholars

⁴⁴⁴ Jeremiah (27:6) has God referring to Nebuchadnezzar as עַבְדִּי "my servant", a telling phrase but one which has less clear or strong connotations of election than "Messiah" or "chosen one".

⁴⁴⁵ 2 Chron. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:2-4.

⁴⁴⁶ Date: Smith (1944) 1-6; Netzer (1974) 35; Scullion (1982) 16; Quinn-Miscal (2001) 3-6; Blenkinsopp (2002) 93; Fried (2002) 379.

⁴⁴⁷ Isa. 45:1. On the word Messiah, see Quinn-Miscal (2001) 170; Heskett (2011) 115-116. Deutero-Isaiah is one of the earliest attempts by a Yahwistic author to engage with Messianic ideology after the rule of the Davidic line was put to an end in Judah, apparently breaching the promise of unending Davidic rule which God made to David through Nathan (2 Sam. 7:16; 21:5). While Deutero-Isaiah solves this problem by transferring the titles and attributes of the Davidic Messiah onto a foreign world-ruler, later authors would instead displace these traditional aspects of Davidic monarchical ideology onto a future, often eschatological, Jewish figure. See Von Rad (1965) 169-175; Hanson (1992); Roberts (1992); Collins (1995) 20-48; Schaper (2009) 3-14.

⁴⁴⁸ Isa. 42:1.

⁴⁴⁹ E.g. 40:23-24; 41:25ff; 45:4-5.

have noted how double-facing this is, in a manner already familiar from Josephus' handling of Vespasian: *Deutero-Isaiah*'s conception of a Messianic Cyrus legitimises Cyrus' rule in Israel and Judah, while simultaneously contesting interpretations which attributed Cyrus' successes to the gods of the nations (one thinks of the Cyrus Cylinder, which regards Cyrus' conquest of Babylon as the work of the Babylonian deity Marduk). Indeed, *Deutero-Isaiah* even uses the career of Cyrus in a "trial-speech" to demonstrate the proposition that only YHWH has power over human history, not the mute idols of the gentiles, much as Josephus reattributes Vespasian's *omina imperii* to the same deity, using Vespasian's success to validate the power of God.⁴⁵⁰ *Deutero-Isaiah* does for Cyrus in his context what Josephus does for Vespasian in his: he legitimises him as the elect of the divine, while simultaneously using that notion to advance the author's own agenda, even when that agenda encompasses the flat denial and refutation of pro-Cyrus narratives circulating elsewhere.⁴⁵¹

The most striking aspect of the parallel between Vespasian and Cyrus as divinely-elected foreign rulers is that, in Josephus' scheme, the divine plans which each of these figures are to play are in opposition. Cyrus is elected and elevated in order to fulfil a divine scheme which will culminate in the rebuilding of the Temple; conversely Vespasian (like his more common, indeed structurally necessary, parallel figure Nebuchadnezzar) is elected in order to set in motion events which will culminate in the destruction of the very same Temple which Cyrus was to rebuild. But this is perhaps more than just nice contrastive parallelism. In the decree of Cyrus as preserved in both *2 Chronicles* and *Ezra*, Cyrus explicitly states that he is rebuilding YHWH's temple because of the aid he received from that God.⁴⁵² Josephus echoes this claim at *BJ* 5.389, during his survey of Jewish history for the benefit

⁴⁵⁰ Isa. 41:2-4. See Whybray (1975) 60-61.

⁴⁵¹ For this reading of *Deutero-Isaiah*, see Knight (1989) 87-88; Kida (1990) 12; Hanson (1995) 101-102; Heskett (2011) 119-125.

⁴⁵² 2 Chron. 36:23; Ezra 1.2.

of the Jerusalem rebels, where he writes that Cyrus rebuilt the temple as a way of thanking the Jewish God.⁴⁵³ Given the extensive help for Vespasian which Josephus elsewhere attributes to that God, there is perhaps a hortatory dimension to this statement which even Greek and Roman readers might have been able to recognise: Cyrus repaid the God who helped him by rebuilding his Temple, so why shouldn't Vespasian? Certainly the whole force of the *Jewish War*, in challenging the Flavian narrative of the defeat of the enemy god YHWH and replacing it with a narrative where YHWH fights for Rome and elects and elevates the Flavian Dynasty, is chipping away at the kind of thinking among the rulers and their circle which made the reconstruction of the Jerusalem Temple seem inappropriate. If God had been such a friend to Vespasian and to Rome, there was no reason why his Temple could not be rebuilt. Perhaps the Cyrus parallel sends positive and optimistic encouragement to Jewish readers alert to the sole feasible biblical parallel for a divinely elected gentile world-ruler. History had already made Vespasian a Nebuchadnezzar, but there was still time for him to play more than one role. It was not yet too late for YHWH's Messiah Vespasian also to be the Messianic Cyrus, the rebuilder as well as the destroyer of the house of God.⁴⁵⁴

The notion, repeatedly articulated in the *Jewish War*, that God uses Rome to chastise his people may have been in some ways problematic from a Flavian point of view. It relegates Rome (and the Flavians) to the role of mere instruments, and it suggests that all of world history is focused on the relationship between YHWH and his people, a hard message to

⁴⁵³ Cyrus rebuilds the temple *χαρίσασθαι τῷ θεῷ* ("to oblige God", with connotations of reciprocity). *AJ* 11.1-7 is even more explicit: here, Cyrus actually reads the prophecies of Isaiah, prompting his gratitude to God and the return of the exiles and rebuilding of the Temple.

⁴⁵⁴ To use the helpful terminology of J.C. Scott, Josephus' text here (as elsewhere) both resonates with the "public transcript" of divine support for the Flavians and embodies elements of a "hidden transcript" invisible to Josephus' intended elite Roman readership, which emphasises the authority of YHWH over world affairs and sees Rome and the Flavians as merely tools within the divine *Weltenplan*. Scott (1990), esp. 1-16.

sell after the catastrophe of 70. Josephus sweetens this notion by going beyond what any biblical author does for Vespasian and Titus' clearest biblical analogue, Nebuchadnezzar, and presenting the founder of the new dynasty as especially close to God and chosen by him. This courtesy has the added advantage of engaging closely and clearly with contemporary pro-regime tales of the divine election of the Flavian house to the Principate. However this courtesy is not wholly unproblematic, challenging as it does the conception of YHWH as crushed and defeated by the Roman gods, thus mingling a certain amount of defiance into the politeness. Josephus' theocentric vision of the reason for the failure of the Jewish Revolt is a profound challenge to the notion of the failure or defeat of God, much as *Deutero-Isaiah's* depiction of Cyrus as God's Messiah (self-evidently controversial in its time, hence the vehemence with which the prophet has to defend the notion) used the success of a foreign ruler to vindicate an apparently helpless and failed deity. While recognising the notion of the divine election of Vespasian from stories circulating widely in the contemporary culture, Roman readers may have been struck by the boldness of this assertion and, if at all persuaded by Josephus' narrative, wondered whether Vespasian perhaps ought to show more respect to his divine ally than was the case. Jewish readers, alert to the precedent of Cyrus as Messiah, may have been encouraged to hope that God's vengeance might work itself out in a rather shorter span than Jeremiah's seventy years, and that Vespasian could be something more than just a Nebuchadnezzar in this rerun of biblical history.

5.1.3. Vespasian and the legitimacy of the Flavian accession

The Roman civil wars which broke out following the assisted suicide of Nero and which ultimately elevated Vespasian from his command against the Jewish rebels to the throne

presented Josephus with real and pressing problems. As discussed in Section 3.1 above, it is commonly accepted that one of the reasons for the intense official commemoration during Vespasian's reign of the suppression of the Jews was precisely to displace attention from the unpalatable fact that the new emperor had won his position by military might alone, to obscure the strife that Vespasian unleashed on Rome in order to become emperor and to channel the Roman people's celebratory impulses at the climax of civil war into the commemoration of a wholly less problematic "foreign conquest".⁴⁵⁵ Yet for all that the Flavians may have wanted the focus to remain on Judaea, it was necessary for Josephus even as a historian of the Jewish Revolt to devote some attention to the convulsions which Vespasian's bid for the throne provoked in the wider Roman world. The two conflicts are not cleanly separable: the course of the one materially impacted the course of the other. In particular, events in Italy directly affected the course of events in Judaea, and thus the narrative Josephus needed to tell. The death of Nero and the accession of Galba resulted in a prolonged suspension of hostilities against the Jewish rebels and the temporary absence from the scene of two key players, Titus and King Agrippa II. The Flavian bid resulted in the disappearance of major characters such as Mucianus and Vespasian himself from the Judaeian theatre of operations, the drawing off of a significant portion of the Judaeian armies, and a consequent military reorganisation which led most visibly to the appointment of Titus in his father's place as overall commander of the climactic assault on Jerusalem. In short, no account of the Jewish Revolt could possibly be complete and satisfying if it did not take into account events in the West. Moreover, thematic parallels between the two conflicts must surely have seemed irresistible. Josephus, following his model Thucydides, makes the concept of internal division and factionalism, *στάσις*,

⁴⁵⁵ 86-89 above.

central to his narrative and to his analysis of the failure of the Revolt.⁴⁵⁶ It was an irresistible coincidence, surely, to any Thucydidean-minded author that, at precisely the moment when Jewish *stasis* reaches its height in Jerusalem, the same affliction breaks out at Rome too.⁴⁵⁷ Both narrative and analytical considerations, then, favoured giving an account of Rome's great civil upheavals, but the danger of upsetting the Flavian family by mishandling such sensitive material must have been acute.⁴⁵⁸ Consequently, examining Josephus' treatment of the Flavian *coup* should reveal a great deal about how he navigated the perils of political expression in Vespasian's Rome.

In the relevant part of the programmatic preface at the beginning of Book 1, Josephus sketches in brief some of the key themes which will appear in his detailed treatment of the civil war later in Book 4:

Ἐπειθ' ὡς ἤδη καμνόντων Ἰουδαίοις τῶν πραγμάτων θνήσκει μὲν Νέρων,
Οὐεσπασιανὸς δὲ ἐπὶ Ἱεροσολύμων ὠρμημένος ὑπὸ τῆς ἡγεμονίας
ἀνθέλκεται: τὰ τε γενόμενα περὶ ταύτης αὐτῷ σημεῖα καὶ τὰς ἐπὶ Ῥώμης
μεταβολάς, καὶ ὡς αὐτὸς ὑπὸ τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἄκων αὐτοκράτωρ
ἀποδείκνυται.

Then [*I shall relate*] how, when the situation was turning adverse for the Jews, Nero died, and Vespasian, intent on Jerusalem, was turned aside by the call to power, the divine signs concerning this which occurred to him, and the upheavals at Rome, and how he was hailed *imperator* by the soldiers against his will.

(BJ 1.23-24)

⁴⁵⁶ On Josephus and Thucydidean *stasis*, see Mader (2000) 56-103; Canfora (2006) 750-751; Price (2011).

⁴⁵⁷ Josephus' exploitation (or perhaps fabrication) of this coincidence will be discussed at 185-186 below.

⁴⁵⁸ Note Ellen O'Gorman's formulation of two types of dissident history under the Early Principate, one of which is a history which presents an unacceptable narrative of how the emperor came to power (2000, 134).

I have already considered the importance of the divine signs of Vespasian's imperial destiny in the previous section, and they are surely a key aspect of the way in which Josephus engages with Flavian claims about the legitimacy of the *coup*.⁴⁵⁹ However, even when one is enacting the will of God one's conduct can still be subject to judgement, and in this section I will focus on how Josephus presents the human aspects of the Flavian campaign. In the prefatory passage above, I would draw attention to certain details as paradigmatic of the way in which Josephus will handle this material in the main narrative: the passive construction expressing that Vespasian was turned aside from his objective by the needs of the imperial power in the chaos following Nero's death; the word μεταβολάς, which has Thucydidean resonances in discussions of *stasis*, used to designate the troubles at Rome; the role of Vespasian's soldiers in prompting his bid for power; and perhaps above all Vespasian's unwillingness to be hailed *imperator*.⁴⁶⁰ All of these details from the preface will recur in my discussion of the main narrative: for now, we can observe that the general impression that begins to form here is that of a soldier intent on doing his duty who is not desirous of personal power, but who accedes to the requests of others to take charge for reasons beyond self-interest. This maps very closely onto the Vespasian we discover in the actual narrative of these events in Book 4, and prepares the reader to accept Josephus' tendentious presentation of these events in the main narrative. The programmatic preface carries the appearance of a neutral factual survey of major episodes within the subsequent work, as impartial as a contents page, but there is nothing impartial or unengaged about it. This passage, as we shall see, is saturated with interpretation, conditioning the reader to accept as objective fact a reading of the Flavian *putsch* which is shot through with partiality.

⁴⁵⁹ 153-164.

⁴⁶⁰ On Thucydides and μεταβολή, see Pothou (2011) 266-267.

Preceding his detailed account of the Flavian *coup*, at BJ 4.491-496, we find effectively a second preface, this time more concerned with what Josephus will not tell us than with what he will:

Οὐεσπασιανῷ δ' εἰς Καισάρειαν ἐπιστρέψαντι καὶ παρασκευαζομένῳ μετὰ
πάσης τῆς δυνάμεως ἐπ' αὐτῶν τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων ἐξελαύνειν ἀγγέλλεται
Νέρων ἀνηρημένος, τρία καὶ δέκα βασιλεύσας ἔτη καὶ ἡμέρας ὀκτώ. περὶ οὗ
λέγειν ὃν τρόπον εἰς τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐξύβρισεν πιστεύσας τὰ πράγματα τοῖς
πονηροτάτοις, Νυμφιδίῳ καὶ Τιγελλίνῳ, τοῖς τε ἀναξίοις τῶν ἐξελευθέρων, καὶ
ὥς ὑπὸ τούτων ἐπιβουλευθεὶς κατελείφθη μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν φυλάκων ἀπάντων,
διαδράς δὲ σὺν τέτρασι τῶν πιστῶν ἀπελευθέρων ἐν τοῖς προαστείοις ἑαυτὸν
ἀνείλεν, καὶ ὥς οἱ καταλύσαντες αὐτὸν μετ' οὐ πολὺν χρόνον δίκας ἔδοσαν,
τόν τε κατὰ τὴν Γαλατίαν πόλεμον ὥς ἐτελεύτησε, καὶ πῶς Γάλβας
ἀποδειχθεὶς αὐτοκράτωρ εἰς Ῥώμην ἐπανῆλθεν ἐκ τῆς Ἰσπανίας, καὶ ὥς ὑπὸ
τῶν στρατιωτῶν αἰτιαθεὶς ἐπὶ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἐδολοφονήθη κατὰ μέσσην τὴν
Ῥωμαίων ἀγορὸν ἀπεδείχθη τε αὐτοκράτωρ Ὅθων· τὴν τε τούτου στρατείαν
ἐπὶ τοὺς Οὐιτελλίου στρατηγούς καὶ κατάλυσιν, ἔπειτα τοὺς κατὰ Οὐιτέλλιον
ταράχους καὶ τὴν περὶ τὸ Καπετώλιον συμβολήν, ὅπως τε Ἀντώνιος Πρίμος
καὶ Μουκιανὸς διαφθείραντες Οὐιτέλλιον καὶ τὰ Γερμανικὰ τάγματα
κατέστειλαν τὸν ἐμφύλιον πόλεμον. πάντα ταῦτα διεξιέναι μὲν ἐπ' ἀκριβὲς
παρητησάμην, ἐπειδὴ δι' ὄχλου πᾶσιν ἐστὶν καὶ πολλοῖς Ἑλλήνων τε καὶ
Ῥωμαίων ἀναγέγραπται, συναφείας δὲ ἔνεκεν τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ τοῦ μὴ
διηρτῆσθαι τὴν ἱστορίαν κεφαλαιωδῶς ἕκαστον ἐπισημαίνομαι.

When Vespasian had returned to Caesarea and was preparing to march with all his forces against Jerusalem itself, it was announced to him that Nero had died, after a reign of thirteen years and eight days [sic]. To write about this affair,

about how Nero violated the dignity of his office, entrusting all affairs to the wickedest of men Nymphidius and Tigellinus, the most worthless of freedmen [sic], and how, when he was plotted against by these men, he was abandoned by all his guards, and how, escaping with four loyal freedmen, he killed himself on the outskirts of the city, and how his destroyers paid the penalty not long after; how the war in Gaul ended, and how Galba, having been hailed emperor, returned to Rome from Spain, and how he was accused of stinginess by the soldiers and killed by treachery in the middle of the Roman Forum, and how Otho was hailed emperor, and of his war against Vitellius' generals and his death, and the disturbances under Vitellius and the fighting at the Capitol, and how Antonius Primus and Mucianus, having destroyed Vitellius and his German forces, put an end to civil war - I ask leave not to cover all of these matters in detail, because they are known to all and have been related by many of the Greek and Roman historians. However, because of the interrelatedness of events and so as not to create a break in the story, I have here sketched out each of these events summarily.

(BJ 4.491-496)

This "second preface" to the events of 69 is a deftly-constructed *praeteritio*, in which Josephus rapidly and efficiently provides for the reader the information needed to understand Vespasian's *coup* without drowning in detail. His use of *praeteritio* is itself interesting: the reasons he articulates for passing over this material (which is not passed over at all) are unconvincing and read more like pretexts. He writes that the events are universally known (in which case one may question why he felt the need to include this summary), and that they have already been covered by contemporary Greek and Roman

historians (the reliability of whom he roundly denigrates in the preface to *BJ* 1).⁴⁶¹ Rhetorical *praeteritio* may be being used here to signal the author's awareness of the potential to create offence among the powerful, suggesting to the readers his real reason for reticence, his awareness of the political sensitivity inherent in this content.⁴⁶² It is helpful to pause to consider the mechanics of this extraordinary long sentence, and particularly to reflect on how it would come across to a first-time reader. The inordinately long second sentence quoted above forms a *recusatio*, but it is a very long time before the reader realises this: it is not until *παρητησάμην*, very close to the end, that the reader becomes aware that Josephus is in fact declining to describe in detail the long list of scenes he has previously adumbrated. Past experience with the *Jewish War* would incline the reader initially to expect this list to be prefatory, to be introducing a discussion of precisely these themes, because the reader has already encountered such a sentence (a long list of clauses introduced by *ὥς* or *ὅπως*) in the Book 1 programmatic preface, which is structured in precisely the same way, and which of course functions as a proclamation, not a disavowal, of the intent to narrate the listed episodes.⁴⁶³ Thus reader expectation is being manipulated and reversed here: primed by the programmatic preface, the first-time reader initially understands what she is reading as a programmatic survey of Josephus' imminent civil war narrative, before discovering that actually Josephus is announcing that he will *not* be treating this material. Soon after, there follows a second reversal. Having told us that he will not relate the campaign of Otho against Vitellius' generals, the reign of Vitellius, the fighting at the Capitol and the campaigns of Primus and Mucianus, he proceeds in short order to give a fairly detailed narrative of precisely these events. This instability, this uncertainty about what will and will not be told, may indicate and

⁴⁶¹ *BJ* 1.1-2, 6-9, 16.

⁴⁶² Perhaps a variety of what Dominik *et al.* call "publicly-enacted self-censorship" (2009b, 3), which can be a form of critique insofar as it exposes the limits of free expression. On self-conscious political *praeteritio* in the *Epistulae* of Seneca, see Wilson (2015) 139.

⁴⁶³ *BJ* 1.19-29.

communicate uncertainty about what can and cannot be said in Vespasian's Rome, marking Josephus' awareness of the sensitivity of the task he is about to undertake. Moreover, the historian's *recusatio*, his reluctance to undertake the civil war, can be seen to mirror Vespasian's own, and both are equally futile and perhaps equally illusory. However much Vespasian and Josephus may claim that they wish to remain focused on Jerusalem, it rapidly becomes clear that everything leads to Rome, and to the central and uncomfortable fact that Vespasian became *princeps* mainly by right of conquest.

I will consider Josephus' detailed treatment of these events in three parts. First I will examine Josephus' depiction of Vespasian's own conduct during the period of his *coup*, which is mostly concerned with how and why he took the decision to contend for power in the first place. Following this I will consider the depiction of Vespasian's short-lived predecessors of 69, Galba, Otho and Vitellius, and the account of the campaigns of the Flavian forces in Italy led by Antonius Primus, operations which led to the downfall of Vitellius and Vespasian's accession.

Josephus' narrative of Vespasian's slow and reluctant acceptance of the necessity of intervening in the civil war is told at *BJ* 4.491-632, intercut with material pertaining to the Jerusalem *stasis*.⁴⁶⁴ The narrative can be summarised as follows. When news of Galba's accession arrives at Caesarea, Vespasian suspends operations and sends Titus and Agrippa II to Rome to obtain instructions from the new emperor. At Corinth, the pair learn of Otho's *coup* and Vitellius' candidacy. Titus opts to return to Judaea in the face of this confusion, and father and son remain in anxious suspense, unwilling to resume a foreign

⁴⁶⁴ Jerusalem *stasis*: 4.503-545, 556-584.

war when beset by such concern for their own country.⁴⁶⁵ After breaking off to describe the violent convulsions of *stasis* on the rebel side caused by the activities of Simon bar Gioras, Josephus returns to the Italian situation, which he explicitly compares with the civil war between the Jewish rebel factions (Οὐ μόνον δὲ κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν στάσις ἦν καὶ πόλεμος ἐμφύλιος, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς Ἰταλίας, “there was not only internal conflict and civil war in Judaea, but also in Italy”).⁴⁶⁶ After a summary account of the revolt of Vitellius, the first Battle of Bedriacum and Otho’s suicide, Josephus gives a brisk narrative of the brief resumption of the Roman offence against the Jews, leading to the capture of every part of the country except Jerusalem and four rebel fortresses.⁴⁶⁷ Josephus then returns to the Jerusalem *stasis*, painting a vivid picture of the divisions within the city and supplying a particularly colourful account of the drunkenness, gluttony, greed, murders and transvestite sexual couplings of the Galileans among the followers of John of Gischala. After further factional fighting, the scene switches again to Rome, where the soldiers of Vitellius, billeted in the city, run rampant, pillaging and murdering civilians. News of these disturbances (ταραχὰς at 4.588, echoing the *ταράχους* under Vitellius in the *praeteritio* at 4.495) and of Vitellius’ accession enrages Vespasian when it reaches Judaea, but despite his patriotic fury the perils of a winter crossing to Italy deter him from attempting to liberate Rome from its tyrant. However, the soldiers and officers of Vespasian openly discuss revolution, arguing that Vitellius is a bad emperor imposed by bad soldiers, contrasting Vitellius’ childlessness with Vespasian’s possession of a viable adult heir, castigating Vitellius as an immoral and violent tyrant and insisting that it was their duty to repay the kindness Vespasian had shown to them by installing him as emperor. They salute Vespasian *imperator* against his will and, through heated arguments

⁴⁶⁵ BJ 4.491-502.

⁴⁶⁶ BJ 4.545.

⁴⁶⁷ BJ 4.545-555.

and ultimately at sword-point, overcome Vespasian's insistent refusal to countenance a bid for power. He rapidly secures Egypt by writing to the prefect Ti. Julius Alexander, who administers the oath of loyalty to Vespasian to his two legions, and enthusiasm for Vespasian spreads throughout Syria and even as far afield as the armies in Moesia. Having liberated Josephus from captivity, Vespasian sends Mucianus west to Italy with substantial forces to lead the Flavian invasion.⁴⁶⁸

The theme of Vespasian's reluctance, already foregrounded in the programmatic preface, is clearly marked very strongly in this version of events. Steve Mason has suggested that some parts of this presentation should be read ironically and potentially subversively, noting in particular that Vespasian's fears of a winter crossing seem cowardly, and that the fact that the soldiers compel Vespasian to accede to their wishes at sword-point is hardly flattering.⁴⁶⁹ However, Mason's reading does not contextualise this passage against the background of the Roman tradition of imperial *recusatio*, and these passages need not be read in this way (although of course the potential for hermeneutic plurality is the *sine qua non* of figured speech in classical rhetoric). By Vespasian's reign, there had developed a strong expectation that "good" emperors would initially refuse the office, or at least express some reluctance about the idea of becoming emperor. At the best of times, accepting the position of *princeps* was an elaborate game involving sometimes extravagant *recusatio*. Inspired by Augustus' example of declining honours, Tiberius' persistent unwillingness to claim or exercise his powers no doubt contributed somewhat to his posthumous reputation for dissimulation, and there are strong traditions asserting

⁴⁶⁸ BJ 4.585-632.

⁴⁶⁹ Mason (2016a) 126, where he amusingly characterises Vespasian's initial attitude towards Vitellius as "passive-aggressive".

Claudius' unwillingness to become emperor.⁴⁷⁰ The necessity of *recusatio* was all the more urgent in instances where a *princeps* had risen to the throne through civil war, because the suggestion that an emperor had willingly initiated such a war in order to fulfil personal ambition would have been toxic for an emperor's post-accession reputation, as is suggested by the examples of Vespasian's immediate predecessors. All three of the other emperors of 69, who all came to power in irregular circumstances, are represented in one source or another as receiving power passively or reluctantly; however distorted or pejorative these stories may have become, it is not implausible that they owe their origins to *recusationes* publicly enacted by the emperors themselves.⁴⁷¹ In stressing Vespasian's unwillingness to play the usurper, Josephus is simply playing the game, and thus the narrative he crafts broadly conforms to tendencies friendly to the Flavian house. Moreover, avoiding a winter crossing is not so much cowardly as prudent and even pious, since military leaders who attempted inopportune crossings could sometimes be depicted in classical literature as scorers of the divine.⁴⁷²

An examination of the reasons Josephus advances for the validity of Vespasian's candidacy, primarily through the collective speech he assigns to the soldiers at *BJ* 4.592-600, is also instructive. Josephus' Flavian troops are more civic-minded than the rampaging reprobates serving under Vitellius. No reference is made to Vespasian's soldiers wanting rewards for king-making, a common motivation for civil war armies in historiography.⁴⁷³ They stress instead their moral and military superiority over the legions of Vitellius, and the corresponding superiority of the great general Vespasian to the brutal

⁴⁷⁰ On Tiberius, see esp. Tac. *Ann.* 1.11, Vell. Pat. 2.142.2, and Rogers (1943) 62; for Claudius, see Suet, *Claud.* 10. On *recusatio imperii* more generally, see Béranger (1958) 137-169; Wallace-Hadrill (1982) 36-38; Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 162-163; Hillard (2011). For the great example, see *RG* 5-6.

⁴⁷¹ Galba: Dio 64.2.1, Tac. *Hist.* 1.15; Otho: Suet, *Otho* 7.1; Vitellius: Suet. *Vit.* 8.

⁴⁷² Best seen in the depictions of Caesar's inopportune crossing of the Adriatic in both Lucan (5.504-677) and Appian (*BCiv* 2.53-54). On the perils of ill-timed sea-crossings, see Beagon (1992) 179-180 and Ash (2007) 79-80, comment on *audentioribus spatiis*.

⁴⁷³ See Ash (1999) 29-31, 56-57.

tyrant Vitellius.⁴⁷⁴ They point out the suitability of Titus as an imperial heir (a theme echoed in much Vespasianic self-promotion), and state that Vitellius can only command support in regions close enough for him to intimidate, whereas the rest of the world will come voluntarily over to Vespasian.⁴⁷⁵ Finally they argue that the Senate will not long tolerate the tyranny of Vitellius and will soon, of their own accord, hail Vespasian emperor, and that it would be a disgrace if Vespasian's own troops do nothing to bring this about in gratitude for the general's many kindnesses to them, but rather wait for the Senate to do what they should have done themselves out of love for their commander.⁴⁷⁶ (This last detail conveniently aligns Vespasian's soldiers with the interests of the Senate, another legitimising strategy). Of course this is partisan rhetoric placed in the mouths of Flavian enthusiasts, but what is striking about this speech is how much of its content Josephus elsewhere validates in the authorial voice, which gives the appearance of strongly corroborating and enhancing the speech's analytical power. The superior quality of the Flavian forces over the Vitellian is emphasised by Josephus later in his narrative of Caecina Alienus' defection; the denigration of Vitellius is confirmed in Josephus' depiction of him.⁴⁷⁷ The spontaneous adherence of large swathes of the world to Vespasian happens almost as soon as news of his bid for the throne spreads.⁴⁷⁸ In confirming the details articulated in this speech in his narrative, Josephus makes it look like more than mere partisan enthusiasm; it is, rather, a fundamentally correct analysis of the political situation. These are not, like Vitellius' troops, self-interested squaddies run amok beyond all recall to discipline. Even when dictating terms to their commanding officer at the points of their swords they are civic-minded, concerned citizens, and entirely

⁴⁷⁴ *BJ* 4.592-6.

⁴⁷⁵ Titus: *BJ* 4.596-7. Intimidation and shallowness of Vitellian support: 4.598.

⁴⁷⁶ *BJ* 4.600.

⁴⁷⁷ Superiority of Flavians: *BJ* 4.635-636; on Vitellius' character, see below, 183-184.

⁴⁷⁸ *BJ* 4.618-621,

astute in their reading of the needs of the *res publica*.⁴⁷⁹ It is wholly correct that Vespasian's humility and reserve should yield to arguments like these, not least because (as Josephus periodically emphasises) Vespasian shares his troops' concern for his homeland.⁴⁸⁰ Vespasian becomes emperor on behalf of Italy at the urging of his troops, despite his high-minded and humble reservations, and not because of his own ambitions or his soldiers' desire for financial reward.

Vespasian's reluctance to wage civil war is complemented in Josephus' account by the absence of any indications of a coordinated or concerted effort to build support in the East, by either Vespasian himself or his close associates. The role of Titus and Mucianus in persuading Vespasian to launch the *coup*, stressed by others, is significantly played down in Josephus' narrative, where the troops and regular officers alone persuade Vespasian to his undertaking, and Mucianus' encouragement is only mentioned as happening after the decision to initiate war is a *fait accompli*.⁴⁸¹ This heightens the sense of spontaneity in Josephus' narrative, and removes the suspicion of coordinated planning and complicity from those who would later become the acknowledged leaders of the *partes flavianae*. Likewise, once the decision has been taken, news spreads around the region and the empire without any apparent effort to mobilise support on the part of Vespasian or his circle, including to those legions on the Danube who would win the Italian campaign for the Flavians. With the exception of the missive sent to Alexander, there is no hint here of the letters which, according to Tacitus, Vespasian and his colleagues sent to governors and legionary commanders in other provinces, or of the fact that the Balkan legions were largely won over to Vespasian through treasonous communication between the Flavians and the Third Legion, who knew Vespasian and had recently been relocated from Syria to

⁴⁷⁹ Ash (1999) 56.

⁴⁸⁰ *BJ* 4.440-441, 588-590, 631.

⁴⁸¹ Role of Titus and Mucianus: Tac. *Hist.* 2.1-2, 2.76-77; Dio 65.8.3-4. Mucianus' encouragement in Josephus: *B.J.* 4.605. See Ash (2007) 73.

the Danubian frontier.⁴⁸² Thus in the later sources we can glimpse at least some of the coordinated diplomacy which won Vespasian his vast following in the East and in the Balkans, and given the scale of the coalition which came to support the Flavian cause surely we must assume that the later sources are right to suspect some such diplomacy; in Josephus, by contrast, enthusiasm for Vespasian is entirely uncontrived and spontaneous, and all that is required to bring other legions and provinces onside is for news of the self-evidently superior man's candidacy to reach them.

A concomitant consideration concerns chronology. One of the most potent weapons in the arsenal of those who would maintain that Josephus is a Flavian propagandist is the charge that he deliberately and systematically tampers with the timeline of events in order to cast Vespasian in the best possible light. The accusation was levelled first and in most detail by John Nicols.⁴⁸³ Nicols notes that Josephus (who is unusually precise with and enthusiastic about dates by the standards of ancient historians) places the beginning of Vespasian's lightning campaigns in Judaea before the start of the *coup* at some point in June, perhaps as late as the 23rd.⁴⁸⁴ However, this would require Vespasian to complete the campaign, return to Caesarea, learn of Otho's death, Vitellius' accession and the abuses of Vitellius' troops in Rome, hesitate to launch a *coup*, be pressed by his soldiers into accepting the title *imperator*, write letters to Ti. Julius Alexander and be hailed by the legions of Egypt, all by 1st July, clearly an impossible timeline.⁴⁸⁵ Nicols offers two possible solutions to this problem. First, he suggests that we ought to amend the name of the month which we

⁴⁸² Letters: Tac. *Hist.* 2.98; Third Legion: Suet. *Vesp.* 6.3; Nicols (1978) 132.

⁴⁸³ *BJ* 5.550. Nicols (1978) 62-3: his analysis, though widely accepted, is complicated by the difficulty of correlating the calendar used by Josephus with the Julian calendar. The consensus now is that Josephus uses a calendar which directly translates months from the Julian calendar into Macedonian months. On Josephus' calendar, see Niese (1893); Nicols (1978) 43-45; Price (1992) 210-230; Ash (2007) 73.

⁴⁸⁴ Depending on which calendrical reconstruction we prefer (see previous note), Josephus' date for the beginning of the Judaeian campaign in 69 could either be the 5th, 13th or 23rd June (though it should be observed that any of these dates would create too tight a timeline for the events he describes).

⁴⁸⁵ The timeline is perhaps not as obviously absurd to the reader of the *Jewish War* because Josephus nowhere gives the July 1st date. This crucial omission enables him to fudge the dating as he does; reasons for the fudging will be considered below.

find in the manuscripts from Δαϊσίου to Δύστρου, which would give us a much more credible date in March. But Nicols himself notes that this would be a radical emendation, with no support from any of the manuscripts. Nicols's alternative solution is that "Josephus intentionally altered the facts in order to bring the *BJ* into conformity with Flavian propaganda", specifically in order to make the beginning of the *coup* appear to have happened later in the year than it did, so as to avoid having to admit that it was not the accession and abuses of Vitellius which prompted Vespasian to act for the sake of his country: he had in fact decided to launch a civil war much earlier, before Vitellius' accession, when Otho and Vitellius were still fighting between themselves and Otho was still the recognised emperor at Rome.⁴⁸⁶ Indeed, both Tacitus and Dio suggest that Vespasian began orchestrating his *coup* while Otho was still emperor.⁴⁸⁷

There is an even more fundamental problem with Josephus' specific claim that it was the abuses of Vitellius' troops in Rome which so angered Vespasian and made him contemplate rebellion. We know that Vespasian was acclaimed in Egypt on 1st July (which he later took as his *dies imperii*), and while it is possible that news of Otho's death and Vitellius' *de facto* accession on 16th April might have reached Caesarea in time for such an acclamation to be put in motion by that date, Vitellius and his troops did not arrive in Rome until halfway through July, meaning that Vitellius' troops' behaviour there cannot possibly have formed part of Vespasian's initial motivation, merely part of his subsequent justification for his *coup*.⁴⁸⁸ While it is just about conceivable that Vespasian may have waited until the death of Otho to initiate his bid, it appears that the detail that the Vitellians' nefarious activities in Rome angered Vespasian to the point that he

⁴⁸⁶ As an alternative solution, Weber (1921, 156-7, followed by Drexler 1925 290) proposes that the campaign *ended* on 5th Daisios, although this directly contradicts Josephus' text (Οὐεσπασιανὸς ἀναστὰς ἐκ τῆς Καισαρείας πέμπτη Δαϊσίου μηνός), and it would still leave a rather tight timeline.

⁴⁸⁷ Tac. *Hist.* 2.6-7; Dio 65.8 (see Ash 2007 33). Morgan (2006, 179) sees it as reasonable to assume that Vespasian was preparing or at least contemplating his *coup* as early as the accession of Galba.

⁴⁸⁸ Wellesley (1975) 114; Murison (1993) 148; Morgan (2006) 181-2; Ash (2007) 231.

contemplated staging a *coup* is an invention, and an invention probably tailored to make the moral case for a Flavian intervention stronger than it had actually been. These calendrical details have very significant implications: it seems hard to escape the conclusion that Josephus, normally such a careful recorder of dates, was prepared to misdate elements of his narrative to strengthen his apologetic presentation of Vespasian as a reluctant usurper.⁴⁸⁹

It is not only the dates which are peculiar in Josephus, but the sequence of events as he relates them is also unusual. As noted in Section 3.1 above (74-75), Tacitus and Suetonius assert that it was the legions of Egypt, not Judaea, which took the initiative in saluting Vespasian as emperor, prompted by the prefect Ti. Julius Alexander. In Josephus, however, it is the Judaeans who first acclaim Vespasian, and the oath is administered in Egypt only after Vespasian sends letters to Alexander, after his acclamation in Caesarea. Josephus stands out here, in a manner which recalls the way in which he denies Vespasian election by the gods of Egypt and reassigns responsibility for the emperor's extraordinary *fortuna* to the God of the Jews (section 5.1.2 above). Once again Josephus minimises the Flavian family's debt to Egypt and places Judaea and its God at the centre of Vespasian's story, reconceptualising Vespasian as the elect of YHWH, made emperor in fulfilment of divine scripture on the soil of Eretz Israel.⁴⁹⁰

One final relevant aspect of the portrayal of Vespasian is his apparent sluggishness in conducting the Galilean campaign. On a striking number of occasions, Josephus in fact seems intent on stressing Vespasian's dedication to making rapid progress in Galilee:

⁴⁸⁹ See also Levick (1999) 36, for the suggestion that Josephus antedated the revolt of Vindex in order to contribute to his presentation of the patriotic motivations of Vespasian at *BJ* 4.440. Nicols (1978) 54-55 suggests that the explanation for this ostensible early dating in Josephus is that Vespasian had been informed in advance of Vindex's intentions.

⁴⁹⁰ Henrichs (1968) 77-79 and Lindner (1972) 82-84, on the prioritisation of the Judaeans over the Egyptian legions. Hadas-Lebel (1993) 139-40 and Hadas-Lebel (1994) 104-106 notes the discrepancy too, but her arguments that we should accept Josephus' testimony as more accurate than that of the later authors are not convincing.

Vespasian is eager to get the job done, always just on the point of marching to Jerusalem to conclude the war when events frustrate his plans.⁴⁹¹ This presentation of events, however, does not seem to have convinced many modern readers, considering the frequency with which Vespasian's campaigns in Galilee are discussed in the language of caution, meticulousness or slowness.⁴⁹² At times, the ostensible fiction of Vespasianic haste requires explicit intervention from the author to explain away some indication of apparent sluggishness. Thus Vespasian's lengthy operations in the kingdom of Agrippa are explained as a repayment for the king's hospitality and justified with an explicit claim that such operations fell within the terms of Vespasian's command (the fact that Josephus feels it necessary to make this claim may, to a suspicious reader, make it seem like this might not have been the case).⁴⁹³ Likewise, Vespasian's suspension of hostilities against the Jews on learning of the accession of Galba incredibly lasts a full year. Josephus presents this as normal, suggesting that it was standard procedure for a general, as *legatus Augusti*, to await orders from a new *princeps* upon the decease of the old, but I know of no parallels for this type of suspension of hostilities down to the death of Domitian.⁴⁹⁴ Moreover, at *BJ* 4.550, Vespasian resumes hostilities against the Jews during the lightning campaign of summer 69 without apparently having received any new orders; if hostilities could be resumed so easily and without orders from the new *princeps*, can we really believe that awaiting new orders had been necessary to begin with? Is Josephus here attempting to

⁴⁹¹ *BJ* 1.23; 3.115, 141; 4.441, 491, 550.

⁴⁹² E.g. Homo (1949) 37; Brandon (1951) 163; Grant (1973) 197; Wellesley (1975) 10; Price (1992) 80-81; Goodman (2007) 16.

⁴⁹³ *BJ* 3.443-445.

⁴⁹⁴ *BJ* 4.502. The only possible exception is the pause in expansionary activities recorded by Tacitus in Agricola's fourth campaigning season in Britain (*Agr.* 23), which some (but not Tacitus) have explained as a pause to await instructions from the new emperor Domitian (Jones 1992 225 n.37 surveys the bibliography; see also the note on *Agr.* 23 in Kraus and Woodman 2014). However, the absolute dating of Agricola's campaigns is impossible to establish, and as Southern (1997, 68-69) points out, there were solid strategic reasons why Agricola might want to pause expansion and to consolidate and build his string of forts at that point in the campaign aside from a need to await new orders. These uncertainties prevent us from using Agricola as a parallel to corroborate Josephus here. We may further note that Agricola's governorship also encompassed the death of Vespasian, and there is no record in the earlier parts of his campaigns of a prolonged delay while awaiting new orders.

naturalise this suspicious period of quiescence? After hostilities have been resumed, Josephus again feels it necessary to excuse Vespasianic sluggishness, by having Vespasian convene a council of war in which he has to explain to his officers why they should not attack Jerusalem immediately: slowness to action is a conscious strategy now, and one which Josephus endorses in the authorial voice.⁴⁹⁵ Later, Titus is made to excuse his father's sluggishness in a speech to the rebels at BJ 6.339. All of this may indicate that Josephus recognised something politically sensitive about the image of a general in command of large military resources appearing to drag his feet and prolong his command at a time of political instability.⁴⁹⁶ Whatever suspicions such conduct may have aroused would only, of course, be intensified with hindsight, after that very same general had gone on to seize power by force.

A recent and radical re-examination of the Galilean campaign by Steve Mason makes Josephus' insistence on Vespasian's haste seem even more suspicious. On Mason's new reading, the suppression of Galilee was completed at the submission of Sepphoris, which happened almost as soon as Vespasian arrived in the region. The "rebel" cities in Agrippa's kingdom were not, in fact, part of any region-wide Revolt, but were merely guilty of housing some individuals who had agitated against the king (*not* Rome). Even Jotapata's only transgression was to have successfully stood up to a vindictive assault led by Placidus conducted entirely for the purposes of exemplary violence; the town's success necessitated a full Roman response to save face. Thus, to Mason, Vespasian spent almost three years in the North presiding over minor policing operations and indulging in extravagant and unnecessary favours on Agrippa's behalf, all time in which he should

⁴⁹⁵ BJ 4.366-376. The council of war may be just a literary device designed to enable Josephus to make this justification, but if there is any truth behind it, it may furnish an indication that even Vespasian's officers thought the campaign was proceeding too slowly.

⁴⁹⁶ Chilver (1957) 34 and Levick (1999) 39 see Vespasian's failure to prosecute the Galilean war with more urgency as suspicious.

have been hastening to Jerusalem.⁴⁹⁷ Constraints of space prevent me from considering Mason's very detailed arguments here; however, if even only a part of Mason's new model is true, then it powerfully corroborates what has been argued above, that Josephus misrepresents Vespasian's languid progress in the North as an ardent and energetic campaign by a commander eager to do his duty. This misrepresentation minimises the chance that the reader will suspect Vespasian's intentions in the East during the civil war period, and come to the conclusion that he was waiting out the political situation with a powerful army at his back.

We turn now from the figure of Vespasian to consider how Josephus' depictions of his rivals and subordinates affect the way we understand Vespasian's claims to legitimacy as *princeps*. In Section 3.1, the Vespasianic-period representation of Vespasian's short-lived predecessors of 69 was examined: it will be recalled that the portrayal of Galba seems to have been broadly positive, a legitimate emperor killed by treachery and avenged by Vespasian; Otho was largely negatively characterised as a Neronian tyrant, but the Othonian sympathies of Vespasian's Danubian troops led to some complication of the matter and necessitated the conception of Otho as a "mixed character"; Vitellius was utterly and universally denigrated.⁴⁹⁸ Now we turn to consider where Josephus fits into this representational landscape. His remarks on Galba and Otho are brief, and the significant content is restricted to the *praeteritio* on the events of 69 quoted above. There is apparent sympathy for Galba, who is represented as being "treacherously murdered" (ἐδολοφονήθη), and we also note that Josephus distances himself from the sole negative charge brought against Galba, that of meanness (ταπεινοφροσύνη) by merely stating that

⁴⁹⁷ Mason (2016a) 335-401.

⁴⁹⁸ 71-74.

he was *accused* of this (αἰτιαθεὶς) by the soldiers, and declining to endorse this charge in the authorial voice or adduce any evidence in favour of it.⁴⁹⁹ Broadly speaking, this thinly-sketched Galba conforms to the apparent Flavian desire to present that emperor as the last legitimate ruler avenged by Vespasian, slain on a specious pretext by treachery. The presentation of Otho, similarly brief, is largely value-neutral, perhaps the safest course when writing about an emperor of such mixed reputation and significance under Vespasian. Insofar as he is the beneficiary of Galba's impious death he is presented negatively, but it is not clear from Josephus even that Otho had arranged that death. Similarly, Josephus is our only narrative source not to wax lyrical on the nobility of Otho's civic-minded suicide, which is recorded without comment.⁵⁰⁰ The good and the bad have been stripped from Josephus' Otho, and he functions simply as a placeholder before the violent irruption of Vitellius onto the scene.

Josephus' Vitellius is unremittingly negatively characterised. In the long *praeteritio*, Vitellius brings disturbances to Rome.⁵⁰¹ His arrival in the city brings severe sufferings: he billets his menacingly large retinue throughout the city, and his men wreak murder and pillage on the civilian population.⁵⁰² He brings madness to the city and devastates the country.⁵⁰³ The Flavian soldiers accuse Vitellius of sexual immorality (λαγνεία, a charge repeated and confirmed in the authorial voice at *BJ* 4.652) and tyranny.⁵⁰⁴ He displays innate cruelty and orders the burning of the Capitol.⁵⁰⁵ As the Flavian troops enter Rome, Vitellius is drunk and gorged on an extravagant banquet.⁵⁰⁶ His immoderate desires (λαγνεία again), Josephus opines in the authorial voice, would have destroyed the empire

⁴⁹⁹ All references from *BJ* 4.494.

⁵⁰⁰ *BJ* 4.495.

⁵⁰¹ *BJ* 4.495.

⁵⁰² *BJ* 4.585-7.

⁵⁰³ *BJ* 4.589-90, 631.

⁵⁰⁴ *BJ* 4.596.

⁵⁰⁵ *BJ* 4.647.

⁵⁰⁶ *BJ* 4.651.

had he not been supplanted by the Flavians.⁵⁰⁷ Moreover, Vitellius' army is Othered, made un-Roman, in ways similar to Rhiannon Ash's identification of how both the Vitellian and the Flavian armies are presented as foreign in Tacitus' *Histories*, with the crucial difference that Josephus only does this to one side.⁵⁰⁸ The foreignness of the Vitellians is highlighted at *BJ* 4.587, where they survey Rome with "unaccustomed eyes" (ἀήθεσιν ὀφθαλμοῖς) and, like a conquering barbarian army, they cannot restrain themselves from plunder. As we saw, in the long *praeteritio* Vitellius' troops were referred to as τὰ Γερμανικὰ τάγματα ("the German armies"), which is echoed again at 4.546, where they are τὰ κατὰ Γερμανίαν τάγματα ("the armies from Germany"). Josephus is here not literally attempting to convince his readers that Vitellius came to Rome at the head of a horde of trans-Rhenine barbarians; nevertheless, this disavowal of his army's Romanness delegitimises Vitellius, takes the sting out of the fact that Vespasian intervenes against his fellow-Romans, and casts Vitellius himself as a menace to the Roman order (Primus' Flavian soldiers are never designated "the Pannonian armies"). All of this is self-evidently in keeping with Vitellius as the menacing, immoderate, luxurious and depraved mini-Nero of all the other sources, and no doubt also in the type of discourse preferred by Vespasian when on the throne. In every way, Josephus supplies us with a Vitellius conducive to Vespasian's needs; but there are other interesting parallels and correspondences with Josephus' Vitellius, not in the "Flavian propaganda" but elsewhere in the *Jewish War*, in Josephus' account of the *stasis* that racked Jerusalem at the hands of the Jewish rebel factions.

⁵⁰⁷ *BJ* 4.652.

⁵⁰⁸ Ash (1999) 39-49, 67-69.

As has already been noted, Josephus, like Thucydides, considers *stasis* a central theme of his history, and lists it as one of the main causes of the failure of the Jewish Revolt.⁵⁰⁹ I have already noted Josephus connecting the Jerusalem *stasis* with the simultaneous *stasis* at Rome in the *praeteritio*.⁵¹⁰ Josephus indicates his debt to the Thucydidean analytical framework of *stasis* through vocabulary: we have previously observed the occurrence in his Rome narrative of terms which, in discussions of civil discord, have Thucydidean resonances, words such as στάσις, μεταβολή, terms connected with παραχή, and τύραννος. Moreover, it is precisely when *stasis* flares up in Rome that Josephus chooses to give his most concentrated and detailed account of *stasis* in Jerusalem, suggesting an artful arrangement designed to highlight the comparability of these phenomena.⁵¹¹ Given the linkage, via Thucydides, between Roman and Judaeian *stasis*, we can ask what the precise parallels are. The only character designated a τύραννος in the 69 narrative is Vitellius, but elsewhere this is one of Josephus' favourite words for the leaders of the Jewish rebel factions.⁵¹² The correspondences between Vitellius and these figures are pronounced: in addition to being explicitly labelled tyrants, they victimise civilians, bring disorder, are primarily motivated by self-interest, and satisfy their passions in extravagant indulgence and sexual license.⁵¹³ It is precisely in this section of Book 4, intercutting Josephus' narrative of the war between Vitellius and Vespasian, that we find the extraordinary

⁵⁰⁹ Steve Mason (2016b, 20) highlights the centrality of *stasis* to Josephus' understanding of the Revolt by noting that it is the first word of the *BJ*'s narrative proper, at 1.31.

⁵¹⁰ *BJ* 4.545

⁵¹¹ We should note that Josephus is not necessarily constrained by chronology. At this point in the war, he was a prisoner in the Roman camp; it may be doubted how much precise information he had about the progress of events in Jerusalem. It is better to read Josephus' placement of his detailed consideration of Judaeian *stasis* here as an authorial decision, to bring that theme into contact with his treatment of Roman *stasis*. On Josephus' tendency towards thematic arrangement in the *War*, see Cohen (1979) 69-73, and (specifically on the relationship between Roman and Jewish *stasis* in Book 4) Drexler (1925) 291, "die römischen und innerjüdischen Dinge ganz disparat nebeneinander stehen". Bilde (1988) 67 sees this parallelism as thematic and in keeping with Polybian practice.

⁵¹² Vitellius as τύραννος at *BJ* 4.595. On the Jewish rebels, Rhoads (1976) 182 collects all 37 uses of the term in the *Jewish War*: almost all instances refer to Jewish rebel leaders.

⁵¹³ I will exemplify these tropes from Book 4 alone. Victimising civilians: Jewish rebels, *BJ* 4.541, 560; soldiers of Vitellius, *BJ* 4.586-587; disorder: Jewish rebels, *BJ* 4.151; Vitellius, *BJ* 4.495, 588, 631; indulgence of passions: Jewish rebels, *BJ* 4.561-562; Vitellius, *BJ* 4.651, 652.

depiction of the luxury and sexual license of the party of John of Gischala in Jerusalem, in passages which may well have had Neronian or Vitellian overtones to Roman readers.⁵¹⁴ We should remember that in some respects the real war in the *Jewish War* is not between Jews and Romans, but between those who possess self-control and those who lack it, and examples of both types of character can be found on both sides of the conflict.⁵¹⁵ The self-control and civic-mindedness of a Vespasian or an Ananus make them appropriate leaders for their nations; the inability of a Vitellius or a John to master their urges makes them conversely unfit to govern. Thus disordered and ungovernable *tyrannoi* introduce the contagion of *stasis* to both Rome and Jerusalem; it is the moderate, self-controlled and patriotic Flavians who ultimately cure the disease in both places through the judicious and legitimate application of military force.

In terms of the persuasiveness of Josephus' historical analysis, this parallelism has a double force. On the one hand, by the time Roman civil war has broken out the reader has already become accustomed and conditioned to Josephus' way of writing about *stasis*. By depicting Roman *stasis* in the same terms as and following the same course as the now-familiar Jewish *stasis*, Josephus primes the reader to accept his tendentious presentation of the war between Vitellius and Vespasian. It also works the other way, however. Both Gottfried Mader and Jonathan Price have argued that Josephus essentially and probably deliberately misapplies Thucydides' *stasis* model.⁵¹⁶ To Thucydides, *stasis* is a sort of pandemic, usually breaking out in a political community at a time of external war, which consumes the whole polity and leads to spiralling conflict and the progressive abandonment of community values and ties of kinship and friendship.⁵¹⁷ While some are able to resist the increasing "radicalisation" and the revaluation of meanings which

⁵¹⁴ *BJ* 4.561-562.

⁵¹⁵ McLaren (1998) 78-107; Bilde (1988) 73-74.

⁵¹⁶ Mader (2000) 56-103; Price (2011).

⁵¹⁷ Mader (2000) 56-59.

characterise and constitute *stasis*, such neutrals are typically killed at the earliest opportunity. No one side is guilty or innocent in this model; neither oligarchs nor democrats are consistently to blame for *stasis*, but it is an almost medical pathology, and a diagnostic model for thinking about the dynamics of social and political collapse in communities under intense stress.⁵¹⁸ Josephus, on the other hand, deploys *stasis* polemically, by consistently blaming it on one element alone in the civil conflict, the extreme rebels, whom he everywhere vituperates.⁵¹⁹ To Thucydides, an entire community will be engulfed by *stasis*; conversely Josephus divides his political communities into three parts, the extremist perpetrators of *stasis*, the moderate resisters of *stasis*, and the common civilian victims. The Thucydidean language, then, provides Josephus with a cloak of objectivity for his polemic, suggesting that he is simply applying a universal theoretical model of political collapse to a particular instantiation in Judaea when in fact he is denigrating the Jewish rebel factions.⁵²⁰ In extending his partisan bastardisation of Thucydidean theory to Rome, Josephus lends a further patina of objectivity to his slurs. By exporting his model from Judaea to Rome and showing how *stasis* there operates according to the same principles, he seemingly validates the universality of his analytical framework and, indirectly, his denigration of the Judaeans *tyrannoi*. Thus on the one hand the pseudo-Thucydideanism and the linkage between Judaeans and Roman *stasis* serve Flavian interests by reinforcing Josephus' denigration of Vitellius, but on the other Josephus' pseudo-Thucydidean denigration of Vitellius further advances Josephus' tendency to defame the extremist rebels. As elsewhere, we see Josephus engineering the perfect congruence of his own and the regime's interests.

⁵¹⁸ On the equal guilt of all parties and the elimination of "neutrals": Thuc. 3.82.8. For Thucydidean *stasis*, the classic model is, of course, Corcyra, and the generalizing comments which follow it (Thuc. 3.70-84). See Macleod (1979); Orwin (1988) 832-841; Price (2001) 6-78; Palmer (2017).

⁵¹⁹ Price (2011) 88-98

⁵²⁰ Mader (2000) 69.

Josephus' depiction of the actual progress of the Flavian invasion of Italy is striking primarily for what he includes. Josephus provides brief narratives of three episodes in particular which in post-Flavian authors sometimes involve the discredit of the Flavian side. The episodes in question are the sack of the city of Cremona by Flavian forces, the burning of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitol in street-fighting between Flavian and Vitellian partisans, and the abuses inflicted upon the civilian population of Rome by the Flavian troops on their entry into the city.

The Cremona episode was notorious. We have seen how it was treated by later authors: both Dio and Tacitus depict troops running out of control in their desire for plunder and revenge, with Tacitus also attributing partial, if elusive, responsibility to the renegade general Antonius Primus.⁵²¹ Josephus differs. As he relates the episode, there is no indication whatsoever of the capitulation of Cremona, explicitly attested by both of the other authors, and Primus is depicted forcing entry into the city and actually ordering his troops to pillage.⁵²² As an enemy city which (in Josephus' version) did not surrender, Cremona would be a legitimate object for a *direptio*, however distasteful the idea of such an enormity inflicted on a true Roman *colonia* may have been to Josephus' Roman readers. What matters most in this, however, is the absence of any indication of that common trope in our other sources, Primus' Flavian troops rampaging out of control, as well as Josephus' clear attribution of responsibility for the sack of Cremona, for good or ill, to the commanding officer. This presentation of events accords well with Vespasian's postbellum policy. As already discussed, after the war Vespasian avoided punishing any of his soldiers who had engaged in atrocities during the Flavian march on Rome, and instead

⁵²¹ 76-78.

⁵²² *BJ* 4.641-644.

sidelined Primus completely, making him bear the blame.⁵²³ Josephus' narrative of the Cremona atrocity, which pins all responsibility for the sack of the city on Primus and does not criticise the conduct of the soldiers who won Vespasian his throne, fits the Flavian scapegoating agenda perfectly. As mentioned earlier, Tacitus' *Histories* explicitly preserves the views of two other Flavian historians, Vipstanus Messalla and Pliny the Elder, who both attribute the sack of Cremona to leaders of the Flavian faction rather than to soldiers.⁵²⁴ Josephus' account, then, accords with other Flavian-period accounts in directing the blame for this atrocity away from the rank and file, and is well-suited to Vespasian's needs. Josephus deploys this apologetic strategy, the scapegoating of a subordinate, on Vespasian's behalf elsewhere when recounting an atrocity in Judaea: as we have seen, he exonerated Vespasian from blame for the massacre of civilian refugees by blaming the military tribune Placidus.⁵²⁵

Josephus is in accord with all of our other sources except Tacitus (including his contemporary Pliny) in unambiguously attributing responsibility for the burning of the Capitol to the Vitellian attackers instead of the Flavian defenders.⁵²⁶ He goes further than most and, along with Suetonius, actually has Vitellius ordering the assault (in the other sources the siege results from chaotic circumstances following Vitellius' botched attempt at abdication, an episode which Josephus does not narrate at all).⁵²⁷ The abuses at Rome are attributed to the troops, although significantly to the troops of Primus. Primus fails (indeed is not even presented as attempting) to check his troops who, in their enthusiasm for rooting out Vitellian supporters, engage in a general massacre of the population. It is

⁵²³ 78.

⁵²⁴ 76-77.

⁵²⁵ *BJ* 3.110-111; 147 above.

⁵²⁶ *BJ* 4.645-649, esp. 649. c.f. Suet. *Vit.* 15.3, Plin. *HN* 34.38; Dio 65.17.3. Tac. *Hist.* 3.71 says that the question of responsibility for the fire was disputed, but that the more common tradition in his day was that the Flavians started the fire.

⁵²⁷ *BJ* 4.647, c.f. Suet. *Vit.* 15.3.

the arrival of Mucianus on the following day which calms the disturbances.⁵²⁸ Although the soldiers share more responsibility this time, the unfavourable comparisons with Mucianus, the terminator of *stasis*, is to the inevitable detriment of Primus. Once again, scapegoating of Primus, in line with Vespasianic policy, is detectible here. Primus, the renegade general who won the war but ignored his orders, can safely be censured without that censure reflecting on Vespasian, too comfortably far removed in Alexandria to bear any responsibility for atrocities in Italy. Mucianus, the legitimate vicegerent of Vespasian and the authorised representative of the Flavian faction, shows the true nature of the new regime, moderates the madness and puts an end to this final paroxysm of *stasis*.

Josephus' account of Flavian activity in Italy, therefore, is structured around narratives of several highly problematic episodes, none of which Josephus really needed to cover as a historian of the Jewish Revolt. So is this focus on the problematic indicative of dissident inclinations? We would do well here to bear in mind the earlier-expressed reservations about the possibility of ruling authoritatively on the "real meaning" of a text, as figured speech-minded critics are wont to do, and also to recall Vasily Rudich's schematic but useful typology of different kinds of readers.⁵²⁹ Reader-response to Josephus' curious selectivity is likely to be determined by whether the reader sees an incongruity between Josephus' ostensible loyalism and his decision to focus on the more disreputable aspects of the Flavian campaign, or rather sees one as the consequence of the other. Readers who approach the text with suspicion (Rudich's "dissident" or "ensorious" readers) may note Josephus' insistent focus on Flavian carnage and atrocity and see this narrative as an *exposé* of the falsity of the salvific characterisation of the family encouraged under Vespasian, showing the partiality and inadequacy of the straightforward characterisation of the family as saviours of Italy from Vitellian tyranny; such a dangerous literary

⁵²⁸ BJ 4.654.

⁵²⁹ 38-42; Rudich (1997) 10-11.

undertaking, they will see, needs to be larded with insincere apologetics in order to make it palatable to the new dynasts. But less suspicious, perhaps more regime-inclined audience members (Rudich's "loyalist" readers) might well conclude that Josephus, as a true believer in the Flavian world-order, would necessarily focus his righteous and sincere apologetics on precisely those aspects of the Flavian accession for which his patrons might incur unmerited criticism. The perfect viability of either of these assessments makes Josephus' account of the invasion of Italy a good candidate for veiled critique, but it also prevents us from concluding definitively either way. It will have to suffice to note that, whichever of these interpretations we may prefer, they both proceed from a recognition that these episodes were difficult for the Flavians and for their preferred version of history, and a source of anxiety for authors who addressed them, whether dissidents or loyalists. Josephus' anxious focus on Flavian atrocity can help us to map tensions, incongruities and focuses of dissent after the dust of 69 had settled in Vespasian's Rome.

Finally, these atrocities of Primus, conducted so conveniently in the absence of both Vespasian and his lieutenant Mucianus, raise questions of grand strategy. Josephus agrees with our other sources in noting that the food supply was one of the principal reasons why Vespasian acquired Egypt as quickly as he did, but he disagrees on the precise reasons. Strikingly, our Flavian authority is the only one of our extant authors who states, quite explicitly, that Vespasian's express intention was to starve the civilian population of Rome.⁵³⁰ His plan, it seems, is to weaponise the *populus Romanus*: the idea is that the inability of the citizens to endure grain shortages, coupled with fear of a (slowly) approaching Flavian army under Mucianus' command, would precipitate the downfall of Vitellius. This presentation of Vespasian's intended strategy further distances Vespasian

⁵³⁰ *BJ* 4.405-406. Tacitus (*Hist.* 3.8.2-3, 3.48.3) sees Vespasian's seizure of the corn supply as an attempt to put pressure on Vitellius' soldiers in Italy; Dio (65.9) does not depict Vespasian starving Rome, but he does show us Vespasian organising emergency corn relief in Alexandria immediately after he learns of the defeat of Vitellius. On the blockade strategy, see Wellesley (1975) 119; Ash (1999) 150-151.

from the atrocities of Primus, as a rapid raid into Italy does not seem to have been part of the plan at all. However, Vespasian's willingness to starve the people of Rome is hardly unproblematic either. Rhiannon Ash notes a number of sinister and unpromising parallels from Roman history of people who attempted this strategy; we might further add that this scheme is especially problematic in the *Jewish War*, which contains vivid and horrific depictions of the problems which food shortages can bring to a city.⁵³¹ *BJ* 6.193-213 casts a sinister retrospective shadow over Vespasian's strategy as outlined here, with its descriptions of starved civilians fighting over scraps and subsisting on boiled leather and straw, culminating in the abomination of teknophagy perpetrated by Maria of Betheszuba.⁵³² These horrors force the reader to ask whether *this* is what Vespasian intended for Rome; if Josephus is intentionally suggesting this sinister hypothetical, then this awkward juxtaposition between Vespasian's frustrated blockade strategy and the vivid and horrific famine at Jerusalem would be far from flattering to Vespasian.

Overall, Josephus' account of the tumultuous conflicts of 69 is in many ways our most consistently pro-Flavian, the most congenial to Vespasian's needs once the conflict had passed and order needed to be restored. Vespasian himself is clearly exonerated of the charge of starting a war to fulfil his own personal ambitions. The reluctance of Vespasian to fulfil the commission laid on him by his soldiers is emphasised even at the cost of deliberately distorting the timeline of events in the early stages of the *putsch*. The slow speed at which Vespasian proceeded in Galilee, perhaps with one eye permanently kept on events in the West, is recast as an eager rush to complete his commission. Josephus' depiction of Vespasian's defeated predecessors is perfectly tailored to promote the

⁵³¹ Ash (1999) 149-151.

⁵³² On Maria, see Mader (2000) 140-146; Gleason (2001); Chapman (2005) 142-145; Chapman (2007b); Mason (2016a) 116-121.

narrative of Vespasian as an avenger of Galba, and a rescuer of Rome from an immoderate tyrant. Vespasian's distance from Rome during the crucial stages of the war means he cannot be held responsible for the atrocities perpetrated by the forces on the ground; responsibility for those atrocities is consistently pinned on either the Vitellian side or on that convenient scapegoat Antonius Primus, from whom Vespasian and Mucianus so publicly distanced themselves once in power. It is true that Josephus is also able to turn this pro-Flavian narrative to his own agenda, using his account of 69 to bolster the ostensible authority and impression of impartiality of his polemical pseudo-Thucydidean analysis of *stasis*. In other ways he shows signs of independence, too: he is not afraid to depict episodes which may involve discredit to the Flavian side (although usually, ostensibly at least, striving to ensure that neither Vespasian himself nor the senior conspirators around him are directly implicated in such episodes); his strong insistence on considering Judaea, not Egypt, as the true birthplace of the regime is also highly distinctive and probably a deviation from the official narrative. For all such signs of independence, however, his narrative must count as a highly convenient version of events from Vespasian's perspective.

5.1.4. The Virtues of Vespasian

This section will explore Josephus' depiction of the character of Vespasian in *Jewish War* 1-6, and how closely it adheres to or departs from what we can reconstruct of Vespasian's self-presentation to his subjects at Rome in the period of the work's composition. Such a discussion will need to be anchored in ancient conceptions of character, and as discussed earlier both literary depictions of emperors and the emperors' own self-presentations focused on the emperor's virtues (and, in the case of posthumous accounts of emperors

whose memories had fallen into disfavour, their vices).⁵³³ We saw how the natural narrative mode of historiography (as distinct from panegyric and, to some extent, biography) was to provide a chronological record of an individual's achievements as demonstrations of their virtues and vices, perhaps with occasional authorial comments making this explicit, but that introductory character sketches and obituary notices provided narrative historians with one means of introducing a synchronic catalogue of a person's qualities.⁵³⁴ Josephus deploys these conventions sparingly: only Vespasian, Simon bar Gioras (briefly) and John of Gischala receive substantial introductory sketches, and (eulogistic) obituary notices are reserved solely for the high priest Ananus ben Ananus and, summarily, Jesus ben Gamalas.⁵³⁵ Josephus' use of introductory sketches and obituary notices shows us that he was familiar with these conventions of classical historiography, but his unwillingness to resort often to these strategies suggests that he had a strong preference for chronological narrative over encomiastic or invective catalogues. Perhaps aware of the proper distance between panegyric and history, Josephus prefers to allow his Flavians to reveal their virtues in action, with little authorial prompting to help the reader.⁵³⁶ There is nothing in Josephus comparable to the ticked checklist of the monarchical virtues of his emperor which Velleius provides instead of a narrative of Tiberius' reign.⁵³⁷ However, Josephus' commitment to viewing character in terms of the virtue-vice polarity is signalled clearly in the brief lyrical coda to his encomium of Ananus and Jesus, where he depicts the personified Virtue herself (ἀρετή) mourning their deaths, and interpreting their murders as the triumph of Vice (κακία) over herself.⁵³⁸ This discussion of Josephus' depictions of the virtues of Vespasian will first survey the

⁵³³ 42-49.

⁵³⁴ 43-44.

⁵³⁵ *BJ* 3.4-5; 4.504-504; 2.585-587; 4.318-325.

⁵³⁶ Lucian's denunciation of contemporary history is, suggestively, based on the contemporary historians' supposed inability to maintain the distinction between their genre and panegyric: *Hist. Consc.* 7.

⁵³⁷ *Vell. Pat.* 2.126-130.

⁵³⁸ *BJ* 4.325.

Vespasianic virtues in evidence in the narrative and situate them in the context of other contemporary representations of the emperor, then it will consider a small number of passages where it is just possible that Vespasian's virtues are ironically presented, points in the text where Vespasian's vices may in fact be exposed to the discerning reader's view, before concluding with a consideration of two curious omissions in Josephus' depiction of his emperor.

Explicit virtue-language is rare in Josephus' depiction of Vespasian. His first explicitly-attested virtue in the *Jewish War* will turn out to be one of his most characteristic: we are told, in his introductory sketch, that Nero credited Vespasian with σταθεράν μετ' ἐμπειρίας τὴν ἡλικίαν ("age made steadfast through experience").⁵³⁹ This steadfastness, explicitly linked here to Vespasian's age and military experience, is perhaps best expressed in Latin as *constantia*, not a virtue commemorated on Vespasian's coins but one attributed to Vespasian by Suetonius, and an important numismatic motif on the coins of Vespasian's early political patron, Claudius.⁵⁴⁰ Nero's explicit attribution of this virtue to Vespasian reinforces the impression already created in the introductory sketch, which lists Vespasian's long military service, and is picked up and echoed by the soldiers on the eve of civil war, who attribute precisely this same virtue, in rather similar terms, to their general.⁵⁴¹ In addition to fixity of purpose, *constantia* can also have connotations of bravery, an aspect of *virtus*. *Virtus* was an enormously important part of the militaristic Vespasian's public image, as seen above.⁵⁴² Vespasian demonstrates his own physical courage at Gamala, when he is personally involved in the fighting, and it is in this episode

⁵³⁹ *BJ* 3.6.

⁵⁴⁰ Suet. *Vesp.* 4.5 (he fights in Judaea *constanter*); Fears (1981b) 894 on Claudian *constantia*.

⁵⁴¹ *BJ* 4.597.

⁵⁴² 91-92.

that Josephus uses the word ἀρετῇ (a good Greek equivalent for *virtus*), another rare explicit attribution of a virtue to Vespasian.⁵⁴³ Also complimented in this episode is δαιμόνιον τὸ παράστημα τῆς ψυχῆς (“the miraculous courage of his soul”), focalised through the perspective of his enemies, testament again to Vespasian’s bravery.⁵⁴⁴ Titus suggests the *virtus-victoria* complex when he asserts that his father is a man habituated to victory.⁵⁴⁵ Another instance of personal courage can be found when Vespasian is wounded by an arrow at Jotapata: swiftly able to master his pain, he shows himself to his panic-stricken soldiers soon after the injury, and thereby quells their distress.⁵⁴⁶

Overcoming pain implies virtues involving the mastery of passions, and these too are prominent in Josephus’ Vespasian. Already hinted at in the stability derived from his experience, this aspect of the general’s character manifests itself in various ways. He is capable of mastering the passions of others, as when, on a number of occasions, he successfully restrains his army’s and his officers’ ardour.⁵⁴⁷ In his consolatory speech to the soldiers after the reversal at Gamala, Vespasian asserts the primacy of reason over passion in warfare.⁵⁴⁸ At Tiberias he masters his own anger in order to behave in a more reasonable manner (a trope which also pertains to his capacity to demonstrate another essential virtue, *clementia*).⁵⁴⁹ One way of conceptualising the mastery of reason over passion is as the virtue of σωφροσύνη, a key monarchical virtue since Plato.⁵⁵⁰

Vespasian’s soldiers attribute this virtue to their commander at *BJ* 4.596. Vespasian’s prioritisation of reason is further indicated when Josephus pays tribute to his skill as a

⁵⁴³ *BJ* 4.33. Note also 4.617: the soldiers of Egypt know of Vespasian’s ἀρετῇ. For the equivalence of *virtus* and ἀρετῇ, see Fears (1981b) 875, Ferguson (2016) 162-3, and note that ἀρετῇ translates *virtus* in the description of the *clupeus virtutis* in the Greek text of *RG* 34.

⁵⁴⁴ *BJ* 4.34.

⁵⁴⁵ *BJ* 3.482. On the *virtus-victoria* complex, see Fears (1981a) 736-825; Lendon (1999) 304-323.

⁵⁴⁶ *BJ* 3.226-229.

⁵⁴⁷ *BJ* 3.127; 3.350; 4.366-376.

⁵⁴⁸ *BJ* 4.39-48.

⁵⁴⁹ *BJ* 3.456-7

⁵⁵⁰ *Rep.* 4.428a. See Ferguson (2017) 188-190, who connects σωφροσύνη with both *moderatio* and *clementia* in Latin, and North (1966) 166-171.

military planner and a reader of military situations.⁵⁵¹ This is usually indicated with reference to the virtue of σύνεσις, “quick understanding”, one of the principal desirable qualities of the general.⁵⁵²

A very particular type of self-mastery inheres in the imperial virtue of *civilitas*. The ruler who is *civilis* refrains from assuming or wielding extraordinary powers over his fellow-citizens.⁵⁵³ We have seen elements of *civilitas* in Vespasian’s public image.⁵⁵⁴ *Civilitas* in Josephus is strongly suggested, of course, in Vespasian’s extraordinary extended *recusatio* in *Jewish War* 4, discussed at length in the previous sub-section, and perhaps above all in Josephus’ comment that Vespasian would have preferred the security of private life to the dangers of government, a time-worn trope in ancient depictions of the reluctant monarch, or when we are assured by Josephus that Vespasian, like a Platonic philosopher-king, knew how to obey as well as to rule.⁵⁵⁵ But of course, in times of emergency a preference for private life is scarcely a virtue, and the reasons for Vespasian overcoming his reluctance are as relevant to his virtue-profile as that reluctance itself. Vespasian consents to assume rule of the world for essentially patriotic reasons.⁵⁵⁶ His patriotism is stressed on several occasions, beginning with his response to news of the Vindex revolt, when he commits all the more fully to prosecuting the war against the Jews in order to allay the concerns of Italy (and not Nero).⁵⁵⁷ This and similar passages position Vespasian as a saviour-figure, and we have examined some contemporary evidence suggesting that the notion of Vespasian as saviour of Rome or even of the world was current in his reign.⁵⁵⁸ A number of passages in Josephus suggest Vespasian as saviour-type. The citizens of

⁵⁵¹ *BJ* 3.6; 3.170; 3.317-322; 4.377.

⁵⁵² Schmidt (1968) 675-676; Thuc. 1.74

⁵⁵³ For *civilitas* see Béranger (1953) 149-152, and above all, Wallace-Hadrill (1982).

⁵⁵⁴ 94-95.

⁵⁵⁵ *BJ* 4.602, 4.589. On *recusatio* as a sign of *civilitas*, see Wallace-Hadrill (1982) 36-37.

⁵⁵⁶ For the protection and/or salvation of Rome or the empire as part of the ideology of the Principate, see Béranger (1953) 252-278.

⁵⁵⁷ *BJ* 4.441. Other indications of concern for Rome or Italy: 4.502, 4.589, 4.602.

⁵⁵⁸ 92-93.

Tiberias, recipients of a pardon for their city's revolt, hail Vespasian as σωτήρ.⁵⁵⁹ The image with which Josephus concludes his narrative of the pardon of the people of Tiberias, that of Vespasian raising up (ἀνελάμβανεν) the stricken city, may even obliquely allude to the salvific imagery of the *ROMA RESURGENS* coinage.⁵⁶⁰ *BJ* 4.652 and 657 link Vespasian's victory in the Roman civil war to the salvation of the empire and the world respectively, a theme picked up again in Titus' speech to the defeated Jerusalem rebels at *BJ* 6.341.

Certain key imperial virtues cluster around the theme of the emperor's relationship with the divine, foremost among them *pietas*.⁵⁶¹ It is unsurprising that Josephus, as a Jewish author, evinces little interest in Vespasian's attitude towards the gods of his people. Usually, Josephus exploits the fact that, in Greek, it is possible to use the singular θεός to refer to the gods plural, or the divine in general, as well as to an individual "pagan" god or to the Jewish God. Vespasian is twice shown thanking "the god" for his success: this could either mean "the divine", potentially encompassing the gods more broadly, or simply "God", an interpretation arguably suggested by the fact that Josephus consistently suggests that the Jewish God lay behind the success of the Romans.⁵⁶² Depending on the inclinations of the reader, then, these scenes either illustrate conventional Roman *pietas*, with Vespasian ensuring that the gods receive their share of the credit for his successes, or alternatively they show Vespasian acknowledging that the God of the Jews was overseeing his victory, in line with Josephus' own theological interpretation of events. In Greek, both *felicitas*, the blessing of *fortuna*, and *fortuna* itself would best be expressed by the language of τύχη.⁵⁶³ This often implied proximity to divinity, perhaps especially in

⁵⁵⁹ *BJ* 3.459.

⁵⁶⁰ *BJ* 3.461.

⁵⁶¹ On *pietas*-focused aspects of Vespasian's public image, see 93.

⁵⁶² *BJ* 4.370; 3.444.

⁵⁶³ Note that τύχη translates *fortuna* at *RG* 11. See also Kajanto (1981).

Josephus, who often uses the word τύχη simply to mean “God”.⁵⁶⁴ Thus Vespasian’s *felicitas* is manifested both in the consistent aid he receives from the deity and also in those occasional strokes of genuine good fortune (themselves perhaps not cleanly separable from divine intervention) which Vespasian is depicted as occasionally meeting in the course of his campaigns.⁵⁶⁵ Thus Josephus will commemorate both Vespasian’s *pietas* and *felicitas*, but only in terms which, at least potentially, transfer these concepts from the domain of Fortuna and “the gods” to that of his own God.

Josephus’ depiction of Vespasian’s more humane qualities, best considered under the heading of *clementia*, has been suspected by some.⁵⁶⁶ This matters, given the central importance of *clementia* among the imperial virtues: if Josephus’ Vespasian can be shown to be deficient in this quality, then that may imply that Josephus wants to suggest that he is significantly deficient as a ruler. The influence of Seneca’s treatise *De Clementia* has long coloured discussion of this virtue, and in particular has led to an insistence on distinguishing it from blanket mercy, which would constitute a vice; this matters, as some of Vespasian’s “clement” acts concern fully pardoning the guilty.⁵⁶⁷ But, as Miriam Griffin has shown, Seneca himself does not always maintain the distinction between *clementia* and mercy, even within the *De Clementia*, and in fact outside the strictures of the Stoic school the two concepts were probably largely identical.⁵⁶⁸ *Clementia* is best defined as the voluntary mitigation of one’s power to punish, a willingness not always to pursue punitive measures to the full extent of which one is capable, and which in most authors can and does extend as far as a full pardon.⁵⁶⁹ Josephus’ Vespasian’s supposed deficiencies arise out of unflattering comparisons with the *Jewish War*’s depiction of Titus

⁵⁶⁴ Lindner (1972) 42-48, 89-94; Shutt (1980) 184-186; Shaw (1995) 387; Rajak (2002) 105; Hadas-Lebel (2006) 100-102.

⁵⁶⁵ Good fortune in the Galilean campaign: *BJ* 3.144; 3.327.

⁵⁶⁶ Stern (1987) 73; Mason (2016a) 129.

⁵⁶⁷ *Sen. Clem.* 2.7. For insistence on the distinction, see Yavetz (1975) 425-426; Bauman (1996) 78-89.

⁵⁶⁸ Griffin (1976) 156-168; see also Weinstock (1971) 233-243.

⁵⁶⁹ Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 157.

(whose *clementia* will be examined in more detail in the discussion of the presentation of Titus below, 221-225, 240-241). Vespasian does soften his stance towards those he could punish on a number of occasions, but almost always as a result of the intercession of another character, twice Titus and once King Agrippa.⁵⁷⁰ However, while Vespasian is certainly more severe than his son, we should note that *severitas* is not in itself a vice, least of all in a military commander.⁵⁷¹ Vespasian does exercise voluntary and unprompted *clementia* on one occasion, when commuting Josephus' sentence from being sent to Nero to being held in captivity in Judaea.⁵⁷² His capacity for humanity is further illustrated by the fact that he feels pity for refugees from Jerusalem.⁵⁷³ And crucially, even if Vespasian's *clementia* needs to be prompted by other, more soft-hearted types, it is still *clementia*. Vespasian is still capable of moderating his wrath, and of choosing to mitigate punishments on which he had determined. In fact, such intercession narratives reflect well on both people involved, highlighting the good qualities of both the intercessor and the person capable of being influenced towards clemency. Vespasian is not as soft-hearted as his son, but that does not make him hard-hearted (and as seen above, in Vespasian's reign, there was less of a pressing need to assert Vespasian's *clementia* than that of Titus).⁵⁷⁴ We should not forget that *clementia*'s opposed vices were *crudelitas* or *saevitia* and, as shall be argued below, nothing in Vespasian's conduct in the *Jewish War* can really be said to reflect these vices.⁵⁷⁵ While *clementia* is not one of this Vespasian's outstanding qualities, he cannot fairly be said to lack it to a problematic degree.

⁵⁷⁰ Titus: *BJ* 3.396-7, 4.628; Agrippa: *BJ* 3.456-7.

⁵⁷¹ *Sen. Clem.* 2.4.1. See Yavetz (1975) 425-426.

⁵⁷² *BJ* 3.399-408.

⁵⁷³ *BJ* 4.412.

⁵⁷⁴ 98-100.

⁵⁷⁵ *Opposites of clementia*: Griffin (1976) 143.

That exhausts the credit side of the virtue-vice polarity. Josephus nowhere employs vice-language in connection with Vespasian, which is entirely predictable in the circumstances. But the long tradition of figured critique of rulers in classical literature means that we clearly should not take the absence of overt criticism as a sign that no criticism of Vespasian's character is present. I will now turn to an examination of three passages where specific faults of Vespasian's character may be suggested in Josephus' prose, passages potentially exposing Vespasian's cruelty, his loss of self-control and his deficiencies in trustworthiness.

In section 5.1.1 above, a number of passages were discussed which some modern commentators have taken as indicative of cruelty in Vespasian's conduct of military affairs. It will be recalled that, while such passages may shock modern readers, nothing was found in them to be out of keeping with the accepted norms of Roman warfare.⁵⁷⁶ But there is a further passage in which one influential modern scholar has suggested that Josephus seeks to present Vespasianic *crudelitas*, BJ 4.476-477. This passage is part of a geographical excursus on the vicinity of Jericho. Josephus, describing the miraculous properties of the Dead Sea, notes that solid objects will float rather than sink in its waters. He then records a visit of Vespasian to the area:

ἀφικόμενος γοῦν καθ' ἱστορίαν ἐπ' αὐτὴν Οὐεσπασιανὸς ἐκέλευσέ τινας τῶν
νεῖν οὐκ ἐπισταμένων δεθέντας ὀπίσω τὰς χεῖρας ῥιφῆναι κατὰ τοῦ βυθοῦ,
καὶ συνέβη πάντας ἐπινῆξασθαι καθάπερ ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἄνω βιαζομένους.

Vespasian came to the Sea to investigate it, and he ordered some people who did not know how to swim to be thrown into the deep water with their hands

⁵⁷⁶ 146-147.

tied behind them. It happened that they all floated up as if they had been carried up by a current.

Steve Mason has seen this passage, devoid of explicit value-judgments in the authorial voice, as an exposé of Vespasian's dark side.⁵⁷⁷ There is no indication of consent on the part of the "victims" of Vespasian's sinister experiment (though the overruling of the consent of an inferior by a superior need not be a sign of *crudelitas*), nor any indication that Vespasian would have cared either way whether they floated or sank. But there does not seem to me to be much here suggestive of *crudelitas*. Vespasian's purpose is not cruel entertainment but the satisfaction of scientific curiosity (he went there καθ' ἱστορίαν), and while curiosity about the natural world is not a recognised imperial virtue it is also not an inappropriate trait for a general or emperor to manifest.⁵⁷⁸ There is unlikely to have been anything truly "experimental" about this process, either, as the suspension of solid bodies in the Dead Sea seems to have been a reasonably well-known phenomenon in the Graeco-Roman world, mentioned in texts written by authors active in or close to the Flavian period.⁵⁷⁹ Vespasian did not throw these people into the water to see what would happen to them; he knew that they would float (hence his desire to undertake the exercise), and simply wanted to see it happen. Insofar as this passage has any bearing on imperial representation, we should note that, in staging this episode, Vespasian is putting on a spectacle, and the notion of emperors as providers of natural wonders as spectacles is a common trope in Roman literature, reflective of the emperor's command over the natural

⁵⁷⁷ Mason (2016a) 126. See also Stern (1987) 73-4.

⁵⁷⁸ See Tacitus' account of Germanicus' cultural tours of the Eastern Mediterranean and Egypt (*Ann.* 3.53-54, 59-61) and Livy's account of Aemilius Paulus' touristic itinerary in Greece (45.25-28). Nero is recorded as sending expeditions to find the source of the Nile (*Sen. QNat.* 6.8.3-4; note also the explorations of Aelius Gallus in Egypt and Arabia Felix under Augustus, at Strabo *Geog.* 2.5.12).

⁵⁷⁹ Plin. *HN* 2.226, 5.71-72, 7.65; Tac. *Hist.* 5.6; Strabo *Geog.* 16.42; Diod. Sic. 19.98.

world.⁵⁸⁰ Pliny the Elder celebrates Vespasian in this way when he describes how he was the first person to display balsam plants at Rome, and how he dedicated a sculpture of the personified Nile made from a miraculously large piece of Egyptian basalt in the *Templum Pacis*; Martial's *Liber Spectaculorum* is effectively a catalogue of the natural miracles displayed in the arena by one of Vespasian's sons, probably Titus.⁵⁸¹ These texts demonstrate that such a conception of the emperor's relationship to nature was current in Flavian Rome, and it is most likely this relationship between the emperor and the provision and eliciting of freaks of nature which is being invoked by Josephus here.

Josephus' Vespasian is, as we have seen, a person perhaps primarily characterised by steadiness and self-control. Our second problematic passage, surprisingly, has been taken to be concerned with a loss of self-control at the assault on Gamala.⁵⁸² The passage describing Vespasian's fighting withdrawal from the city after the collapse of houses on the Roman troops has been discussed above in connection with the controversy about the appropriateness of Roman generals fighting in the line.⁵⁸³ But while Vespasian fights creditably and retains his cool under intense pressure, the whole scene is problematised by the speech he delivers to his demoralised soldiers on the evening after the calamity (4.39-48). In a part of this speech (44-46), Vespasian chastises his soldiers for impetuosity, for heedlessly pursuing the enemy onto higher ground after their initial successes in the assault, rather than waiting and luring them down to a safer place to fight; heedlessness and incautiousness in war are barbarian, rather than Roman, traits, characteristic, says Vespasian, of the Jews. In making the soldiers' loss of self-control the focus of

Vespasian's criticisms, argues Menahem Stern, Josephus is being darkly ironic. It cannot

⁵⁸⁰ Murphy (2004) 197-203 on the emperor as natural historian (the same author also connects this passage of Josephus with that conception, at 198); for client kings in a similar role, see Totelin (2012). Further analysis of this episode in Gleason (2001) 85.

⁵⁸¹ Plin. *HN* 12.111-114; 36.58. For an overview of the debate about the identity of Martial's "Caesar", see Coleman (2006) xlv-lxiv.

⁵⁸² *BJ* 4.11-83.

⁵⁸³ 145-146.

escape the reader's notice that, in the earlier narrative of Vespasian in combat, it is he who heedlessly rushes to the upper parts of the city and ends up cut off from the rest of his forces. However staunchly and courageously he may have extricated himself from that difficulty, had he followed his own advice he would never have been in that situation in the first place. In constructing his speech in this way, the argument runs, Josephus not only focuses attention once again on Vespasian's loss of self-control, but he opens the emperor up to a charge of hypocrisy too.⁵⁸⁴

The problem with these passages is essentially an incompatibility of values. The narrative of the Roman disaster at Gamala and the subsequent recovery is divided into two distinct episodes, the fighting itself and the speech afterwards.⁵⁸⁵ When considered in isolation, each of these pericopes reflects well on Vespasian. In the combat episode, he rushes to the upper town out of concern for his soldiers when the houses collapse, illustrating his proper *cura* for the safety of his troops; when he realises his predicament, he remains rational, and calculates that standing his ground rather than fleeing would be the best response; he fights courageously and skilfully, and does not turn his back on the enemy until he is clear of the city walls. In the second episode, Vespasian does precisely what a competent general is required to do after a reverse; he revives his men's flagging enthusiasm through oratory. The speech he delivers is a textbook example of the consolatory exhortation. Most importantly, it has its effect, causing a miraculous revival of Roman morale. So taken individually, both passages present Vespasian positively: the core incompatibility, however, is in the question of how concern for personal safety should be valued.

Vespasian advanced to his perilous position forgetful of his own safety (4.31, ἐν λήθῃ τοῦ κατ' αὐτὸν ἀσφαλοῦς γενόμενος); yet in the speech, he castigates the soldiers precisely for the same trait (4.44, τῆς ἀσφαλείας ἡμελήσατε). Motivation matters here: it may be said in

⁵⁸⁴ Stern (1987) 73-74.

⁵⁸⁵ BJ 4.21-38, 39-51.

Vespasian's defence that he became forgetful of his own safety out of concern for the safety of others (4.31), whereas Vespasian depicts his soldiers as carelessly pursuing a quick victory (4.44). Nevertheless the dissonance does seem striking, and awkward.

In a character otherwise as steady and self-controlled as Josephus' Vespasian, the loss of rational control inherent in this episode is surprising, an inversion of audience expectations. We can perhaps situate it better by noticing how strongly the Gamala episode is marked throughout by motifs of inversion, paradox and reversal. The central inversion, of course, is the rapidity with which what looks like becoming a decisive Roman victory tips over into a calamity because of the structural collapses in the city.⁵⁸⁶ But confusion and inversion and reversal appear in many guises throughout. Josephus emphasise the extent of the reversal by drawing attention to the fact that, until this point, Vespasian's army had known no defeat.⁵⁸⁷ The city itself defies expectation and conventional order, miraculously extending vertically rather than horizontally in space.⁵⁸⁸ The sides in the conflict become confused: Josephus comments, in narrating the wounding of King Agrippa, on the Romans' shock that Jews would wound a fellow-countryman so savagely; in the final conflict, couched in the vocabulary of confusion and disorder, Romans fight Romans in the streets, unrecognisable to each other because of the dust kicked up by the collapsing buildings.⁵⁸⁹ Another way in which the sides become confused is that in Vespasian's speech, as we have seen, the Romans are accused of fighting like Jews.⁵⁹⁰ In his speech, Vespasian draws explicit attention to the motifs of Fortune and

⁵⁸⁶ *BJ* 4.21-29.

⁵⁸⁷ *BJ* 4.39.

⁵⁸⁸ *BJ* 4.7.

⁵⁸⁹ *BJ* 4.14-16; 29. We may further note Book 4's central concern with *stasis* in both Jerusalem and Rome: these early scenes of Jews attacking Jews and Romans fighting Romans offer a foretaste of what will develop into the major theme of the book.

⁵⁹⁰ *BJ* 4.45. On Josephus' tendency to write about Romans and Jews in terms of national characteristics (often expressed in their fighting styles), as well as the occasional deliberate confusion of these categories, see Mader (2000) 43-46; Mason (2016c) 104-107.

reversal, applying them to the present situation.⁵⁹¹ Finally, there is the grand concluding reversal: the Romans, as a result of their catastrophic defeat, become elated and enthused, whereas the Jews, as a result of their resounding victory, become dejected and dispirited.⁵⁹² Perhaps, in this strongly paradoxical narrative, Vespasian presents paradoxes of his own, the eminently self-controlled veteran who loses his head and exposes himself to unnecessary peril, the general who castigates his troops for the failings he himself has just been shown demonstrating. At any rate, it should be evident that loss of self-control is certainly not typical of Josephus' Vespasian: his apparent lapse at Gamala was very much a one-off, one of a number of freakish reversals characteristic of the *mundus inversus* motif which animates Josephus' account of the horrors of the assault on the "Masada of the North".

When Josephus was writing, the importance of an emperor keeping his word had recently been starkly illustrated by the assassination of Galba, murdered largely because of his failure to honour a donative to the praetorians promised in his name. However, we have already seen Vespasian's trustworthiness being called into question in his issuing of a false promise of safe passage to the rebels in Tarichaeae, before having them killed or enslaved.⁵⁹³ But this is not the only incident which questions Vespasian's truthfulness. Another passage seems to depict Vespasian as an oath-breaker, a passage concerning the general's treatment of Josephus himself.⁵⁹⁴ After the fall of Jotapata, the hiding-place of Josephus and his companions is betrayed. Vespasian sends two envoys, Paulinus and Gallicianus, instructing them (κελεύσας - this direct attribution of responsibility for their message to Vespasian is very important) to offer pledges of security in return for his surrender. Josephus hesitates, suspecting their intentions, so Vespasian sends in their place

⁵⁹¹ BJ 4.40-42.

⁵⁹² BJ 4.49-50.

⁵⁹³ 147-149.

⁵⁹⁴ Den Hollander (2014) 92; Mason (2016a) 123-124.

Nicanor, an old friend of Josephus, to assure him of Vespasian's sincerity. Then, after an account of Josephus' prophetic dreams and the suicide pact, Josephus surrenders and is brought to Vespasian. The reader is surprised to discover that, contrary to his earlier assurances, Vespasian appears resolved on putting Josephus to death. It is largely the clement intervention of Titus which persuades him to spare Josephus' life. Vespasian resolves instead to send Josephus to Nero, but Josephus himself convinces Vespasian rather to keep him in captivity with the army.⁵⁹⁵ We cannot help but recall Nicanor's assurances to Josephus, and wonder if Vespasian's crime is here being indicted in the mouth of his own spokesman:

προσετίθει δ' ὥς οὔτ' ἂν Οὐεσπασιανὸς ἐνεδρεύων φίλον ἔπεμπεν, ἵνα τοῦ
κακίστου πράγματος προστήσῃται τὸ κάλλιστον, ἀπιστίας φιλίαν, οὐδ' ἂν
αὐτὸς ἀπατήσων ἄνδρα φίλον ὑπήκουσεν ἐλθεῖν.

He added that Vespasian, if he were trying to trap Josephus, would not have sent a friend, thereby concealing the worst of deeds, treachery, with the noblest of pretexts, friendship; and nor would he have agreed to come in order to deceive a man who was his friend.

(BJ 3.349)

It is important to notice first what is and is not at stake here. Nothing in Vespasian's conduct towards his prisoner could be construed as cruelty.⁵⁹⁶ As a captured enemy, the pledge of security notwithstanding it would be perfectly just for Vespasian to execute Josephus. And Josephus' guilt means that sparing his life is an act of *clementia*, rather than *iustitia*. Josephus deserves to die, but is spared. As R. S. Rodgers reminds us,

⁵⁹⁵ BJ 3.392-408.

⁵⁹⁶ Pace Stern (1987) 73-4.

“clemency in the court presupposes guilt”.⁵⁹⁷ As always, Titus is more clement than his father, but this does not necessarily make Vespasian inclement: the father was, after all, open to persuasion to the gentler course. This story shows both that Titus’ counsel and wishes were taken seriously by his father, emphasising his influence and proximity to power, while simultaneously showing a capacity for clemency in Vespasian. Furthermore, Josephus does offer Vespasian an opportunity to exercise clemency without Titus’ intercession in this narrative, in commuting his revised sentence from deportation to Nero to captivity in Judaea.⁵⁹⁸ Neither the *clementia* nor the *iustitia* of Vespasian can be impugned in this story; it is, like the Tarichaeae narrative, his *fides* and perhaps his *pietas* which are called into question. Josephus’ inclusion in his Galilean narrative of two episodes where Vespasian apparently decides that the sanctity of his word is of less consequence than expediency suggests, without a word of overt criticism in the authorial voice, that this opportunistic slipperiness is a persistent character defect of the emperor. We may even wonder whether this evidence of a predilection for convenient dissimulation is meant cast doubt on the sincerity of Vespasian’s protestations of reluctance to initiate civil war.

We can conclude by taking note of a couple of strange omissions in Josephus’ portrait of Vespasian, first the lack of any mention of his relatively humble roots in rural Italy. We have seen several indications that Vespasian was unashamed of his lack of aristocratic pedigree, and even advertised it and made it a part of his public persona while in power.⁵⁹⁹ But despite the prominence of this aspect of Vespasian in other accounts, Josephus has not a word to say about it. Why?

⁵⁹⁷ Rogers (1943) 41.

⁵⁹⁸ *BJ* 3.399-408.

⁵⁹⁹ 94-95.

Discussing silences in literature is difficult, and inevitably involves speculation about an author's motives. Perhaps the most straightforward explanation for this omission is simply a matter of generic demarcation. Josephus was not, after all, writing a biography of Vespasian, and his upbringing is not relevant to his command against the Jews. Nonetheless, we might expect at least some acknowledgement of this aspect of the imperial persona in Vespasian's introductory sketch, which deals overtly with the general's life prior to Judaea. An alternative explanation may lie in Josephus' own attitude to questions of social class. In describing Judaeans society in the *Jewish War*, Josephus, a member of the Herodian-Roman-created ruling class of that province, shows himself an advocate for that class.⁶⁰⁰ For him, stability under Rome means entrusting local affairs to an elite, individuals of good (and preferably priestly) ancestry and standing, "omni-competent aristocrats" (Mason 2016c 27) whose breeding and education equip them with the character necessary to govern with wisdom. Time and again he draws attention to the good breeding of the moderates, and to the high birth of the principal victims of the revolutionary leaders; conversely he insists on the low birth of the "tyrants" and their followers.⁶⁰¹ The product of a provincial elite in which family pedigree mattered, Josephus consistently presents good birth as a prerequisite for responsible leadership. Against this background, Vespasian's non-aristocratic roots become positively problematic: the emperor himself, it appears, does not live up to Josephus' criteria for appropriate governance. Josephus' unusual silence concerning the relative humility of the *gens Flavia* may thus cast light on one aspect of Vespasian's public image which could have been problematic for members of local elites in the wider Roman world, or at least those such elites which (as in Judaea) valued pedigree.

⁶⁰⁰ On this elite and its *de facto* creation under Herod, see Goodman (1987), esp. 29-50. On Josephus' attitude to social class, see Rajak (2002) 118-119; Mason (2016c) 27-28.

⁶⁰¹ High birth of moderates and victims: see (e.g.) *BJ* 3.342, 4.259, 4.319, 4.335. Low class of rebels: (e.g.) *BJ* 2.585, 4.135.

Another potentially interesting omission concerns a virtue which is often a crucial aspect of imperial representation, and which was perhaps particularly urgent under Vespasian, imperial *liberalitas* or *largitio*.⁶⁰² In Josephus, the only glimmer of Vespasianic generosity concerns Vespasian's kind treatment of Josephus himself when he was in captivity, which included making gifts to him of clothing and other tokens of esteem.⁶⁰³ This passage is not so much commemoration of Vespasian's *liberalitas* as further bolstering of Josephus' own prestige, illustrating how, even at the lowest ebb in his fortunes, he was still cultivated by the Flavians. It is striking that this "Flavian lackey" should apparently feel absolutely no inclination to help his patron out with this potentially severe image problem.

In sum, Josephus' Vespasian is a recognisably human character, unlike the ideal princes we find in panegyric (and unlike Velleius' Tiberius or Nicolaus' Octavian, who much more closely resembles such figures). Josephus' Vespasian is overwhelmingly positively portrayed, of course: his steady competence, self-mastery, patriotism, personal courage and status as a world-saviour, all of which can be paralleled in other evidence for the reign of Vespasian, make this clear. On the negative side we have found no real reason to support the contention that Vespasian displays any evidence of the vice of *crudelitas*, and, although he is markedly more severe than his son, he is clearly capable of clemency. More alarming is his tendency to privilege advantage over honesty, even under oath: there are, fairly overtly, dark patches in this character's overall complexion. Other signs of Josephan authorial independence include his reconfiguration of Vespasianic *pietas* around the Jewish God, his refusal to celebrate Vespasian's humble origins, and his seeming lack of interest in combating the apparently common view that Vespasian lacked generosity.

⁶⁰² Although not commemorated on coins until Hadrian, *liberalitas* was a key element of imperial representation in other media. See Noreña (2001) 160-161. For Vespasian specifically, see 93-94 above.

⁶⁰³ BJ 3.408.

Although the realities of power at the time of composition meant that Josephus had no choice but to remain courteous about Vespasian, this figure is not the panegyric product of a regime propagandist, but the creation of an independent author, a believable and even fairly rounded portrait of an actual human being, and a portrait markedly different from the one that Josephus offers us of Vespasian's gilded heir Titus, whose presentation in *Jewish War* 1-6 will be the focus of the following section.

5.2. Titus in *Jewish War* 1-6

The discussion of Titus' presentation in these books will proceed at first thematically, as with Vespasian, for the first three sub-sections. The fourth and final sub-section, Titus and the destruction of the Temple, is a break from this procedure. This section will examine a specific portion of the text, *BJ* 6.232-322 (the destruction of the Temple), which presents uniquely complex and intricate problems of interpretation, and which demands to be discussed separately and cannot satisfactorily be treated under the thematic sub-headings. In consequence of this, material pertaining to the destruction of the Temple will be only be briefly mentioned in Sections 1-3, and then in an ancillary role. Detailed discussion of that material will be reserved for Section 5.2.4.

5.2.1. Titus as a military commander

We have already noted that the militaristic focus evident in contemporary representations of Vespasian is just as evident in representations of his son, especially with regard to the suppression of the Jewish Revolt, but perhaps with rather more focus on Titus' personal courage and skill as a fighter.⁶⁰⁴ Therefore, as with Vespasian, the military focus of Josephus' *Jewish War* naturally resonates with the military focus in other contemporary representations of the imperial heir. Titus' military activity divides neatly into two phases in the *Jewish War*. In Books 3 and 4 he is legate of *legio XV Apollinaris*, under the direct command of his father. In 5 and 6, he has taken over his father's command against the rebels, and has oversight of all operations against Jerusalem. Titus emerges from the first phase as the clearly dominant personality under Vespasian's command, and his fairly frequent insistence on fighting personally (see below in this section) means that he often

⁶⁰⁴ 96-98.

comes across as rather more glamorous, charismatic and dynamic than his father.⁶⁰⁵ His fellow legionary legates Sex. Vettulenus Cerialis (*V Macedonica*) and M. Ulpius Traianus (*X Fretensis*, father of the future emperor Trajan) cannot be said to possess personalities at all.⁶⁰⁶ They are faceless military administrators to Titus' charismatic warrior-prince. Brian Jones has noted that this close focus on Titus in the Galilean campaign somewhat obscures the fact that Titus was evidently the junior partner among the legionary legates.⁶⁰⁷ Titus is given the legion which, as Josephus admits, is the least distinguished of the three.⁶⁰⁸ Both Cerialis and Traianus are, over the course of the campaign, given significant independent commands requiring the subjugation of fortified strongholds and large areas of land, whereas Titus, by contrast, only appears to have been given one independent commission under his father, the taking of Gischala, a small town in Agrippa's kingdom.⁶⁰⁹ Josephus even has Titus himself note how easy the reduction of Gischala will be.⁶¹⁰ Even the relatively lowly tribune Placidus is given more significant commands than Titus.⁶¹¹ Titus is completely absent from the narrative of 68, leading Jones to speculate that, at least at this stage in the campaign, he was primarily engaged in diplomatic, rather than military, matters.⁶¹² Josephus' early focus on Titus as a warrior may therefore serve to obscure the fact that as a commander he had rather little to do. Given the highly irregular and somewhat awkward arrangement of having a general's son serve as his legionary legate, it was always likely that Cerialis' and Traianus' contributions to the war would be

⁶⁰⁵ Rajak (2002) 204: "Vespasian often plays an illustrious role; but the brightest aura surrounds Titus".

⁶⁰⁶ Cerialis: *PIR*² V.500; Traianus: *PIR*² V.864.

⁶⁰⁷ Jones (1984) 41-2; Jones (1989).

⁶⁰⁸ *BJ* 3.65.

⁶⁰⁹ Traianus: 3.289-306; Cerialis: *BJ* 3.310, 314, 4.552-554; Titus at Gischala: *BJ* 4.92-120.

⁶¹⁰ *BJ* 4.92.

⁶¹¹ *BJ* 4.57-71, 419-439.

⁶¹² Jones (1989) 133. This is speculative, but given the need, after 69, to conceal any signs of concerted Flavian diplomacy building a coalition in the East, it would make good sense of Titus' absence in the *Jewish War* at this point.

downplayed, and Josephus seems happy to oblige.⁶¹³ However, we should remark that it is detail provided by Josephus himself which allows us to see that the narrative is skewed in this way: this opens up at least the possibility that doublespeak is present here. To readers with eyes to see, a different narrative can emerge from these passages, one in which young Titus dashes around playing the epic hero while the grown-ups get on with the serious business of winning the war.

From the beginning of Book 5, Titus also becomes responsible for the tactics deployed against the rebels. There is a great deal of overlap between Titus and his father as tacticians. Like Vespasian, Titus pays attention to choosing suitable locations for camps, including for sieges; he extracts intelligence from prisoners and refugees; he displays his military forces in order to inspire fear in the enemy and give them a chance to surrender; he is solicitous for the safety of his men and does not expose them to unnecessary risks; he consoles his men with rhetoric after a reverse, and takes steps to replenish his depleted strength; he holds councils of his officers before major engagements and pays attention to the advice he receives from them; he is willing, perhaps excessively so, to fight in the line personally.⁶¹⁴ As we have seen, these tactics are all recommended and approved in military handbooks and in the historiographical tradition. The way he utilises siege engines and tactics at Jerusalem is also entirely conventional.⁶¹⁵ Further conventional tactics include firing up the men's valour ahead of engagements with rhetoric, raising the army's morale by calling the gods to witness that no impiety is involved in the destruction of the Temple, and acting as a military arbiter, paying attention to acts of valour among

⁶¹³ Onasander (1.12) does recommend a general bringing his adult sons on campaign with him as advisors, though not as subordinate commanders.

⁶¹⁴ Camps: *BJ* 5.130-135; prisoners and refugees: *BJ* 6.115-117, 5.114; parading forces: *BJ* 5.349; care for troops: *BJ* 5.316; depleted forces: *BJ* 5.41-43; consolation: *BJ* 6.33-41; advice of officers: *BJ* 5.88, 5.491-501, 6.132-133; personal fighting: *BJ* 3.324; 3.487; 3.497; 4.70; 5.52-61; 5.81-87; 5.93; 5.281; 5.486-490; 6.70. For references to Vespasian adopting these practices, and to the relevant precepts in manuals and historiography, see p.143-144 n.404 above.

⁶¹⁵ Jones (1984) 53.

the troops and distributing rewards accordingly.⁶¹⁶ The parallels with Vespasian are not in the least surprising: this is all just good practice. Titus, like Vespasian, is simply doing what any skilled general would be required to do in the circumstances and like Vespasian there can be no doubting Titus' mastery of the technical discipline of command. Little can be concluded from this material other than that Josephus presents Titus as basically competent. It is much more revealing to look at his possible weaknesses as a commander, which are in evidence in both phases of his military career in Judaea, and which strongly differentiate him from his father. Two key weaknesses in particular have been identified as problematic to his command: his reckless disregard for his own safety in frequently entering combat in person, and his humane indulgence of enemies and subordinates alike, which at times borders on gullibility, causes harm to his army and can even lead to his soldiers running out of control. These supposed flaws merit close consideration.

Titus' personal courage under fire, and his eagerness to enter combat, cannot be doubted in Josephus' account. He fights repeatedly in the line.⁶¹⁷ On one such occasion, he fights despite the attempts of his fellow officers to hold him back.⁶¹⁸ On two further occasions, he wants to fight but is restrained, once by his officers and once by the difficulties of the terrain.⁶¹⁹ When coupled with his concern for his soldiers' safety, we are presented with the image of a general who is considerably more careful of the safety of others than his own. He is an accomplished and brave warrior: he regularly usurps the traditional soldier's honour of being the first over the wall or through the breach, like Alexander at the citadel

⁶¹⁶ Oratory: *BJ* 3.472-484, c.f. Onasander 1.13-16; disclaiming impiety: *BJ* 6.127-128 c.f. Onasander 4.3; arbiter: *BJ* 5.310-311, 5.503, 6.83, 6.133-4, 6.163, c.f. Onasander 34.

⁶¹⁷ *BJ* 3.324-328; 3.487-502; 4.70-72; 5.52-61; 5.81-97; 5.281; 5.287-288; 5.340-341; 5.486-490; 6.70.

⁶¹⁸ *BJ* 5.88.

⁶¹⁹ *BJ* 6.89; 6.132-133.

of the Malli.⁶²⁰ His martial feats are often impressive, and G.M. Paul has drawn attention to how Josephus emphasises the decisiveness of Titus' personal interventions by his frequent use of the past unreal conditional structure, often with the apodosis stated first to heighten the emphasis on Titus' salvific intercession: a catastrophe *would* have ensued *had not* Titus personally intervened.⁶²¹ In such passages, Titus is the agent of *peripeteia*, whose personal engagement on the field can tilt the balance of entire battles. On one occasion, when the Tenth Legion is encamped on the Mount of Olives separate from the rest of the army and comes under sustained attack from the Jewish rebels, Titus' intervention is said by Josephus (with no flattery or envy, he avers) to have twice saved the legion from destruction.⁶²² On other occasions, the sight of Titus fighting in the most hard-pressed parts of the field fires up his soldiers to fight more fiercely, and there can be little doubt that the affection which Josephus presents the soldiers as demonstrating towards Titus stems in large part from his willingness to play the soldier's role in combat.⁶²³

On the surface at least, such episodes are narrated in entirely glowing terms, and contribute immeasurably to the glamour, charisma and dynamism of Josephus' Titus. However, Josephus' evidence furnishes indications that Titus' courage can shade over all too easily into recklessness.⁶²⁴ One episode above all is paradigmatic of this tendency. Titus has joined a scouting party in the vicinity of the walls of Jerusalem (atypical conduct, surely, for a general in the field). He comes under attack and has to fight his way

⁶²⁰ *BJ* 3.324; 3.497; 4.70; 5.331; 6.70. Alexander: Arr. *Anab.* 6.9-13, Plut. *Alex.* 63; Curt. 9.4.26-6.2.

⁶²¹ Paul (1993) 56-64, with references. It is worth noting that Titus' persistent tendency to fight in the line makes him seem more like an epic hero than a Roman commander. On the blurring of generic boundaries between epic and historiography in historiographical battle-narratives of the Principate, see Ash (2002).

⁶²² *BJ* 5.81-97.

⁶²³ *BJ* 5.93; 5.311; 6.54-58. On Titus as an inspiration to his troops, see Mader (2000) 105-123.

⁶²⁴ Jones (1984) 47; Jones (1989) 133; McLaren (2005) 287 (although McLaren's contention that such episodes in the *Jewish War* are necessarily critical of Titus is undermined by his claim two pages later that similar material in Suetonius about Titus fighting in person are laudatory and reflective of Titus' own propaganda); Den Hollander (2014) 190-193.

out. However, Josephus expressly tells us that Titus has gone out without wearing either armour or a helmet. His squadron comes under heavy fire from enemy archers, but Titus emerges unscathed, a clear sign, says Josephus, of God's favour.⁶²⁵ As we shall see, this is not the only time in the narrative when the will of God has to be invoked to excuse Titus' sloppiness. I have already examined the controversy about the appropriateness of Roman generals fighting in person, and shown how different opinions existed in antiquity supporting either side of the debate.⁶²⁶ The existence of this controversy, of two different ways of valuing the same type of conduct in a general, opens up the possibility for figured critique, for Josephus to depict Titus in terms which appear approbatory when viewed in one matrix of values (necessary for genuine figured speech), but which open Titus' conduct up to criticism when recontextualised in a different matrix. But alternatively, Josephan subversion need not be suspected here. Rather, it may be a case of Josephus being damned whatever he does. A general who does not fight lacks glamour and dynamism, but a general who does is reckless. Rather than attempting to rule authoritatively on Josephus' intention here, it may be better simply to note that in Josephus Vespasian and Titus seem to represent different instantiations of idealised generalship. Vespasian is the severe, self-disciplined, thoughtful general who (with one sole lapse at Gamala) does not consent to risking himself in combat, a position not attributable to cowardice but wholly justifiable in one school of Roman military thinking. Titus, evoking more glamorous historiographical traditions and more charismatic qualities of the warrior-general, is an eager and courageous combatant, always keen to be at the heart of the action. Indeed, this may be especially appropriate in the broader context of imperial propaganda, where, as has been noted in the scholarship, emperors tend to avoid fighting in person while imperial heirs, hungry for glory and achievements, are fairly often

⁶²⁵ *BJ* 5.52-61.

⁶²⁶ 145-146.

depicted seeking out combat on the battlefield.⁶²⁷ Which version of proper generalship Josephus endorses is hard to gauge. On the one hand, Josephus depicts himself as general in combat, strongly suggesting that Titus' practice accords best with his understanding of how a general should behave.⁶²⁸ But on the other hand (and this seems to me to constitute the basis for a fairly potent argument that Josephus demonstrates awareness of the potential for understanding Titus' conduct as recklessness) Josephus rather unnecessarily allows characters in his narrative to voice opinions against the appropriateness of a general entering combat. When attempting to restrain Titus from fighting, his officers, on two occasions, are allowed to express their concerns, and those concerns are rather similar to those expressed by Onasander when urging generals not to fight: Titus is risking death, and his death would do untold damage to the morale and prospects of his army; he can do much more good staying back in a supervisory role; and any gains that may accrue from Titus personally fighting cannot possibly outweigh the risks that such conduct would incur.⁶²⁹ On the first of these occasions, Titus brushes off (but does not argue against) such concerns, rushes into battle and, as so often elsewhere, saves the day. At the least, these passages illustrate that Josephus recognises that this aspect of Titus' conduct was not straightforwardly and uncontroversially praiseworthy; at most, he is giving alert readers enough contextualisation in the debate about proper generalship to be able to find the means, arguments and language with which to form their own critiques of Titus' conduct without further authorial prompting.

The notion of Vespasian and Titus as different sorts of ideal general is worth pursuing further. If we revisit Vespasian's uncharacteristic experiences on the front line at Gamala,

⁶²⁷ Campbell (1984) 65; Rich (1999) 545. Note especially Drusus Caesar's eagerness to fight enemy leaders in order to win the right to dedicate the *spolia opima* (Suet. *Claud.* 1.2-4), and both Suetonius and Tacitus praising the personal prowess in combat of Germanicus (Suet. *Cal.* 3.2 and Tac. *Ann.* 2.20.3).

⁶²⁸ *B.J.* 3.151, 205, 234, 259-264.

⁶²⁹ *BJ* 5.88; 6.132-133; Onasander 33.

it is striking how Josephus emphasises that Titus was not present to rescue his father.⁶³⁰

The absence of Titus (visiting Mucianus in Syria) has, it appears, opened up a vacancy on the Roman side for a charismatic warrior-general, and it is under such circumstances that Josephus can depict Vespasian assuming this role. This functions as a bridge between the two notions of good generalship, and it exempts Vespasian from the possible criticism that his caution in avoiding combat is owed to cowardice or a lack of fighting prowess. When necessary, we are shown, Vespasian can fight just as fiercely as his son. But more than this, the emphasis on the absence of Titus serves to strengthen the demarcation between the proper domains of these two distinct generals. Ordinarily, Titus belongs on the front line and Vespasian in headquarters. The difference - perhaps even the incompatibility of values - between these two different ideal generals is partially elided, however, when we note its relationship to an important element in Josephus' analysis of the dynamics of revolt on the Jewish side. Josephus often links the collapse of consensus on the Jewish side to issues of generational difference. The young and the mature have different sets of virtues and values in Josephus' eyes and, while never a hard-and-fast rule, the qualities of youth (boldness, eagerness for change, rashness) tend to incline the young towards the more extreme elements in the revolt, while the qualities of maturity (self-discipline, the desire for peace, wisdom) make the more moderate cause appealing to the older generation.⁶³¹ One of the tragedies of *stasis*, in its characteristically Josephan aspect as a conflict between "moderates" and "extremists", is that it divides the generations, turning the young against the old. If we turn to the Roman side, we see that this generational distinction also applies to Vespasian, self-controlled, austere and cautious, and Titus, dynamic, brave and arguably reckless. The difference, of course, is the absence of *stasis* in Vespasian's army. Vespasian and Titus are a sort of counter-example to the warring

⁶³⁰ BJ 4.32.

⁶³¹ E.g. BJ 1.649, 651, 2.267, 286, 290, 303, 346, 4.128, 133. See Mader (2000) 27-28.

generations on the Jewish side, illustrating how, when united in purpose, the different qualities of young and old in fact complement one another.

The complementarity of Vespasian's and Titus' characters is explicitly stressed on a couple of occasions in the *Jewish War*, once by Nero when selecting the Flavian pair for the Jewish command, and once by Vespasian's soldiers in arguing for the merits of the Flavians as an imperial dynasty.⁶³² The latter passage is especially eloquent: εἴτε οὖν ἐμπειρία γήρως προσήκει τὸ ἄρχειν, Οὐεσπασιανὸν αὐτοὺς ἔχειν, εἴτε νεότητος ἀλκῇ, Τίτον: κραθήσεσθαι γὰρ τῆς παρ' ἀμφοῖν ἡλικίας τὸ ὠφέλιμον ("if government needs the experience of maturity, Vespasian possesses it, but if it requires the forcefulness of youth, Titus; the strengths of their generations will be blended in the pair"). Vespasian's caution thus need not be taken as a critique of Titus' recklessness, nor need Titus' dynamism be taken as a critique of his father's cowardice or sluggishness. They both behave as people of their generations should behave, and both patterns of behaviour can be interpreted as appropriate according to different strands of military thinking at the time. This stress on the compatibility and complementarity of the imperial pair, moreover, makes sense in the context of Vespasian's Rome. Josephus' depiction of the complementarity of the two different generals, both highly competent but demonstrating distinct and age-appropriate virtues, could be read as a broadly pro-dynastic statement in such a context, when the partnership between Titus and his father was the central political fact at Rome and was coming under hostile scrutiny and critique from those who did not favour the new political settlement.⁶³³

⁶³² *BJ* 3.6; 4.597.

⁶³³ 95.

Aside from his daring, Titus' most pronounced quality as a general in the *Jewish War* is his humanity, with the emotion of pity and the quality of clemency often being stressed. Some scholars have argued that these humane instincts, while clearly praiseworthy in themselves, at times interfere with Titus' ability to command his forces effectively. Steve Mason has argued that Titus' concern for his troops' safety, already cited as a military virtue of Vespasian in section 5.1.1 above, would not have struck a Roman reader as praiseworthy, and indeed would have conspired to paint Titus as a "risk-averse general".⁶³⁴ In order to establish this, Mason argued for a traditional and apparently univocal Roman tradition of regarding such concern for the troops as excessively cautious in a commander. There seems to me to be little evidence in support of this view.⁶³⁵ Perhaps a more persistent problem is the kindness which Titus repeatedly shows to the enemy. We are told on more than one occasion that the Jewish rebels mistook Titus' kindness (τὸ φιλόανθρωπον, a good Greek equivalent for *clementia*) for weakness (δειλία, ἀσθένεια); we might wonder whether this "misreading" constitutes an authorial prompt from Josephus guiding the reader towards a less generous reading of Titus' behaviour were it not for the fact that the Jewish rebels so persistently misread everything that happens to them.⁶³⁶ Certainly we encounter a string of episodes where Titus' consideration for the enemy causes actual harm to the Roman side or results in setbacks to the war-effort. It is late in the story indeed, after the ruse of Castor at the second wall, that

⁶³⁴ Mason (2005a) 262-3.

⁶³⁵ In supporting this contention, Mason cites two modern authorities, Eriksen (2002) and Mattern (2002). Mattern does not in fact discuss the issue of a general's concern for the troops, either in the pages cited by Mason (162-222) or anywhere else in the book. Eriksen argues that Velleius' stress on the care which Tiberius shows for the wellbeing of his troops is symptomatic of a new military ideology arising in the early Principate, with more focus on the commander as an individual than had previously been the case. But she supports this contention with reference to a very thin selection of Republican texts, not all of which are relevant to the topic in hand, while ignoring Late Republican texts which *do* seem positively to value a general's concern for his troops (e.g. Caesar, *BGall.* 6.34, *BCiv.* 1.72), and even if Eriksen is right, the "new" military ideology had been in existence for a rather long time when Josephus started work on the *Jewish War*. Mason (2011a) 235-236 and Mason (2016a) 171-175 revisit this question in a much more nuanced and satisfactory way.

⁶³⁶ *BJ* 6.129, 6.340. Rebel misreadings: e.g. *BJ* 3.38, 4.26, 6.288. Greek equivalent: Griffin (1976) 148; Bauman (1996) 13-14.

Titus finally learns that pity is harmful in war (πρὸς βλάβης μὲν ἔγνω τὸν ἐν πολέμοις ἔλεον), yet he still does not desist from his compassionate behaviour.⁶³⁷ In the later stretches of *War* 1-6, Josephus is keen to emphasise that Titus' treatment of the Jewish rebels is more lenient than the laws of war, and after having sworn no longer to be clement after the capture of the Temple, Titus still relents due to the influence of pity.⁶³⁸ Josephus emphasises not just that Titus was clement but that he was almost unreasonably so, exercising this virtue far more consistently than could be expected of any military commander. The possible reasons for this emphasis will be discussed shortly.

Specific episodes where Titus comes undone through apparently excessive consideration for the enemy are in evidence in both phases of his military career in the *War*. Under his father's command, he allows the rebel chief John of Gischala to escape from his hometown by succumbing to a breathtakingly transparent ruse.⁶³⁹ John tells Titus that he intends to surrender, but asks for a day's leave to allow for Sabbath observance before his forces withdraw. It is to the credit of Titus' piety that he assents to this; less creditable is the fact that, instead of surrounding Gischala to prevent an escape, he withdraws several miles distant, leaving the town unguarded. This is particularly stupid given that John himself had recommended that Titus surround and guard the city.⁶⁴⁰ Of course, John and his followers escape, leaving Titus embarrassed. Josephus can only explain Titus' decision not to guard the town as the working out of a divine plan, with God wanting to allow the dastardly John to escape to Jerusalem to cause more suffering amongst the doomed Jews.⁶⁴¹ Titus' straightforward lack of guile (ἀπλότης) reveals itself again at the second

⁶³⁷ *BJ* 5.329.

⁶³⁸ Laws of war: *BJ* 6.346, 352; disavowing future clemency: *BJ* 6.352; relenting through pity: *BJ* 6.399.

⁶³⁹ *BJ* 4.97-117.

⁶⁴⁰ *BJ* 4.101. On this episode, see McLaren (2005) 286.

⁶⁴¹ *BJ* 4.104. For an interesting *comparandum* note *BJ* 2.539, when Josephus similarly explains the apparently inexplicable withdrawal of the Syrian legate Cestius Gallus from Jerusalem when he was on the point of victory to God's desire to prolong the conflict. Divine intervention seems to be Josephus' go-to

wall at Jerusalem, when a certain Castor likewise feigns surrender in order to stall the Roman assault.⁶⁴² While the ingenuous Titus falls for it owing to his persistent desire to induce the Jews to surrender rather than fight, his cunning friend Josephus sees straight through the ruse.⁶⁴³ While some scholars have castigated the Josephan Titus' excess clemency as tantamount to gullibility in these scenes, others have criticised it elsewhere as impotent and even hypocritical.⁶⁴⁴ Titus creditably pities the victims of the Jewish rebels, over whose fates he has no control, but pitying those under his power while doing nothing to prevent their suffering is hardly impressive.⁶⁴⁵ Thus, in an episode when Josephus claims that Titus was compelled to behave with uncharacteristic severity, he pities the indigent Jerusalem civilians whom he had ordered to be crucified to terrorise the rebels, but that pity does not prevent him from carrying the act through.⁶⁴⁶ His pity for the refugees whom his Syrian soldiers were hacking open in pursuit of swallowed gold does not motivate him effectively to check this abuse or significantly to punish those responsible.⁶⁴⁷ His willingness to be influenced through intercession towards clemency (thus casting himself in a role more usually occupied by his father) leads him to refrain from appropriately punishing the surviving Roman soldiers who, without waiting for orders, fell victim to a Jewish ruse at the city gates with disastrous results (their very disobedience, incidentally, insulating Titus from any possibility of being blamed for those results).⁶⁴⁸

explanation whenever a prominent Roman does something stupid. See Mason and Chapman (2008) 371, note 3247.

⁶⁴² *BJ* 5.317-330. On Castor's ruse, see Gleason (2011) 67-68.

⁶⁴³ *BJ* 5.326. These episodes are discussed in Stern (1987) 73; Mason (2005a) 263-4; Mason (2016a) 129.

⁶⁴⁴ Yavetz (1975) 415-416; Alon (1977); Smallwood (1976) 325-326; Mason (2005a) 262, 265; Mason (2016a) 129.

⁶⁴⁵ Pitying victims of rebels: e.g. *BJ* 1.10, 5.519, 522; 6.215-219.

⁶⁴⁶ *BJ* 5.450, cited as reflecting badly on Titus by Gruen (2011) 157-158.

⁶⁴⁷ *BJ* 5.553-560.

⁶⁴⁸ *BJ* 5.121-127.

It seems hard to deny in the light of this roster of compassionate failures that an excess of humanity vitiates Titus' command as Josephus narrates it. So what is to be made of all this? Another way to approach the question is to ask what either Josephus or Titus (or both) stood to gain from this evidently problematic characterisation. In an important article, Zvi Yavetz has connected Titus' clemency in Josephus to Suetonius' remarks about Titus' public image in Vespasian's reign.⁶⁴⁹ Late in Vespasian's reign, it appears, Titus had a strong need to develop his public image in more humane directions, and Josephus' depiction of him as a kind-hearted general seems tailored to facilitate this rehabilitation. This supplies a compelling reason why a friendly historian of the dynasty may want, in the context of Vespasianic Rome, to stress precisely the same sort of qualities that Josephus emphasises in his depiction of Titus' humane generalship. Steve Mason has suggested that the only imaginable reason why Titus would be prepared to endorse such a problematic account of his generalship is if he were willing to accept a certain measure of embarrassment concerning his military competence as the cost of an expedient emphasis on his gentler qualities.⁶⁵⁰ So the question then arises as to whether any of this can be considered really "subversive", when Titus is embarrassed on one score in pursuit of the furtherance of a different positive outcome. One of the problems with any reading of Josephus which attempts to characterise the *Jewish War* either as a part of or as a rejection of the "Flavian propaganda" is the underlying belief that such propaganda would be monolithic in message, always in service of compatible aims. In fact, Rome was a culture in which both the brutal efficiency of a severe general and the enlightened humanity of a benevolent monarch could be held up for admiration. Titus, presented to the public in militaristic terms (Mason is right to note that a triumph is a celebration not of clemency but of brutality) yet needing to emphasise his humanity, needed somehow to

⁶⁴⁹ Yavetz (1975). Titus' image problem under Vespasian : 98-100 above.

⁶⁵⁰ Mason (2005a) 266-267, n.7.

present both faces at once.⁶⁵¹ Rather than a figured critique of Titus' gullibility and excessive soft-heartedness, the *Jewish War* may represent an attempt to tick both boxes, marking the moment when divergent tendencies in the Roman ideology of rule drag the author in two different directions simultaneously. Caught in the interstices between the ideology of the murderously efficient general and that of the kind-hearted autocrat, Josephus give us a curious amalgam of both, a tactically competent and personally courageous warrior prince whose tender heart, again and again, leads him and his army into trouble.

This is, of course, to assume that the needs of the Flavians were the driving force behind how Josephus represented Titus as a general. However, as often, Josephus appears adept at yoking together the interests of the dynasty with the furtherance of his own authorial tendencies. In the council of war in which the fate of the Temple is discussed (treated fully in section 5.2.4 below), Titus' conduct is, as we shall see, excessively and perhaps unbelievably clement.⁶⁵² For present purposes, what needs to be noticed is that, in order to make this conduct credible in any way, Josephus must already have established not only that Titus is capable of humanity, like his father, but that he has a strong and persistent tendency to exercise humanity beyond what might reasonably be expected of a Roman general. This looks like teleological characterisation, an aspect of Titus character which is highlighted again and again in order to condition the reader to accept what might otherwise have seemed an unbelievable narrative in the middle of Book 6. Thus Josephus is not only crafting a version of Titus which honours that prince's need to come across as both a competent general and a humane leader, but which also strengthens Josephus' tendentious reconstruction of motives and events at the *telos* of Books 1-6 of the *Jewish War*.

⁶⁵¹ Mason (2005a) 254-255.

⁶⁵² *BJ* 6.236-243.

5.2.2. Titus and the divine

The absence of anything comparable in the sources to the great cluster of Vespasianic miracle-stories in the public image of Vespasian's eldest son is striking. The general absence of this type of material relating to Titus elsewhere means that it is perhaps something of a surprise to find that Josephus is just as keen, perhaps even keener, to associate Titus with the miraculous and the divine as he is in the case of his father. With the exception of the *Liber Spectaculorum*, which presents a whole sequence of miraculous occurrences manifesting themselves in Titus' presence in the specific context of the arena, no other classical representation of members of the *gens Flavia* shares Josephus' fascination with the idea of Titus as the favourite of heaven. In the case of Vespasian, Josephus' indications of divine favour can partly be explained as complementing stories about Vespasian's divine election which circulated broadly in the wider world, but such considerations do not seem to have applied in the case of Titus. Clearly different explanations are required.

Josephus does in one place associate Titus with God's establishment of the Flavian dynasty. In the prophecy which he depicts himself as delivering to Vespasian at Jotapata, Josephus announces the following: σὺ Καῖσαρ, Οὐεσπασιανέ, καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ, σὺ καὶ παῖς ὁ σὸς οὗτος ("You, Vespasian, will be Caesar and *imperator*, you and your son here").⁶⁵³ This conspicuous reference to Titus' imperial destiny at this crucial moment in the narrative demands to be read against the backdrop of politics in Vespasian's Rome. It has already been observed that the succession from Vespasian to Titus was openly challenged by some in Rome (perhaps influenced by Galba's recent break with intra-

⁶⁵³ BJ 3.401.

familial succession in his adoption of Piso), and indeed this question seems to have become something of a focus of opposition.⁶⁵⁴ This passage thus acquires an immediate, perhaps even an urgent, topicality in Vespasian's Rome, a direct relevance to contemporary debates which went to the heart of the legitimacy of the Flavian political settlement. As with Josephus' stress on the complementarity of the characters of Vespasian and Titus, it can be considered a pro-regime and pro-dynastic statement.⁶⁵⁵ It is useful to think about precisely how this statement functions as a legitimising strategy for Titus' succession. Josephus makes this one part of a prophecy whose other component has already been fulfilled: in the same prophecy, Josephus also foretells the rise of Vespasian. Furthermore, *BJ* 3.351 explicitly links this prophecy to Josephus' foretelling of the ultimate failure of the Jewish Revolt. Thus the prediction of Titus' succession is part of a complex of prophetic utterances which has already, in its other constituent parts, been demonstrated beyond doubt by history to be authentically inspired. The God who put Vespasian on the throne and who crushed the Jewish rebels here indicates that the accession of Titus is preordained.⁶⁵⁶ This serves to naturalise a politically tendentious proposition, to close and render unarguable and inevitable a political project which was in fact open and which was capable of being contested, that Titus must succeed his father. This is strengthened when Josephus refers to both Vespasian and Titus as *αὐτοκράτορες* (*BJ* 6.341), and by his proleptic designation, in the voice of Titus' fellow officers, of Titus as *τῆς οἰκουμένης δεσπότην* ("master of the world").⁶⁵⁷ These features thus position Josephus as a supporter and advocate of the regime-friendly view that Titus must succeed

⁶⁵⁴ 95.

⁶⁵⁵ 218-220.

⁶⁵⁶ Moehring (1984) 909.

⁶⁵⁷ *BJ* 6.341; 5.88.

his father, and Titus' inclusion in the prophecy makes it clear that it is God who has ordained that this will be the case.⁶⁵⁸

One aspect of the relationship between Titus and the divine which is stressed much more strongly than was the case with Vespasian is Titus' piety. We have seen how ambiguity surrounds Vespasian's piety, specifically on the question of whether it is directed at the Jewish God or the gods more broadly, and that how this ambiguity is interpreted may depend on the predispositions of the reader.⁶⁵⁹ In the case of Titus, there is more clarity. On one occasion, exceptionally for Josephus, we find an indication of Titus' reverence for the Roman gods. At *BJ* 6.127 Titus calls upon the gods of his fathers (θεοὺς ... πατρίους), along with whichever gods may watch over the Jerusalem Temple, to witness that it was not his fault that the rebels were defiling that Temple. This, of course, serves to strengthen Josephus' insistence on the innocence of Titus for the fate of the Temple and the transgressions performed therein over the course of the siege. But more remarkable is the consistent reverence which Titus shows towards the god of the Jews. Already under his father's command, we have seen how his blunder at Gischala was motivated by his desire to permit the rebels to observe the Sabbath.⁶⁶⁰ Throughout the narrative this same pious regard for the god of the enemy is everywhere evident, and above all of course in Titus' repeatedly-expressed desire to preserve the Temple from desecration at the hands of his own troops.⁶⁶¹ Titus even presumes to take on the role of an expert in *halacha* when castigating the rebels for their transgressions against the regulations of the Temple.⁶⁶² This

⁶⁵⁸ S. Schwartz (1990, 13-16) sees these features as evidence that *Jewish War* 1-6 was a product of the reign of Titus, a wholly unnecessary hypothesis, especially in the light of the strong indications of Vespasianic-period composition outlined in Chapter 4, 122-127.

⁶⁵⁹ 198-199.

⁶⁶⁰ *BJ* 3.97-105, 222 above.

⁶⁶¹ E.g. *BJ* 1.27; 5.334; 444; 456; 519; 6.94-95; 122-124; 214-216; 228.

⁶⁶² *BJ* 6.124-126.

is all perfectly in line with the tolerance and respect for Jewish tradition which Josephus elsewhere emphasises as characteristic of the best Roman governance of Judaea, and certainly highlighting Titus' reverence for religious customs hallowed by antiquity and tradition is one way of contributing to the overall impression of humanity which adheres to Josephus' depiction of the general.⁶⁶³ However, it is worth stressing that this is Josephus' own way of praising Titus, and entirely different from anything found in any other positive representation of the regime. The Triumph and the deposition of the Temple treasures in the *Templum Pacis* are not at all suggestive of reverence towards the Jerusalem Temple and its traditions and customs: these acts celebrate Titus not as the respecter but as the destroyer of the Temple. Piety towards the Jewish God does not seem to have been a quality with which either Flavian was particularly interested in being associated after 70. Thus Josephus finds a way to represent Titus' attitude towards the Jewish God and Temple which is entirely opposed to how Titus was otherwise represented in the reign of his father, making him a positive *exemplum* of Rome's humane tolerance of the Jews when he himself seemed more concerned to be seen as the man who crushed them, and yet this deviant representation still serves the purpose of contributing towards a generally positive delineation of his character.

Concrete signs of God's care for Titus are abundant in the *Jewish War*. In addition to his guaranteeing Titus' accession, God (opines Josephus) gave the city of Jaffa to the Romans to be taken by Traianus and Titus; Titus expresses the view on a number of occasions that God is on his side; Titus expresses the view that God has delivered the city of Tarichaeae up to him; Titus' decision to return to Judaea from his aborted journey to Galba is made

⁶⁶³ On pious gentile kings and governors respecting the Jewish laws and Temple in Josephus, see Cohen (1987) 412-415.

under divine impulse, thus saving him from being used as a hostage by Vitellius; God protects the undefended Titus from a hail of missiles near Jerusalem; in the final fall of the city God motivates the rebel leaders to depart from impregnable towers so that the Romans can defeat them.⁶⁶⁴ In addition, Josephus' choice of vocabulary suggests that God contributed to the marked enthusiasm which Titus was capable of inspiring in his troops by his oratory or his example.⁶⁶⁵ All of this marks Titus off quite clearly as the specially favoured recipient of divine aid, which assists him in his campaigns and saves and protects him, just as he in turn saves and protects his men. But the most remarkable indication of divine favour for Titus comes in an episode which is not related in the narrative voice, but which Josephus recounts in the speech which he delivers to the rebels at Jerusalem. The main thrust of this speech is that God assists the Jews when they are quiescent, but aids their enemies when they resort to violence to defend themselves. In order to sustain this historical hypothesis, Josephus gives an inaccurate or disingenuous account of various episodes in biblical and post-biblical history illustrative of this principle.⁶⁶⁶ His climactic example concerns a clear sign of divine assistance to Titus and his army in the present siege:

Τίτω μὲν γὰρ καὶ πηγαὶ πλουσιώτεραι ῥέουσιν αἱ ξηρανθεῖσαι πρότερον
 ὑμῖν: πρὸ γοῦν τῆς αὐτοῦ παρουσίας τὴν τε Σιλωὰν ἐπιλείπουσιν ἵστε καὶ
 τὰς πρὸ τοῦ ἄστεος πάσας, ὥστε πρὸς ἀμφορέας ὠνεῖσθαι τὸ ὕδωρ: τὸ δὲ
 νῦν οὕτως πληθύνουσι τοῖς πολεμίοις ὑμῶν, ὥς μὴ μόνον αὐτοῖς καὶ
 κτήνεσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ κήποις διαρκεῖν. τό γε μὴν τέρας τοῦτο πεπεῖραται καὶ
 πρότερον ἐφ' ἁλώσει τῆς πόλεως γεγεννημένον, ὅτε ὁ προειρημένος

⁶⁶⁴ Jaffa: *BJ* 3.293; God on Titus' side: 3.484, 6.38-41, 6.411; Tarichaeae: 3.494; Galba: 4.501; arrows: 5.60-61; towers: 6.399

⁶⁶⁵ Supernatural (δαμόνιος) frenzy: 3.485; supernatural impulse (ὁρμὴ τινι δαμονίῳ) of Sabinus: 6.59.

⁶⁶⁶ *BJ* 5.376-419. For the inaccuracies and disingenuities, see S. Schwartz (1990) 23-35.

Βαβυλώνιος ἐπεστράτευσεν, ὃς τήν τε πόλιν ἐλὼν ἐνέπρησε καὶ τὸν ναόν,
οὐδὲν οἶμαι τῶν τότε ἡσεβηκότων τηλικοῦτον ἡλίκα ὑμεῖς.

Even the streams which had previously dried up for you flow more fully for Titus. For you know that before his arrival the Siloam had failed, as had the other streams near the city, so much so that water was being sold in amphoras. But now they flow so fully for your enemies that they sustain not only them and their animals, but even the gardens. This same wonder was noted previously at the time of a capture of the city, when the aforementioned Babylonian [sc. *Nebuchadnezzar*] went to war against us, who captured the city and burned the sanctuary, although I think that none of the impieties committed at that time match yours now.⁶⁶⁷

Wilhelm Weber draws comparisons between this passage, which he interprets as presenting Titus as a wonder-worker, and the Alexandrian healing-miracles of Vespasian (which of course Josephus does not record), to argue that this episode has its origins in Flavian propaganda.⁶⁶⁸ But Weber's emphasis seems skewed here: the passage does not, in fact, focus on Titus' *Wunderkraft* or seek to present him as possessed of supernatural powers, but rather this is an unsolicited and unworked miracle sent by God. It celebrates God's, not Titus', power over nature, and therefore it seems hardly propagandistic in such a straightforward sense. Moreover, the (shaky) basis for thinking that the Alexandrian miracles originate in regime propaganda is their wide distribution in a number of classical authors (they may even be parodied in the Gospels); conversely, Josephus is our only source for this story, meaning that even this slim basis for a belief in Flavian miracle-

⁶⁶⁷ BJ 5.409-411.

⁶⁶⁸ Weber (1921) 235-236. In a similar vein, Paul (1993) 64-66 also believes that this story highlights Titus as a supernatural, semi-divine wonder-worker, primarily by reading too much into Josephus' deployment of the relatively common word *παρουσία*. Théron (1981) 242 sees this as an indication of Titus' status as saviour of Jerusalem.

propaganda documents disappears in this case.⁶⁶⁹ This odd episode may have been wholly invented by Josephus in order to illustrate the power of God, to draw yet another parallel between the Romans and the Babylonians, or to flatter Titus as a focus of the miraculous favour of God; alternatively it may have a historical kernel (a rise in local rivers and streams is a well-known effect of rapid deforestation, and Josephus has elsewhere mentioned that the Romans deforested the Jerusalem area to a distance of ninety stades in order to construct their siege-works and circumvallation wall).⁶⁷⁰ Josephus' source for the supposed biblical precedent is as elusive as the source of the Titus episode (it was certainly not the Bible: neither of the biblical accounts of the coming of Nebuchadnezzar reports any such tale).⁶⁷¹ Again, it may be free invention to emphasise parallelism between Rome and Babylon, it may be Josephus' misremembered details from the Bible, or it may derive from parabiblical material transmitted either orally or in now-lost texts. But more important that Josephus' source for either the Babylonian or Roman iterations of this miracle is what he does with the story. It is difficult to know what to make of Steve Mason's suggestion that this episode may be so far-fetched as to be deliberately engineered to make Titus look ridiculous, other than to say that any reader of Velleius or Pliny's *Panegyricus* will soon come to appreciate that "less is more" was not often an operative principle when Romans came to praise their emperors in writing.⁶⁷² The Siloam passage is at least ostensibly respectful to Titus in that it clearly represents him yet again as specially favoured by heaven, but it also advances Josephus' own theology of history, by emphasising once again the power of God, and by tightening still further his persistent parallelism of Babylon and Rome (which in itself indicates God's power over history). As

⁶⁶⁹ Vespasian's miracles in classical sources: Table 1, 79-81 number 1.7. Gospel parodies: Eve (2008).

Flavian miracle-propaganda: Henrichs (1968), Fears (1977) 171-172; Luke (2010); Rajak (2014) 195-196.

⁶⁷⁰ Deforestation and water levels: Runyon and D'Odorico (2016) 39-70. Trees around Jerusalem: *BJ* 5.523.

⁶⁷¹ 2 Kings 25; 2 Chron. 36:15-20.

⁶⁷² Mason (2005a) 259-260. Self-evidently excessive flattery of a tyrant was a recognised strategy of figured critique in antiquity (Quint. *Inst.* 9.2.49; Demetr. *Eloc.* 292), but this passage is not flattery in the strict sense meant by these authors but narrative featuring no explicit praise of the subject.

before, we see Josephus here turning the courtesy he was no doubt expected to show to the imperial dynasty to his own advantage, yoking his positive presentation of the heir apparent to his own, distinctly non-Flavian agenda. Equally importantly we need to note, *contra* Weber and Paul, that this passage emphasises the power over nature not of Titus but of God, and in that respect it coheres with all the other, earlier-mentioned signs of divine favour which manifest for Titus, which are all unsolicited and bestowed independently of anything Titus is shown doing. Titus does not compel or demand the services of God like Elijah or other Jewish or Hellenistic wonder-workers. God helps Titus on his own terms, and for his own reasons.

So far it has been shown that Titus is strikingly reverent towards God, and that God consistently bestows assistance on Titus. It remains to make one important observation on the connection between these two phenomena. It is manifestly not the case that Titus receives God's blessings as a result of his piety towards God. This makes Josephus' theological formulation unusual in the Roman historiographical tradition. The notion that Rome succeeded because of divine aid as a result of the superior piety of the Romans was a familiar one, already in evidence in the Middle Republic in the famous letter of Messala Corvinus to the Teians, and it is articulated by numerous Roman authors including Cicero and Livy.⁶⁷³ Even the notion that an enemy god might "defect" in consideration of Roman piety had a long history in Roman religious thought.⁶⁷⁴ Perhaps the clearest expression of this militaristic theology comes from the writings of another provincial historian

⁶⁷³ Corvinus: *RDGE* 34 = *SIG* 2.601; Cic. *Har. Resp.* 19; Livy (e.g.) 44.1.11. See also Fears (1981a) and Thein (2014). This is also presumably the implication of the relief on Trajan's Column which depicts Jupiter about to launch a thunderbolt at the Dacian foe (Lepper and Frere, 1988, 68-71 and Plate XIX).

⁶⁷⁴ Most obviously in the practice of *evocatio*, on which see Basanoff (1947); Le Bonniec (1969) 101-115; Le Gall (1976); Edlund-Berry (1994); Gustaffson (2000).

attempting to explain Roman success, Dionysius, from a speech placed in the mouth of the dictator A. Postumius Albus before the battle of Lake Regillus:

θεοὶ μὲν ἡμῖν ὑπισχνοῦνται δι' οἰωνῶν τε καὶ σφαγίων καὶ τῆς ἄλλης
μαντικῆς ἐλευθερίαν τῇ πόλει παρέξειν καὶ νίκην εὐτυχῇ, ἀμοιβὰς τε ἡμῖν
ἀποδιδόντες ἀγαθὰς, ἀνθ' ὧν αὐτοὺς σέβοντες καὶ τὰ δίκαια ἀσχοῦντες ἐν
παντὶ τῷ βίῳ ἡμῶν διετελέσαμεν, καὶ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἡμῶν νεμεσῶντες κατὰ τὸ
εἶκός.

The gods undertake through bird-omens and entrails and other forms of divination to provide our city with liberty and blessed victory, bestowing good things on us in recompense for our reverencing them and practising justice through all our lives and, as seems probable, feeling anger at our enemies.⁶⁷⁵

The gods reward *pietas* with political and military success: this is the principle of *do ut des* writ large, and it does not reflect the conception of divine support for Rome found in Josephus. Only the third of Dionysius' three criteria for divine support (piety, justice and divine anger at Rome's enemies) is operative in the *Jewish War*. The problem is not that Titus lacks either piety or justice (he clearly does not), but simply that the conduct of Titus and the Romans is irrelevant in Josephus' economy of divine favour. Some scholars have detected universalising tendencies in Josephus' depiction of Jewish cult but, while it may be true that his God is open to receiving worship from non-Jews and to rewarding righteous gentiles, ultimately the progress of world history is determined on one axis and one axis alone, the status of the relationship between God and the Jewish people.⁶⁷⁶ In no passage of the *Jewish War* does Josephus ever hint that Titus is dear to God because of his

⁶⁷⁵ Dion. Hal. 6.6.2.

⁶⁷⁶ Universalising tendencies: Downing (1982); Schwartz (1990) 27. Single axis: Bilde (1988) 185-187.

piety; on the other hand, time and again Josephus stresses that it is the Jewish rebels who have driven God from the Temple, that their transgressions are what have determined God's support for the Roman suppression of the Revolt.⁶⁷⁷ In one way, this formulation is reflective of Josephus' inbetweenness, his simultaneous oddness in both the Jewish and the classical traditions, his status as someone "anglicised but not English", in the formulation of Homi K. Bhabha.⁶⁷⁸ To Roman readers, the notion of the divine supporting Roman military success and even of an enemy deity "defecting" to the Roman side would have been familiar enough, but that god's complete indifference to the piety of the Romans or of Titus would seem unusual.⁶⁷⁹ Similarly, Josephus introduces elements that are dissonant and unparalleled in biblical historiography, in particular his insistence on the piety of those whom God uses to chastise the stiff-necked Jews (no biblical or parabiblical text ever emphasises the pious reverence of Titus' most obvious biblical analogue, Nebuchadnezzar), presumably influenced by the need to portray Titus positively and perhaps by an awareness of the Roman traditions of world-rule through piety. Thus Josephus echoes both Roman and Jewish literary traditions, but does not fit comfortably into either. But at the deeper level, the *Jewish War* belongs more to the Jewish conception: Titus' piety is cosmetic, extraneous to the basic mechanics of the Josephan theology of history. God's favour is the Jews' to lose, not the Romans' to win. Indeed, the principal function of the piety of Titus (or the Romans more broadly) seems to be not flattery of either the victorious army or its general, but rather as yet another means to denigrate the Jewish rebels. Roman piety towards the Jewish God is presented as a paradox: even the Romans, who are at war with Jews, show more piety towards God than the Jewish rebels,

⁶⁷⁷ E.g. *BJ* 4.323; 361-2; 5.566; 6.99-110. See Saulnier (1989) 546-547. For a full (and impressively massive) list of formulations of this idea in the *Jewish War* see Mader (2000) 13.

⁶⁷⁸ Bhabha (2004) 101-174, on inbetweenness.

⁶⁷⁹ Disregard for Flavian piety: Thérond (1981) 241.

for all their pietistic rhetoric.⁶⁸⁰ The emphasis here is less on Roman piety than on reprehensible Jewish impiety. Of course piety is a praiseworthy trait in both Roman and Jewish eyes, and emphasising Titus' reverence contributes to an overall positive presentation of the general, but, as often, Josephus is able to combine courtesy to his patron with the furtherance of other ends, namely the denigration of the extremists and the underscoring of his tendentious theological explanation of the failure of the Revolt.

5.2.3. The Virtues of Titus

Titus' "virtue profile" under Vespasian has already been discussed.⁶⁸¹ As with Vespasian, Titus' military virtues were emphasised above all else, a congenial emphasis for Josephus' purposes given the nature of his work. Titus' *virtus* in the narrow sense was substantially the theme of section 5.2.1. above, and that discussion does not need repeating here; it can be taken as amply established that Josephus' Titus is not only a fiercely accomplished and eager combatant, but appears to know absolutely no fear.⁶⁸² The related virtue of *constantia*, courageous fixity of purpose, was, we have seen, emphasised in Josephus' portrayal of Vespasian, but in the case of Titus it is more problematic. Titus' constancy of purpose often seems to be undermined by that all-encompassing *clementia*. This is especially apparent towards the close of the narrative. At 5.329, Titus is said to have learned that clemency is harmful in war, and yet his apparent resolution to renounce *clementia* is futile, as he continues with his compassionate behaviour later in the narrative. Again, when Titus resolves to set fire to the gates into the inner parts of the Temple, it is

⁶⁸⁰ Note especially *BJ* 4.184, where Ananus declares that the Romans are the upholders of Jewish laws and the Jews the enemies of those laws; and *BJ* 6.101-102. Rajak (2002) 82-83.

⁶⁸¹ 96-98.

⁶⁸² To the passages cited in section 5.2.1, we may add the approbatory notices on Titus' τόλμα ("daring"), which frightens the enemy at *BJ* 3.498; his ἀρετή (= *virtus*) in the eyes of Vespasian at 3.504; his ἀλκή ("strength") at 4.597 and 5.59; and his ἰσχὺς ("forcefulness") at 5.90. At 5.63 and 5.90, Josephus pays tribute to Titus' παράστημα ("outstanding courage"), a quality also attributed to Vespasian at Gamala (4.34).

supposedly because he has recognised that his desire to spare a foreign Temple had caused him nothing but trouble, yet far from renouncing that desire decisively he almost immediately goes into a council of war and argues that the Temple should still be spared.⁶⁸³ Again, after the fall of the Temple he resolves to do everything in accordance with the laws of war (another renunciation of clemency), and yet Josephus soon has Titus explicitly failing to live up to this directive.⁶⁸⁴ Titus' better angels thus constantly impair his ability to pursue the final stages of the suppression of the Revolt with the rigour and severity which he has recognised that the task requires. Vespasian never encounters such difficulties. In this vision of the general who knows the laws of war (τοῦ πολέμου νόμοι) but is unable, for emotional reasons, to live up to their requirements, one is reminded above all of Josephus, the historian who understands the law of history (τῆς ιστορίας νόμος) regarding impartiality and detachment but who begs the indulgence of readers for failing to live up to them because of the emotional trauma of the fall of the Temple.⁶⁸⁵ However, in one passage Titus is shown as rather more constant than his father in one respect. It will be recalled that on two occasions in the Galilean campaign, Josephus' Vespasian is shown breaking his word, once to Josephus and once to the rebels in Tarichaeae.⁶⁸⁶ Shortly before the final assault on the Temple, Titus is confronted with two especially brutal rebel leaders who have surrendered and fled to the Roman side, Simon bar Gioras' nephew Ananus of Emmaeus and Archelaus ben Magadattus. Titus' inclination is to punish them severely because of their crimes. However he refrains from so doing, because he had earlier offered an amnesty for Jewish deserters.⁶⁸⁷ Unlike Vespasian, then, Titus regards his word as his bond, and refuses to do what he considers expedient or correct if such a course of action would involve breaking *fides*.

⁶⁸³ *BJ* 6.228, 241.

⁶⁸⁴ *BJ* 6.353, 383. On this see Mason (2005a) 265.

⁶⁸⁵ Laws of history: *BJ* 1.11; laws of war: *BJ* 5.332, 6.346, 353.

⁶⁸⁶ 147-149 and 206-208.

⁶⁸⁷ *BJ* 6.229-230.

Thus Titus' resolve is in doubt, but his trustworthiness is beyond reproach, in precise opposition to how these qualities manifest themselves in Vespasian; but the self-control which Titus exercises in not punishing these despicable deserters may seem to be a quality shared by both father and son. In truth, self-control seems hardly at issue in Titus' clement acts. It will be recalled how Vespasian's occasional clemency almost always required the intercession of a third party; on only one occasion is this shown to be the case with Titus, on remitting the punishments of some soldiers who had not waited for his orders and got themselves into difficulties through their consequent actions.⁶⁸⁸ For Titus acts of clemency are not, as they were in the case of Vespasian, a question of an active exercise in self-control so much as the natural expression of an ingrained and predominant element of his personality; it is not that he lacks self-control in these cases, simply that none is required. Indeed, those who maintain that Titus' repeated rushing into battle is rashness could plausibly argue that this Titus, in direct contrast with his father, has very little self-control indeed. The control of the passions of others likewise seems difficult for Titus. We have seen Vespasian regularly reining in the passions of his men; on only one occasion does Titus do this, during the last-ditch negotiations between the general and the defeated rebel chiefs on Wilson's Arch after the destruction of the Temple.⁶⁸⁹ Elsewhere, Titus' men regularly act either without waiting for orders or in opposition to orders they have received, most famously during the destruction of the Temple but also throughout Books 5 and 6.⁶⁹⁰ This apparent lack of control over his troops is exacerbated yet again by Titus' clemency, by his unwillingness to punish his soldiers as they deserve. Once more this outsized humanity, which is perhaps Josephus' Titus' defining characteristic, interferes unhelpfully with another element of Titus' virtue-profile.

⁶⁸⁸ *BJ* 5.127-129. For Vespasian, see 199-200.

⁶⁸⁹ *BJ* 6.327.

⁶⁹⁰ *BJ* 5.109-119, 553-561, 6.177-186, 252, 256-259, 262-266.

As a general, Titus is much stronger as an inspirer than a controller of men, and this inspirational quality is frequently stressed. A modern reader might suspect that we are entering the realm of absurd comedy on a couple of occasions, when Roman soldiers die cheerfully, happy in the knowledge that they give their lives for their beloved chief.⁶⁹¹ Sometimes this devotion is a result of the affection which the men feel for their general, an element of the *comitas* which Titus shows towards his fellow soldiers; elsewhere it is Titus' soaring rhetoric; and at other times it is inspirational exemplarity, the sight of Titus' own valiant efforts on the battlefield or their fears for him when he is hard-pressed.⁶⁹² The notion of exemplarity invites consideration of a quality which Vespasian had no occasion to exhibit, filial *pietas*. Titus' *pietas* towards the divine, and especially the Jewish God, has been discussed in the previous section, but *pietas* was also an important rubric in evaluating relationships with people to whom one had obligations, above all parents. At *BJ* 3.482-484, Titus sets up his own father as an *exemplum* to himself when exhorting his troops before the cavalry engagement outside Tarichaeae. The men all know his father's virtue, says Titus, and he himself would not be able to bring himself to return to Vespasian, a man habituated to victory, if their mission failed.⁶⁹³ But similarly, the men must hold Titus up as their own *exemplum*, just as he holds up Vespasian's virtues for imitation. Their success reflects on Titus, and Titus' success reflects on his father. This is a fascinating hierarchical economy of exemplarity, in which Titus is both the possessor of excellence in his own right and the vehicle through which his father's virtues can, through imitation, be disseminated throughout the troops. Respectful to Titus yet stressing Vespasian's superior authority, this is the perfect role for an heir to play, ensuring that Titus retains responsibility for his successes while still allowing those successes to enhance the glory of the absent Vespasian. Elsewhere, Titus' pious concern for Vespasian

⁶⁹¹ *BJ* 6.56-57; 182-185.

⁶⁹² Affection: *BJ* 5.310-311, 6.56-57; rhetoric: *BJ* 3.472-484, 497, 6.33-53; exemplarity: *BJ* 5.87, 94.

⁶⁹³ See also *BJ* 5.123-124 for Vespasian as an *exemplum* cited by Titus.

is emphasised at Jotapata: when Vespasian receives a wound, Titus is the first at his father's side, and the anguish which Titus feels is a second source of alarm for the disconsolate troops.⁶⁹⁴ Recall also Gamala, where Josephus stresses that, had Titus been present, he would have rescued Vespasian when he came under attack.⁶⁹⁵ The willingness to risk one's own safety to save a father from physical danger was an especially resonant variety of filial *pietas* at Rome because of the enduring power of the image of Aeneas and Anchises at Troy.

Like his courage, the Josephan Titus' clemency has already been well-established and illustrated, and needs no repeating here. However, two passages from *BJ* 5 and 6 are interesting against the background of this heightened humanity, in both cases incidents when Titus behaves with unusual severity. First, in order to frighten the rebels in Jerusalem into submitting, Titus decides to crucify some poor civilians captured outside the city (although Josephus emphasises that Titus had nothing to do with the soldiers' cruel decision to crucify them in degrading poses). Titus may (and does) pity them, but he goes through with it nonetheless.⁶⁹⁶ Later, Titus executes a soldier whose carelessness enabled Jewish rebels to steal some horses, *pour encourager les autres*, an act which Josephus avers was contrary to Titus' usually clement nature.⁶⁹⁷ Both of these episodes show that gentle Titus well understands the value of exemplary violence and, despite his inclinations, is capable of deploying it. Once again, one is struck not simply by the difference between Vespasian and Titus, but even by their straight opposition. Vespasian is severe by nature but capable of clemency; Titus is clement by nature but capable of

⁶⁹⁴ *BJ* 3.238.

⁶⁹⁵ *BJ* 4.32.

⁶⁹⁶ *BJ* 5.446-451.

⁶⁹⁷ *BJ* 6.153-156 an act which Josephus describes as σκυθρωπότερον in comparison with Titus' usual clement attitude.

severity. Despite their naturally opposed inclinations, both can rise to whatever the situation requires, whether clemency or severity is called for.

A smattering of secondary virtues occurs throughout the text. Titus' *liberalitas*, celebrated by Martial and Suetonius and on the *congiarium*-type Titus Caesar coins, is in evidence when Titus promises wealthy Jewish refugees that he will restore their property to them after the war, and when he sets aside vast numbers of prisoners to be displayed at shows in the cities of the East celebrating the suppression of the Revolt.⁶⁹⁸ Like his father, Titus is a rational warrior, a keen tactician, with the young general regularly shown making calculations, weighing up the pros and cons.⁶⁹⁹ He not only reacts intelligently to the military situations he is faced with, but he is an active forward planner too. At his two officers' councils, he does not merely listen to the conflicting advice given to him by his more experienced generals, but in both cases he outlines his own suggested courses of action, which are presented by Josephus as being superior to the advice he has received.⁷⁰⁰ His *comitas*, which we have seen emphasised by Pliny, is shown by the good-humoured way in which he endures the joshing of his ally Antiochus Epiphanes, a dashing prince of Commagene: young Titus has his father's lack of pretension.⁷⁰¹ Josephus carefully keeps Titus at a distance from any material pertaining to the Flavian *coup*, meaning that Titus has few opportunities to demonstrate two aspects important to the delineation of Vespasian's character, his patriotism and his status as a world-saviour. Nonetheless, Titus is depicted showing a patriotic concern alongside his father for the *res publica* after Galba's assassination, and he later is shown assisting his father in governing the empire at Alexandria while Flavian armies were pressing his father's claim in the West.⁷⁰² Although

⁶⁹⁸ Mart. *Spect. passim*; Suet. *Tit.* 7.3-8.1; BMC 2 Vespasian 629; BJ 6.115, 418.

⁶⁹⁹ BJ 4. 4.92-96; 5.59, 68, 348, 495-501.

⁷⁰⁰ BJ 5.491-501; 6.236-243.

⁷⁰¹ 98; BJ 5.463.

⁷⁰² BJ 4.502; 5.2.

Titus has no opportunity to save the world, there are clearly salvific dimensions to this Titus in his repeated interventions to save Roman troops in danger, discussed in section 5.2.1 above (recall all those emphatic past unreal conditionals). As we have seen, the notion of emperors saving the lives of citizens had been, from the time of Augustus, an important part of imperial ideology, and is reflected in parts of Vespasian's numismatic output.⁷⁰³ Thus Josephus' depiction of Titus as repeated saviour of his fellow-citizens is likely to have struck a rather imperial chord with Roman readers. These minor virtues round out Josephus' Titus and fill out the sketch of a character primarily oriented around the two virtues of fearless military courage and humane clemency, a sketch which is overwhelmingly positive in tone and content but which is by no means insensible of the difficulties which these two virtues can present.

My consideration of the character of Vespasian concluded with a consideration of Josephus' omissions, of what he does not say about Vespasian but might have been expected to, and the same procedure can be followed with the son. There are two particularly noticeable omissions in Josephus' sketch of Titus, one surprising and one rather less so. The surprising omission concerns certain daring exploits of Titus on the battlefield in Judaea related in later historical narratives, episodes which seem so comfortably in keeping with Josephus' emphasis on Titus' military heroism that it is striking to find no mention of them in the *Jewish War*. As has been noted before, Suetonius reports that at one engagement in Galilee Titus' horse was killed under him, and he was forced to mount the horse of a companion who had died next to him; Dio's epitomator further informs us that Titus was wounded fighting at Jerusalem, so severely

⁷⁰³ 92-93.

that his left arm would be impaired for the rest of his life.⁷⁰⁴ We might expect Josephus, eager chronicler of Titus' daring exploits, to have something to say about these episodes (Josephus does not require his principals to be invulnerable, as both Vespasian and Agrippa pick up scars in Judaea).⁷⁰⁵ There are, it seems to me, two possible explanations for this reticence, with no real means of choosing between them. We may conclude from Josephus' silence that these episodes simply did not happen, and were legends which accrued to Titus after the event. Josephus was, after all, much closer to the events than either of the other authors, and his silence can legitimately cast doubt on the historicity of these events because it is hard to imagine material better suited to his focus on Titus' personal heroism. Alternatively, we may suspect that Josephus' awareness of the recklessness of Titus' conduct during the war (indicated, as argued above, by the advice which Josephus has Titus' officers give him about avoiding combat) constrained him here, and that he chose to suppress material which could seem to substantiate the charge that Titus' boldness in battle was unnecessarily rash.

The more predictable omission is perhaps more interesting. Nowhere in the *Jewish War* is there any indication of the relationship between Titus and Queen Julia Berenice, despite the prominence of both of these individuals in the narrative.⁷⁰⁶ Berenice is very active in the early stages of the Revolt in the *Jewish War*: her high point comes at *BJ* 2.309-314, where she delivers a doomed but valiant appeal to the procurator Gessius Florus to desist from his abuses, her head shaved in fulfilment of a Nazirite vow. Thereafter, she rather disappears from the narrative. It is likely, however, that she played a significant role in the affairs narrated, and that she was one of the eastern luminaries who contributed resources both to the suppression of the Revolt and to the Flavian *putsch*. Her contacts book may

⁷⁰⁴ Dio 65.5.1; Suet. *Tit.* 4.3; 97 above.

⁷⁰⁵ *BJ* 3.236; 4.14.

⁷⁰⁶ On Berenice, see 99-100.

have been as useful to Vespasian as her treasury: she had at one stage been the sister-in-law of the all-important Ti. Julius Alexander and a member of the elite eastern network which had grown up around Antonia Minor at Rome, so many of whose members came to the aid of the Flavians in 69.⁷⁰⁷ But Berenice's role in all of this remains conjectural, as Josephus has not a word to say on the topic, a suspicious silence made explicable by his desire to make the Flavian *coup* appear as spontaneous and unorchestrated as possible.⁷⁰⁸ Regarding the relationship itself, we do not know as much as we would like. Seth Schwartz even suggests that it may not have got underway until after the suppression of the Revolt, although this would appear to make a nonsense of the contemporary rumour reported by Tacitus that Titus' return to Judaea after Galba's death was motivated in part by a desire to see the queen again, a rumour which presupposes the pair are in a relationship by early 69.⁷⁰⁹ Thus its absence from Josephus would appear to be a conscious omission. Evoking the distinction between "serious" history and "frivolous" biography, Barbara Levick maintains that "Flavius Josephus' *Jewish War* and *Antiquities of the Jews* had such a stern subject matter ... that it allowed him to escape making any reference to [*the relationship*]"⁷¹⁰ However, Josephus is not so austere that, in the *War*, he refrains from discussing the copious marital problems of Herod, or Herod's heir Alexander's adventures with palace eunuchs, or the sexual immoralities of the Jerusalem rebels.⁷¹¹ Josephus is not shy of relating scandal; he is simply shy of relating Flavian scandal. Generic convention was more likely a pretext than a genuine reason for reticence (as intimated by Levick); a more convincing explanation is the extraordinary degree of controversy which the relationship between Titus and Berenice seems to have stirred up in

⁷⁰⁷ See Nicols (1978) 99-131 and Levick (1999) 28-29 on the Flavians' eastern network.

⁷⁰⁸ 176-177 above.

⁷⁰⁹ S. Schwartz (1990) 11; Tac. *Hist.* 2.1.

⁷¹⁰ Levick (2000) 63.

⁷¹¹ *BJ* 1.431-647, 488-489, 4.561-562.

Rome.⁷¹² Berenice and Titus appear to have been a hotly topical news item in Vespasianic Rome, where Josephus was writing. His silence on the pair cannot thus constitute an attempt to suppress knowledge of the relationship. It was much too late for that. Rather, his decision not to discuss it, perhaps justifiable on generic grounds, looks more like an act of tact and discretion, a desire not to draw further attention to a well-known aspect of Titus' life which many in Rome viewed as undesirable and controversial. Josephus thus excludes Berenice from both Vespasian's *coup* and Titus' affections out of an astute concern for political propriety.

5.2.4: Titus and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple

Josephus' long-standing reputation for mendacity has probably never been more influential than in assessments of his account of the burning of the Jerusalem Temple in the sixth book of the *Jewish War*.⁷¹³ The destruction of the Temple is not, chronologically speaking, the climax of the work, even if just Books 1-6 are considered: after the Temple fell, the city's western hill, the Upper City, remained in rebel hands and its reduction took a full month.⁷¹⁴ However, in many ways it is the *telos* of the work, especially for those interpreters who regard the *Jewish War* as being, in part, a theodicy, an attempt to explain how God could allow the sole sanctuary of his chosen people to be destroyed.⁷¹⁵ If, as so many suspect, Josephus is capable of wilfully distorting the facts even at this centrally important moment in his work, it casts grave doubts over his commitment to veracity everywhere else. Furthermore, Josephus' alleged lie bears directly onto the theme of this study, Flavian representation, because the reason invariably cited for this supposed act of

⁷¹² 99-100.

⁷¹³ *BJ* 6.232-322.

⁷¹⁴ *BJ* 6.374-408.

⁷¹⁵ Lindner (1972); Moehring (1984); Bilde (1988) 72; Edwards (1992) 306-9; Parente (2005); Klawans (2012) 187-191.

deception is regime apology, the desire to improve the image of Titus by exonerating him for the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, and by depicting him ordering, at a council of war just prior to the Roman assault on the Temple, that the sanctuary should be spared from destruction. In this section I will first outline Josephus' account of the sequence of events that led to the destruction; I will then consider the relevance to the question of two passages from the Christian writers Orosius and Sulpicius Severus which are often used to argue for Josephan mendacity; next I will examine the arguments of the large majority of scholars who believe that Josephus is lying, as well as the problems that this hypothesis throws up; I will then examine the arguments of those few scholars who argue that Josephus' account is substantially true, as well as the problems that that throws up; and I will conclude by attempting to move this rather positivistic (and largely unproductive) discussion in a different direction, specifically by attempting to understand how the Josephan version fits into the landscape of regime representation in Flavian Rome. While my purpose is not to establish what actually happened on 9th or 10th Ab 70 (my interests are historiographical rather than historical), the question of veracity or mendacity cannot be entirely ignored given the nature of the scholarly discussion to date and because of the fact that, if it can be solidly demonstrated that Josephus is lying here, it would have profound implications for any historiographical analysis of this episode.

It is important to note that Josephus' attempts to distance Titus from responsibility for the destruction of the Temple begin long before the council of war. Already in the Book 1 preface we are told that the Temple was burned against Caesar's wishes.⁷¹⁶ Josephus on numerous occasions expresses the view that it is the misdeeds of the rebels which are

⁷¹⁶ *BJ* 1.28, ἄκοντος ... Καίσαρος. The exact same phrase recurs at the climax of the account of the destruction of the Temple itself (*BJ* 6.266), a powerful way of emphasising the point.

bringing God's vengeance on the city and Temple.⁷¹⁷ Moreover, the destruction of the physical fabric of the Temple is not begun by the Romans but by the rebels. After the Romans raze the Antonia Fortress on 17th Panemos, it is the Jewish rebels who begin the process of destroying the colonnades which connect the Fortress to the Temple, and a later rebel stratagem involves the deliberate destruction of another colonnade.⁷¹⁸ On 8th Loös, after repeated attempts to gain entry to the Temple complex have failed, Titus gives the order to burn the gates down, reasoning that his desire to spare a foreign sanctuary is proving too costly.⁷¹⁹ After fires have consumed the gates and adjoining porticoes and been extinguished, Titus convenes a council of war, comprising three of his legionary legates, the commander of his Alexandrian detachments, his adviser Ti. Julius Alexander and the procurator of Judaea, M. Antonius Julianus, as well as assorted junior officers. Two opinions are advanced by his officers. The first and most severe is that the Temple must be destroyed in any event: as long as it stands the Jews will be more likely to revolt. Its destruction, we are assured, would be in keeping with the laws of war, a subtle way of Josephus indicating that, however tragic and contrary to Titus' will the destruction of the Temple may have been, it should not count as a Roman outrage but as the expected outcome of a siege. The second suggested course of action, more even-handed, is that, should the rebels surrender the Temple, then it should be spared, but if they decline to do this and insist on using it as a fortress then it should be destroyed. That way, no blame for the impiety of the destruction would lie with the Romans, as the Jews would have transformed the structure from a temple into a fortress. But Titus rejects even this reasonable proposition, and argues that the Temple should be destroyed under no circumstances, even if the rebels continue to fight from it. Titus avers that he will not wreak vengeance on inanimate objects, and that the Temple is a glorious piece of work

⁷¹⁷ E.g. *BJ* 6.40, 108-110, 239, 250.

⁷¹⁸ *BJ* 6.164-5; 177-189.

⁷¹⁹ *BJ* 6.228.

which could serve as an “ornament of the empire”. His reasoning wins over three of his companions, and such is the policy which is to be followed regarding the Temple.⁷²⁰ However, it was not to be. On the 10th Loös, Roman soldiers are putting out fires in the inner courtyards when they come under attack from rebel defenders. In the confusion, one soldier, acting under “some supernatural impulse” (δαίμονίῳ ὁρμήν τινη, *BJ* 6.252), hurls a firebrand through a small window into the buildings surrounding the sanctuary proper and the Temple building catches fire. Titus rushes to the scene and attempts to order his men to put out the fire, but in the general ensuing chaos his orders have no effect. Indeed, other soldiers begin throwing firebrands into the Temple too. He enters the Holy of Holies to investigate it as the Temple burns and then, returning outside, he tries once more, again in vain, to check the blaze. A soldier thrusts a firebrand through the gate into the sanctuary proper; fire takes hold, and others join in the firebombing. Titus realises that the Temple cannot now be spared and withdraws from the scene, unwillingly leaving the House of God to its fate.⁷²¹

For over a century and a half, one of the most frequently-cited factors in the debate about Josephus’ veracity here has been the stark opposition between this version of the destruction of the Temple and the version contained in the *Chronica* of Sulpicius Severus, the fourth-fifth century Christian historian from Aquitania.⁷²² Occasionally, attention is further drawn to another account of the same episode, from the works of Sulpicius’ contemporary Orosius, which agrees in one particular at least with Sulpicius against Josephus.⁷²³ The problem is that both of these accounts make it plain that, far from being

⁷²⁰ *BJ* 6.236-243.

⁷²¹ *BJ* 6.249-266.

⁷²² Sulp. Sev. *Chron.* 2.30.3-7.

⁷²³ Oros. *Hist. adv. Pag.* 7.9.4-6.

an act of disobedience carried out “against Caesar’s wishes”, the burning of the Temple was actually ordered by Titus.⁷²⁴ It is not immediately obvious why we should prefer the accounts of these late sources over that of the contemporary Josephus, who may not have been at the council of war but was with the army when it was held and had easy access to all of the participants. But an 1861 discussion of these texts by Jacob Bernays did a great deal to minimise the distance between Sulpicius and Orosius and the events they describe.⁷²⁵ Bernays constructed an elaborate argument in order to demonstrate that the common source behind both of the Christian accounts is the now-lost narrative of the destruction of the Temple in the fifth book of Tacitus’ *Histories*. Even more boldly, Bernays argued that he had identified the source of this lost Tacitean passage. Minucius Felix lists one Antonius Julianus as the author of a book *de Iudaeis*, and Josephus tells us that one of the participants at the council of war was the then procurator of Judaea, M. Antonius Julianus.⁷²⁶ Thus, according to Bernays, this Julianus wrote an eyewitness account of the council of war which, unlike Josephus’, told the truth about Titus’ intentions for the Temple, and included it in his book on the Jews. This in turn served as the basis for Tacitus’ account, which in turn was the source used by Sulpicius and Orosius. Tacitus, Sulpicius and Orosius had no reason to privilege the reputation of Titus over the facts, and so their accounts lack the tendentious partiality of Josephus and deserve to be considered as the “truer” record of events. Bernays’s work has been so influential that the Sulpicius passage is routinely printed among the fragments of the *Histories* in the major editions of Tacitus, and it has won acceptance from some influential scholars.⁷²⁷ However,

⁷²⁴ Although the account of the fall of Jerusalem in Dio’s *Roman History* is only preserved in epitomated form, and although no mention is made in the text as we have it of a council of war, it is possible to infer that Dio also presented the destruction as deliberate policy. That would seem to be the strong implication of the scene described by Xiphilinus (66.6.2) in which a frenzied Titus urges his fearful soldiers forward to assault the Temple, a striking reversal of Josephus’ depiction of Titus failing to restrain his soldiers from the act.

⁷²⁵ Bernays (1861) 48-61.

⁷²⁶ Min. Fel. Oct. 33.4; BJ 6.238.

⁷²⁷ Weber (1921) 72-73; Drexler (1925) 289; Weiler (1968); Schürer (1973) 506-507; Barnes (1977) 226-7; Bengtson (1979) 75; Barnes (2005); Parente (2005) 47; Rives (2005).

in recent years an increasing chorus of dissent has arisen against Bernays's hypothesis. This matters a great deal: if, as Bernays thought, what we have in Sulpicius is a faithful and non-tendentious transmission of an unbiased eyewitness account of the council, then we would have little choice but to conclude that Josephus is evidently lying here, and that his obligations to his Flavian patron were powerful enough to induce him grossly to distort the record on even the most important episode in the *Jewish War*.

It does not seem to me, however, that there is a strong enough basis to these arguments to enable us to accept these late sources as decisive witnesses against Josephus. The numerous assumptions which underpin the chain of source-dependence in this argument can each plausibly be questioned. Thus it need not be the case that the Antonius Julianus cited by Minucius Felix as the author of a book on the Jews was identical with the Judaeian procurator of that same name: other Antonii Juliani are available, and Tessa Rajak draws attention to a Hadrianic-period sophist of that name as a possible rival contender.⁷²⁸

Furthermore, if *de Iudaeis* in Minucius is to be taken as the title of the work (which admittedly, as Menahem Stern notes, it need not be) then this would suggest that the work was an ethnographic treatise, not perhaps the sort of work in which we would expect to find an account of a Roman council of war.⁷²⁹ Given that we cannot read Tacitus' account of the council of war, it is surely wildly speculative to start attempting to identify his sources, especially when the source we posit may not even have existed. As for Sulpicius' and Orosius' dependency on Tacitus, even this has not been established beyond reasonable doubt. Bernays clearly demonstrates that, elsewhere in his work, Sulpicius evidences familiarity with Tacitus (although it should be noted that all of the examples which Bernays adduces come from the *Annals* rather than the *Histories*), and it is true that

⁷²⁸ Rajak (2002) 209. The *Prosopographia Imperii Romani* lists the procurator, the sophist and the author as three separate entries (*PIR*² A.846, 844 and 843 respectively), although it notes the possibility that either the sophist or the procurator might be the same person as the author.

⁷²⁹ Stern (1976) 461.

Tacitus promises his readers an account of the fall of Jerusalem at the start of *Histories* 5, but these two facts do not combine to create a necessary guarantee that Tacitus was Sulpicius' main source for this episode.⁷³⁰ As Hugh Montefiore has shown, the examples of "Tacitean" phrasing offered by Bernays from the relevant part of Sulpicius are not at all strong.⁷³¹ Even the notion of a common source shared by Orosius and Sulpicius can be questioned. Bernays himself notes that there are no close linguistic parallels between the two passages, but more importantly there are significant discrepancies in detail too.⁷³² While they both agree on the central question of Titus' conscious decision to destroy the Temple, there is little unanimity on anything else. It is not even clear from Orosius that there was a council of war.⁷³³ The reasons articulated by these authors both for sparing and destroying the Temple differ.⁷³⁴ We are forced to conclude that, if there really is a common source behind these passages, then at least one of these authors must have changed not only the language but even the contents of that source beyond recognition.⁷³⁵

The question of *Tendenz* also merits some consideration. It is certainly true that Tacitus, Sulpicius and Orosius were not bound to the person of Titus in the way that Josephus was, but the same surely cannot be said for the supposed ultimate source of their accounts, Antonius Julianus. As an equestrian functionary under the Flavians, Julianus must surely have felt some pressure to produce a version of events congenial to the ruling family; if, as Bernays maintains, it was so strongly in Titus' interests to be exonerated of responsibility

⁷³⁰ Bernays (1861) 53-55; Tac. *Hist.* 5.2.

⁷³¹ Montefiore (1962) 165-169, responding to Bernays (1861) 58-59.

⁷³² Bernays (1861).

⁷³³ Orosius simply states that Titus *diu deliberavit* ("hesitated for a long time", *Hist. adv. Pag.* 7.9.4). This need not imply a formal council.

⁷³⁴ For Orosius, the argument for destroying the Temple is to act as an incentive to the enemy, presumably to desist rebelling; for Sulpicius, it is to destroy the *religiones* of the Jews and the Christians; conversely, Orosius' expressed argument in favour of sparing the Temple is so that it can serve as a memorial to Titus' victory (similar, but not identical, to Josephus' notion of it serving as an ornament of empire), while to Sulpicius its preservation would be a proof of Roman *modestia* and a refutation of *crudelitas*.

⁷³⁵ Barnes (1977) 227 intimates the significance of the differences between Sulpicius and Orosius for Bernays's argument.

for the Temple's destruction, then are we really to imagine Julianus circulating an account so starkly at odds with this "official version"? Furthermore, the supposed transmitters of Julianus' account had tendencies and prejudices of their own which might well lead them to spin or tamper with what they found in their sources. The opening of *Histories* 5 establishes a strongly Judeophobic tone, which might very well colour the later account of Jerusalem and lead Tacitus to want to present the reasonable Titus as sharing the authorial prejudice.⁷³⁶ Furthermore, Sulpicius' *Chronica* is a remarkably tendentious text, not least in the section in question. Sulpicius presents the assault on the Temple as an attack on Christianity (Bernays thought that even this detail went back to Tacitus, although later commentators have seen it as a Sulpician touch).⁷³⁷ It comes in the middle of a series of instances of attacks on Christianity carried out on the direct orders of Roman emperors: Nero, Domitian and Hadrian also feature in this sequence.⁷³⁸ In all cases, the persecution fails and results in the ever-greater triumph of the Church (and also, in the cases of Titus and Hadrian, in the intensifying degradation of the Jews). Sulpicius' account of the fall of the Temple comes in the middle of a sequence of narratives which all fit the same apologetic scheme, and which aim to illustrate God's championing of Christianity in the face of official persecution from the highest levels, as well as the transference of God's favour from the Jews to the Christians. Thus a strong tendentious current flows through this whole section of the *Chronica*, and reasons can easily be adduced for Sulpicius amending the narrative he finds in his sources; crucially, in order for the attack on the Temple to fit this scheme, it needs to be ordered from on high. The idea that Sulpicius is non-tendentious is clearly nonsense: it is a different *Tendenz* to that possibly in evidence in Josephus, but in no way less powerful or pronounced. Indeed, it has been noticed that Sulpicius' account agrees in several details with Josephus against Tacitus (see, for

⁷³⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 5.2-13. On Tacitus' Jewish ethnography, see Bloch (2002); Feldherr (2009b).

⁷³⁷ Bernays (1861) 57-8; conversely, see Leoni (2001) 463-465; Barnes (1977) 228.

⁷³⁸ Sulp. Sev. *Chron.* 2.29-31.

instance, his reported figures for those killed or captured in the siege).⁷³⁹ This has led Steve Mason to argue recently, and plausibly, that rather than preserving a Tacitean narrative, what we find in Sulpicius is a tendentious Christian rewrite of Josephus!⁷⁴⁰

In sum, the Antonius Julianus who wrote on the Jews may (but may not) have been the procurator of Judaea, and his account may (but may not) have included an eyewitness account of Titus' council of war. This may (but may not) have been the basis of the lost account of the last days of Jerusalem in Tacitus, which in turn may (but may not) have been the common source of Sulpicius Severus and Orosius. Antonius Julianus' account, so strikingly at odds with what we are supposed to believe was the official Flavian line, may (but may not) have been reproduced faithfully and non-tendentiously by Tacitus, despite his *animus* against the Jews. Sulpicius may (but may not) have in turn repeated Tacitus' account faithfully, in a manner entirely unaffected by his own strong Christian-apologetic tendencies, in which case Tacitus must have crafted an account which suited Sulpicius' purpose at this point in his narrative almost miraculously well. Every step on this long and elaborate journey has been ultimately an assumption, and every one of those assumptions is eminently and plausibly contestable. In order to create a situation where Sulpicius (and / or Orosius) can reasonably be taken as witnesses of superior or even comparable authority to Josephus, we would need strong evidence that these assumptions are justified; this evidence does not exist, and the arguments advanced have not been strong enough to compensate for this defect. I will, in consequence, disregard both of these late Christian witnesses in the rest of this section and concentrate, instead, on the story as Josephus tells

⁷³⁹ Sulpicius gives 100,000 killed and 1,100,000 captured (*Chron.* 2.30.5). This is much larger than Tacitus' total figure for people besieged in Jerusalem (600,000, *Hist.* 5.13), but Sulpicius' first figure is close to Josephus' 97,000 killed (*BJ* 6.420). The correspondence is also noted by Feldman (1984b) 851. For other close correspondences between Josephus and Sulpicius, see Mason (2016a) 496.

⁷⁴⁰ Mason (2016a) 466-513, also briefly mentioned as a possibility by Pucci ben Zeev (2011) 56-57. T. D. Barnes, an ardent modern supporter of the notion that Sulpicius derives from Tacitus, nevertheless recognises that Sulpicius has been (probably indirectly) influenced by Josephus, too (1977, 226).

it, the only version we have which can be demonstrated to go back to someone in close proximity to the events in question.

Whatever their opinion of the value of Sulpicius and Orosius, clearly the large majority of scholars who have engaged with this passage have come to the conclusion that Josephus is probably lying.⁷⁴¹ I will now consider the arguments advanced by those who hold this view which do not concern external evidence, and these arguments fall broadly into two types. First I will consider those who believe that certain specific details in Josephus seem incredible or contradictory; then I will consider more historiographically-based argument, which relate to Josephus' situation as an author in Flavian Rome.

In terms of incredible details, Jonathan Price has objected that it must have been impossible for the Temple, a structure made primarily of stone and metal, to catch light from a single firebrand.⁷⁴² But we could respond (as does Tomasso Leoni) by pointing to the large quantities of flammable materials inside the Temple for the sacrifices; we might also add that it is clearly not the case that a single firebrand started the blaze.⁷⁴³ At *BJ* 6.258 and 266, we read of more and more disobedient soldiers hurling brands into the Temple buildings. There seems to me to be nothing inherently improbable about a building containing large stocks of material such as timber and oil being set on fire after a sustained firebombing, which is what Josephus describes. Gedaliah Alon has noted that Josephus' account is undermined by the fact that Titus never seeks to punish his soldiers

⁷⁴¹ An incomplete catalogue would include Bernays (1861); Weber (1921) 72-73; Drexler (1925) 289; Momigliano (1952b) 885, 862; Williamson (1964) 280; Weiler (1968); Schürer (1973) 506-507; Smallwood (1976) 325-6; Alon (1977); Barnes (1977) 226-7; Vidal-Naquet (1977) 109; Bengtson (1979) 73-76; Stern (1980) 66-67; Franchet d'Espèrey (1987) 3066-3067; Stern (1987) 73; Price (1992) 162-174; Hadas-Lebel (1993) 170; Spilsbury (2002); Barnes (2005); Parente (2005); Rives (2005); Pucci ben Zeev (2011).

⁷⁴² Price (1992) 171.

⁷⁴³ Leoni (2001) 456.

for their gross disobedience, but this seems naive.⁷⁴⁴ As Martin Goodman points out, if events really did progress as Josephus describes, then Titus would have little choice but to celebrate them subsequently; the undignified and ridiculous spectacle of a conquering general punishing his victorious army would benefit nobody at that point.⁷⁴⁵ Adam Ziolkowski has surveyed a great many accounts of Republican-period city- and sanctuary-destructions in Roman historiography and, although he finds many examples of soldiers sacking and looting without orders, he can only cite one instance where soldiers are subsequently punished for this type of disobedience, the case of the army of Scipio Africanus at Locha.⁷⁴⁶ It seems that the loss of control over one's soldiers at the climactic moment of a long siege was almost expected, and no consequences were ever likely to fall upon soldiers whose discipline failed at that moment.⁷⁴⁷ Titus' predictable and understandable failure to punish his soldiers scarcely seems to be a detail so incredible as to warrant rejecting Josephus' account. As for contradictions, a number of passages elsewhere in Josephus' writings are often indicated as "giving the lie" to his apologetic narrative, with Josephus failing to recognise that statements which he himself makes contradict his master narrative. At the climax of the Cannibal Mary episode when news of the atrocity reaches Titus, he is said to have exclaimed καλύψειν μέντοι τὸ τῆς τεκνοφαγίας μύσος αὐτῷ τῷ τῆς πατρίδος πτώματι καὶ οὐ καταλείψειν ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἡλίῳ καθορᾶν πόλιν, ἐν ᾗ μητέρες οὕτω τρέφονται ("that he would hide this abomination of teknophagy under the ruins of the country, and not leave on the earth in the sight of the sun a city in which mothers thus sustain themselves").⁷⁴⁸ But city, rather than Temple, is threatened with ruin here. Likewise, Titus' express command, at *BJ* 7.1, to raze the whole

⁷⁴⁴ Alon (1977) 259; also Weiler (1968) 143.

⁷⁴⁵ Goodman (2002) 22; Goodman (2007) 443; also Leoni (2007) 466-467.

⁷⁴⁶ Ziolkowski (1996) 82-86.

⁷⁴⁷ At *Ben.* 3.23.2, Seneca depicts the storming of a city as a period characterised by the abandonment of Roman *mores*; decorum and discipline are clearly expected to be forgotten at such times.

⁷⁴⁸ *BJ* 6.217.

city and the Temple is not relevant.⁷⁴⁹ This concerns an episode which took place over a month after the firing of the Temple, when the structure was already in ruins. Here, Titus is simply ordering the clearing of the ground, rather than pointlessly allowing the Temple to stay standing as a ruin. The “dismal directives” (σκυθρωπὰ παραγγέλματα) which Titus is made to claim that he was given by his father at the start of his campaign need not include the destruction of the Temple, but may refer simply to the further prosecution of a war which Titus, in the same speech, presents as entirely regrettable.⁷⁵⁰ Thus it seems that there is no physical impossibility involved in Josephus’ version of events, and nor are there any details which he provides which contradict it. Certainty in his mendacity must be derived from other factors.

Those other factors may be found in Josephus’ presumed motivation. Even Josephus as imagined by his most contemptuous critic would presumably not lie without reason, and so the question arises as to what might have motivated such a fiction. Universally, the purpose is assumed to have been to distance Titus from responsibility for the Temple’s destruction in order to enhance Titus’ reputation. But the biggest problem for those who posit such explanations is the sheer dissonance between Josephus’ version of events and the ways in which the regime itself commemorated the fall of Jerusalem. Bernays already noted this difficulty, and proposed to solve it by positing the notion of Roman remorse. Unlike Carthage or Corinth, he argues, there had been no need to destroy Jerusalem when a garrison could have kept it in check effectively; after an initial surge of jingoistic celebration represented above all by the Flavian triumph of 71, a more reflective mood took hold, and people in Rome came to regard the destruction of an ancient and revered

⁷⁴⁹ Cited by Alon (1977) 256.

⁷⁵⁰ *BJ* 6.344, cited as proof that the destruction of the Temple was intentional by Alon (1977) 263 and Weiler (1968) 147.

city and sanctuary as a mistake.⁷⁵¹ There appears to be no evidence that this was the case. Celebration of the destruction of the Temple was not confined to the triumph; commemoration of the crushing of the Jews, and the destruction of the Temple, persisted throughout the reign of Vespasian, as we have seen.⁷⁵² None of this suggests regret or remorse; it suggests, rather, that public celebration of the Temple's destruction continued all through the period of Flavian rule, and Bernays's remorse seems chimerical. Furthermore, as Bernays notes in another context, the treatment of Jerusalem was entirely within expectations: Roman armies and generals seem to have behaved especially pitilessly during the suppression of provincial revolts.⁷⁵³ Thus if the pitiless destruction of the Temple was so predictable, an instance of normal procedure, whence the remorse and why the perceived need for an *apologia*?⁷⁵⁴

Specific factors relating to the image of Titus can be adduced. Some scholars, most notably Zvi Yavetz, attempt to connect Josephus' account of Titus' moderation to the latter's need to acquire a reputation at Rome for *clementia*.⁷⁵⁵ On the one hand, given Josephus' Titus' well-established reputation for *clementia* within the narrative of the *Jewish War*, it seems highly likely, *prima facie*, that *clementia* is involved in Josephus' depiction of Titus' restraint at this point. However, it is worth observing that Josephus himself does not explicitly emphasise *clementia* at all in his account of Titus' desire to spare the Temple. *Clementia* is the virtue of moderating one's punitive power, and is not a virtue which can be exercised towards a building; if we are to consider sparing the Temple as a manifestation of *clementia*, we should understand it as *clementia* towards the defeated Jews, allowing them to retain possession of their sanctuary despite it being within Titus'

⁷⁵¹ Bernays (1861) 48-49.

⁷⁵² 86-89.

⁷⁵³ Bernays (1861) 59-60.

⁷⁵⁴ Further comments on the disjunction between Josephus' account and the Flavian narrative in Mason (2011a) 223-234.

⁷⁵⁵ Yavetz (1975); Bernays (1861) 50; Stern (1976) 66. On Titus' image problems at Rome in his father's reign, see 98-100 above.

power to deprive them of it. However, Josephus creates a space in which he can analyse and present Titus' motives for sparing the Temple, the council of war, and here Titus does not cite *clementia* as a reason for its preservation.⁷⁵⁶ Titus spares the Temple for essentially aesthetic reasons, because he wants it to function as an "ornament of Empire". In other words, sparing the Temple will be (rather nebulously) good for Romans, not Jews.⁷⁵⁷ Thus, while it certainly seems that Titus' gentle attitude relates to his *clementia*, it is curious and striking that this is not what Josephus actually emphasises at the war-council. Perhaps it is closer to the truth to posit that, rather than Titus' *clementia* being exemplified by his intention to spare the Temple, his decision to spare the Temple is rendered more credible by his already well-established *clementia*. This would suggest, in turn, that there is something else primarily at stake in Josephus' Temple narrative.

An alternative basis for the suspected *apologia* may be a desire to exonerate Titus from any charge of impiety in destroying the sanctuary. But an *apologia* for impiety is not obviously needed here: Stephen Rutledge has amply illustrated how, despite the occasional opportunistic rhetorical vituperation of those who had destroyed temples, temple-destruction was understood at Rome to be a necessary element of urban warfare.⁷⁵⁸ Moreover, throughout Josephus' account, steps are taken to ensure that even the deliberate destruction of the Temple could not fairly be considered impious. The destruction of the Temple is in accordance with the will of God, and therefore cannot be an act of impiety; furthermore, in a passage concerning the omens of the Temple's fall, Josephus suggests fairly clearly that God has left his house, as he does in the book of Ezekiel before Nebuchadnezzar destroys the Temple, casting doubt on its status as a sacred space at the

⁷⁵⁶ Noted by Vitucci (1983) 65.

⁷⁵⁷ The aesthetic qualities of the Temple are important in Josephus' account, and are stressed at *BJ* 6.267 and throughout the long description at *BJ* 5.184-226.

⁷⁵⁸ Rutledge (2007). See especially Sall. *Cat.* 51.9, where Caesar cites the destruction of Temples as a lamentable but necessary aspect of warfare.

time of the destruction.⁷⁵⁹ Lastly, we should recall the second, intermediate course of action suggested at the Council of War, that the Temple could be destroyed without impiety if the Jews continued to fight from it, as they will have transformed it from a Temple into a fortress. Although this course of action was rejected, its logic still applies, and Titus in fact does give the rebels the opportunity to withdraw from the Temple but they refuse.⁷⁶⁰ Thus there was no reason to regret the fall of Jerusalem and no evidence that anybody at Rome did, and questions of clemency and piety do not seem to be at stake in this passage. The destruction of the Temple, everywhere but in Josephus in the reign of Vespasian, was not a terrible accident but a predictable, justified and even glorious event, a restoration of the disturbed *pax Romana* and the similarly disturbed *pax deorum*, and among the proudest achievements of the *gens Flavia*.⁷⁶¹ What is there here, then, which requires exoneration in Roman eyes? And would such exoneration be plausible in Jewish eyes at a time when the dynasty itself was aggressively and publicly boasting of its responsibility for the destruction?

Thus the greatest problem with any argument that Josephus' account is mendacious propaganda is simply that nobody has, as yet, been able to advance a convincing explanation as to why this lie would be of any use to Titus. So does this mean we ought to take his account as true? In recent years only Martin Goodman, Tessa Rajak and Tomasso Leoni have been prepared to challenge the solid consensus in favour of Josephus' deception. But, although their reconstructions do not encounter precisely the same difficulties as those proposed by the Josephus deniers, other problems are raised by accepting Josephus' veracity; significantly, in the case of Goodman's arguments those

⁷⁵⁹ *BJ* 6.299; Ezek. 8-11.

⁷⁶⁰ *BJ* 6.124-130.

⁷⁶¹ 89-90.

problems also relate to the stark difference between Josephus' version of events and the ways in which the Flavians themselves seem to have commemorated the fall of the Temple. Rajak argues that there is nothing inherently impossible or incredible in Josephus' version of events, that it is demonstrably closer to those events than any other account, and that we therefore have no *prima facie* grounds for suspicion.⁷⁶² The premises of this argument are true, but it does not take into account Josephus' obligations to the Flavian family, which ought to at least be considered as a possible basis for mendacity. Leoni very convincingly argues against treating Sulpicius and Orosius as credible alternative accounts, and notes that it is problematic to suppose that Josephus could write such an egregious lie concerning Titus in a book presented to him.⁷⁶³ Goodman notes both Josephus' proximity to events and the problem of his lying about this event in a work presented to Titus; he further argues that the version of events as depicted by Josephus would actually be extremely embarrassing for Titus, as his inability to control his troops would suggest incompetence. There would be no reason for Josephus to invent such an embarrassing story were it not the truth; the differences between Josephus' account and the way these events were presented elsewhere is explained by arguing that, if we accept Josephus' version of events, Titus would have had no choice but subsequently to celebrate the destruction as if it had been a deliberate act. Thus the narrative which emerges from the triumph and other regime-backed modes of commemorating the event is actually the lie, designed to mask the humiliating fact that the Flavians' great legitimising victory resulted from Titus' incompetence; it is in fact Josephus who speaks the truth, regardless of the needs of the dynasty.⁷⁶⁴ This is a brilliant inversion of the usual interpretation of events, but problems remain. We have already noted Ziolkowski's survey of accounts of

⁷⁶² Rajak (2002) 206-212.

⁷⁶³ Leoni (2001); Leoni (2007).

⁷⁶⁴ Goodman (2007) 440-443. Gruen (2011) 158 also sees the Temple narrative as indicative of poor generalship.

city sackings, and seen how he establishes that it seems to have been almost expected that discipline would break down after an army had forced entry into an enemy city or fortress, and we may further note that Josephus, who depicts himself as an ideal general in Book 3, loses control of his subordinates on occasion.⁷⁶⁵ Perhaps to readers with a more realistic understanding of warfare or reasonably wide reading in historiography, the notion of discipline breaking down in the final stages of an assault would not seem all that embarrassing; indeed, if the story really was as self-evidently embarrassing as Goodman maintains, it is hard to see how Titus could possibly have approved of its circulation, true or not. A further mitigating factor in terms of embarrassment is that Josephus makes it clear that it was the will of God that the Temple should be destroyed; can Titus really be criticised for being unable to prevent God's will from coming to pass? Likewise if, on Goodman's reading, the Flavians were content to allow the circulation of a convenient fiction about the deliberate nature of the Temple's destruction, it is hard to see how they could ever welcome and publicly endorse an account which contradicts that fiction as clearly and directly as does the *Jewish War*. But these problems aside, Goodman's argument does accurately identify something which those who treat the passage as regime *apologia* perhaps do not always fully appreciate: that far from flattering Titus or advancing his interests, when read in its production context in Vespasianic Rome Josephus' account is in fact rather challenging to the Flavians, undermining and opposing the way that the dynasty appears to have wanted people to understand events. Whether the mendacity originates with Josephus or the Flavians, this dissonance remains a central part of the problem of knowing what to do with Josephus' account.

⁷⁶⁵ BJ 3.129; 360. On Josephus' self-presentation as an ideal general, see Cohen (1979) 91-97.

Given the evidence and its problems, I remain agnostic on the question of whether or not Titus ordered the destruction of the Temple. However, without committing to this question it remains possible to think about how this passage works as a piece of regime representation in its production context of Vespasianic Rome, and how it advances Josephus' broader objectives in the *Jewish War*. I would bear two principles in mind for such an inquiry. First, while most of the previous scholarship on this passage has concerned itself with the question of how Josephus' account serves the interests of the Flavians, I have already found several times in this study that it is equally productive to think about how Josephus makes the Flavians serve him; it is just as valid to ask how this representation of Titus' behaviour advances Josephus' tendencies as to ask how it suits Titus' needs and agenda. Second, most previous readings which have noticed the dissonance between Josephus and the Flavian version of these events have treated that dissonance as a problem to be solved or explained away; instead, I would like to propose that this dissonance may be the point. Starting from this position, we see that what we have in Josephus is an intentionally oppositional or counter-cultural narrative, an account which goes against the prevailing officially-encouraged understanding of the meaning of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple at Rome. What might Josephus have been hoping to achieve by so markedly diverging from the preferred narrative of his patrons, and how does it relate to his broader aims in the work?

The fact that so many commentators have seen the depiction of Titus' innocence as apologetic suggests that the notion of respecting and attempting to preserve foreign religious structures and cult practices would have been seen as praiseworthy. Was this in fact true in Rome? The bases for such a notion do indeed seem to have been in place. We have already noted the entrenched Roman belief in superior Roman piety, which could and

did extend even to the gods of the enemy.⁷⁶⁶ While the rhetorical vituperation of those who destroyed shrines may well have been largely a case of manufactured outrage, in order for the rhetoric to have any persuasive effect the audience must have been capable of conceiving of the idea that foreign religious structures did deserve some measure of reverence.⁷⁶⁷ One Roman text even shows us that these considerations could specifically apply to the Jerusalem Temple: Cic. *Flac.* 67-69 is a defence of Flaccus for allegedly interfering with the Temple tax being sent to Jerusalem. While Cicero rejects any notion of impropriety here, the very fact that the prosecution raised it implies that actions against the Jerusalem Temple could be construed as problematic at Rome. The Jerusalem Temple was well-known in Rome, and well-known to have been ancient, and antiquity carried positive value in Roman religious thinking (even Tacitus grants the Jews some grudging respect for the antiquity of some of their customs).⁷⁶⁸ It is possible to see that the raw ideological materials for a more sympathetic understanding of the fall of Jerusalem than that expressed by the Flavian triumph did exist in Rome, in attested attitudes towards foreign shrines. What Josephus appears to be doing is repackaging the fall of the Temple for Roman readers in a different set of values to the regime, different but nevertheless still comprehensible. People at Rome were encouraged by the regime to view the fall of the Temple as positive, in keeping with the will of the Roman gods, as the removal of a sinister and disruptive element from the life of the empire; Josephus reframes this event, remakes it as the regrettable destruction of an ancient and revered cult centre, and a cult centre which belongs to a god who is not the enemy of Rome but Rome's great ally against the Jewish rebels and the Flavian Dynasty's great ally against their rivals and competitors. This is a challenge and a provocation to Josephus' Roman readers, a reminder of "Roman values" which may have been overlooked in the official version of the fall of

⁷⁶⁶ 233-234.

⁷⁶⁷ Rutledge (2007) 181-183.

⁷⁶⁸ Tac. *Hist.* 5.5.1.

the Temple, and a hint that the braying jingoism of the Flavian triumph was not the only way in which this event could be understood. Perhaps Josephus' account does not respond to regret for the destruction of the Temple, *pace* Bernays, so much as it attempts to elicit it. What Josephus is able to do in *BJ* 6 is to communicate some of the trauma of the fall of the Temple to Roman readers unaccustomed to viewing the event in this way, by invoking and suggesting values familiar from Roman culture and tradition. The use of aspects of the hegemonic culture as a means of self-presentation, critique and advocacy by representatives of colonised peoples is, as discussed in Chapter 1 above, a persistent feature of literary texts produced under imperial rule, and Josephus' use of Roman values to advocate a more sympathetic understanding of the fall of the Temple fits well into this tradition.⁷⁶⁹

But if the fall of the Temple is both regrettable and traumatic, this does not constitute a critique of those who destroyed it. The Temple's destruction has been established as justifiable: it was made clear at the council of war that even the deliberate destruction of the sanctuary would be in keeping with the laws of war.⁷⁷⁰ As well as being justifiable, it is necessary, because it is the will of God.⁷⁷¹ It has already been noted that Titus cannot be criticised for being unable to prevent events willed by God; nor should he be criticised for trying to, as the attempt is made with the best of intentions. Titus resists God's will because he is unable to discern it correctly, and because the judgement God has decreed against the Jews is too severe for his gentle inclinations. Far from being an impious *theomachus*, his reverence for both the Jewish God and his Temple have been stressed throughout, and his desire to save it is, in his ignorance of God's intentions, itself a sign of

⁷⁶⁹ 10-11.

⁷⁷⁰ *BJ* 6.239.

⁷⁷¹ E.g. *BJ* 6.250.

his piety.⁷⁷² The *Jewish War* does contain episodes (like that involving Caligula) which depict kings or generals making clearly impious assaults on the Temple, but the destruction under Titus is clearly differentiated from these: in these episodes, the attack is deliberate rather than accidental, and is carried out in opposition to rather than in accordance with the will of God.⁷⁷³ So the destruction of the Temple is clearly marked as both justifiable and necessary; but it is, of course, possible for something to be justifiable and necessary, but also regrettable.⁷⁷⁴ Titus' reluctance to take the severe course, related as it is to that egregious humanity which he so consistently displays in the *Jewish War* and which he so pressingly needed to demonstrate in Vespasian's Rome, both exonerates him from blame for an event which Josephus laments despite its necessity and heightens the sense of tragic inevitability which characterises Josephus' version of events.⁷⁷⁵ Titus' attitude may help guide the reader's response: Titus is persistently reverent towards the Temple, keen to save it, and distressed when he cannot. This points the way to a different and more humane understanding of the events of 70 than that promoted by the Flavians themselves, while casting no blame or criticism on the dynasty for the way things turned out. Titus' reluctance to burn the Temple is a key element in establishing this essentially tragic understanding of events: even a Roman prince and *dux imperator* cannot stop this necessary and justifiable but regrettable and traumatic sequence of events from taking its course.⁷⁷⁶

The problem of dissonance remains. It may be that all we can is to observe that, though Josephus so sharply differs from the official version, his account at all times remains

⁷⁷² For discussion of Titus' piety, see 228-229.

⁷⁷³ *BJ* 2.184-203. For other impious assaults on the Temple, see *BJ* 1.32-35 (Antiochus Epiphanes) and 1.179 (Crassus).

⁷⁷⁴ Josephus' explicit laments for the fate of the Temple make the regrettable nature of the destruction clear (*BJ* 1.9-12; 6.267).

⁷⁷⁵ Parente (2005) 66-67. On some formal tragic features of the *Jewish War*, see Chapman (2005) 137-145; Chapman (2007b) 422-424.

⁷⁷⁶ Mason (2011a) 223.

ostensibly respectful to Titus, and that may have been all that was required. Whether true or false, the pertinent fact about Josephus' account of this sequence of events is its sharp divergence from the narrative promoted by his patrons. Far from being built around a propagandistic exoneration of Titus, this account seems to be primarily directed at challenging Flavian-backed attitudes towards the destruction of the Temple which gloried in this event and saw in it a narrative of the permanent defeat of the Jews and their god as one of the cornerstones of the new regime. Josephus' attempt to disassemble the jingoistic Flavian version and reconstruct it as a tragedy may very well have only had a limited impact at its time of composition, his humane and reflective take on the fall of the Temple being drowned out by the ubiquitous racket of Flavian self-congratulation, but it nevertheless remains a quietly brave, counter-cultural attempt to combat triumphalism and to promote a more humane attitude towards what is lost in even a justified and necessary war.

5.3: Domitian in *Jewish War* 1-6

While his father and elder brother were subduing the Jewish rebels, Domitian was at Rome. It is thus wholly predictable that he is a decidedly minor character in the *Jewish War*, although he is not entirely ignored. Domitian receives only three significant mentions in *BJ* 1-6. Before proceeding to examine Flavian representation in Book 7, those three brief references should be examined.

At *BJ* 4.646, Domitian joins Vespasian's beleaguered brother Sabinus on the Capitol during the fighting between Flavians and Vitellians at Rome in 69. Josephus glosses his name with the phrase μεγίστη μοῖρα τῶν εἰς τὸ κρατεῖν ἐλπίδων ("the greatest part of their [*sc. the Flavians in Rome*] hope of taking power"). This is a courteous gesture towards the youngest son of the emperor, and nothing more (the collocation of Domitian's name and "hope" interestingly echoes the Domitian Caesar coins depicting *Spes* on the reverse, minted throughout the reign of Vespasian from 73, e.g. *BMC* 2 Vespasian 656, 1054). At *BJ* 4.649, we are told that Domitian, with many eminent Romans, "miraculously" (δαμονιώτερον) escaped from the Vitellian assault on the Capitol. The vocabulary of miraculousness may carry connotations of divine providence, and perhaps even alludes, as closely as Josephus can, to the notion (promoted extensively in Domitian's reign but already allowed expression under Vespasian in Domitian's shrine of Jupiter Conservator) that Domitian had been preserved by the intervention of Capitoline Jupiter and/or Isis.⁷⁷⁷ As we have already seen, this episode came to be mythologised heavily under Domitian, with the Domitianic poets inflating Domitian's importance in 69 and Domitian himself

⁷⁷⁷ Jones (1992) 14; on Jupiter Conservator, see Darwall-Smith (1996) 110. On the episode and its commemoration under both Vespasian and Domitian, see Wiseman (1978); Wellesley (1981); Southern (1997) 17-19, 101-102 and 104-105 above.

apparently writing a poem on his “war” on the Capitol.⁷⁷⁸ But such excesses are wholly missing from Josephus’ rapid and restrained summation of these events, written under Vespasian. Earlier, at 4.598-599, Vespasian’s soldiers mention Domitian when surveying Flavian assets at Rome. They note that Vespasian has a brother (cited first, as the most significant asset), and another son. Domitian is popular among the young nobles, while Sabinus has effective charge of the city as *praefectus urbi*. Thus both have a role to play, but Domitian’s importance looks decidedly secondary here. These references are courteous, certainly, but they retain a sense of proportion and avoid adulation. They are a long way from how these events were commemorated in Domitian’s own reign, when Domitian was presented as the courageous defender of the Capitol from impious assault, and when his divinely-orchestrated escape marked out his great imperial destiny.

⁷⁷⁸ 104-105.

Chapter 6: The Flavians in *Jewish War* 7

The examination of the structure of *Jewish War* 7 in Chapter 4 identified two major sections. The first (1-162), concerning the establishment of the Flavian Dynasty, describes in turn the separate movements of Vespasian, Titus and Domitian in 70-71 (1-120), and then the activities of the reunited dynasty in Rome (121-162). The second both demonstrates the irresistible power of Rome over her subjects and chronicles the final eradication of the Jewish rebel groups after the destruction of Jerusalem, first in Judaea (163-406) and then in the Diaspora (407-453).⁷⁷⁹ Clearly the dynastic half of the book is of the most interest to this study; however, the rebel section does contain material pertaining to Vespasian's conduct as emperor and Vespasian's and Titus' administration of justice, which will be taken into consideration at the end of this chapter.

The peregrinations of Vespasian in 70, recounted by Josephus at *BJ* 7.21-22 and 63-74, are partly out of chronological sequence. Vespasian was back in Rome by September 70 meaning, as Josephus intimates at 7.21, that his journey from Alexandria to Rome overlapped with the later stages of the siege, and thus ought to have been narrated in *BJ* 6.⁷⁸⁰ The tight geographical focus of that book would have been impaired by dealing with such material in its proper chronological place, and so it is deferred and narrated alongside Josephus' accounts of the movements of Titus and Domitian.⁷⁸¹ This gives the early section, at 7.21-22, a misleadingly "triumphalist" character, anachronistically suggesting a post-Jerusalem victory tour akin to that undertaken by Titus in the East. At 7.21-22, the journey from Alexandria to the promontory of Iapyx, we are told that he was received in

⁷⁷⁹ 117-118.

⁷⁸⁰ See Levick (1999) 86 for the date of Vespasian's return.

⁷⁸¹ This is not the only place where Josephus' predilection for thematic organisation in the *War* takes precedence over chronological narrative structure; on this, see Cohen (1979) 69-73.

all the cities he visited εὐκταίως (“gratefully”, “thankfully”, perhaps “with prayers”). The theme of universal enthusiasm in the provinces for the candidacy and accession of Vespasian, familiar from *BJ* 4.618-620, is here again invoked. In addition to this, however, Josephus’ postponement of this narrative until after the account of the fall of Jerusalem may further suggest (anachronistically) that these provincials were celebrating the successful suppression of the Jewish Revolt; as in the “Flavian propaganda”, the distinction between the crushing of the Revolt and Vespasian’s victory in the Roman civil war becomes blurred here. In the second section on Vespasian’s travels, his arrival in Italy and Rome is likewise a cause for universal celebration. The very universality of Vespasian’s popularity becomes an explicit theme for Josephus. At 7.65-67, Josephus adumbrates three crucial constituencies at Rome who are each given their own distinct reasons for their enthusiasm for the new *princeps*. The Senate respects his age, experience and military record, the very same qualities which Josephus emphasises in Vespasian’s first appearance in the *Jewish War*, and which Vespasian’s soldiers cited with approval in 69.⁷⁸² The people long for stability and prosperity after the evils of the civil wars. The army especially (ἐξαιρέτως), says Josephus, had reason for celebration because of Vespasian’s military experience: now they no longer have to swear allegiance to a disgraceful emperor, and they can entertain reasonable hopes of future military glory. Thus, while not disguising the essentially military basis of Vespasian’s power (note that the soldiers are *especially* enthusiastic about the new order), Josephus gives us a vision of universal *consensus*, a remarkable *princeps*-focused *concordia ordinum* which emphasises Vespasian’s virtues primarily with reference to the evils from which he has delivered different sections of the state: a disgraceful and unmilitary emperor, instability and a lack of prosperity, the chaos of civil war. This universal goodwill is concretely manifested in

⁷⁸² *BJ* 3.3-6; 4.597.

the great exodus of citizens from Rome eager to greet the new emperor on his journey, with those who went out to meet him outnumbering those who remained.⁷⁸³ In turn, Vespasian receives his well-wishers with gentleness (Josephus notes τὴν ἡμερότητα τῆς ἐντεύξεως αὐτοῦ, “the gentleness of his converse”, a phrase redolent of *comitas* or *civilitas*, key imperial – and Vespasianic – virtues).⁷⁸⁴ The people who throng the roads to meet him hail him as “benefactor and saviour” (εὐεργέτην καὶ σωτῆρα), the same designations given to Vespasian by the citizens of Tiberias, whom he spared from punishment during the Revolt. In this case, Vespasian is the saviour of Rome from the chaos wrought by Vitellius, linking this passage with the strongly-marked soteriological aspects of Josephus’ Vespasian in Books 1-6, discussed in section 5.1.4 above.⁷⁸⁵ At the climax of these propitious scenes of total national unity and thanksgiving, the crowds offer prayers that Vespasian might live long, and that sovereignty may pass on to his sons (7.73). This latter detail clearly echoes the strongly dynastic nature of Flavian representation, but it may also furnish a further indication of Domitianic-period authorship. Under Vespasian, the dynastic settlement seems fairly clear, as was argued above: Titus was the principal heir, and Domitian the “spare”. Domitian was thus a contingency; the idea that sovereignty should pass on to Vespasian’s “sons” (παισὶν, 7.73) would seem to sit awkwardly with a date of composition in the reign of Vespasian.⁷⁸⁶ It only fully makes sense with hindsight, after the unforeseeable early death of Titus and the accession of Domitian.

The extraordinarily integrative nature of this narrative must be stressed. Josephus unifies the *populus Romanus*, first (counter-intuitively) by disassembling that category into three disparate parts and then, by focusing on each component in its specificity and giving it a

⁷⁸³ BJ 7.68-69.

⁷⁸⁴ BJ 7.70.

⁷⁸⁵ BJ 7.71. For Tiberias, see BJ 3.459; p. 198 above.

⁷⁸⁶ 95-96.

credible motivation for welcoming the new emperor's accession, reasserting and re-establishing the category's validity, uniting all the parts around the figure of Vespasian. This might come as a surprise to the reader of the *Jewish War*, whose last visit to the city during the narrative of the civil war in Book 4 in that text was marked, above all, by the complete absence of any such unity. We left Rome a ruin, victimised first by the cupidity of Vitellius and the abuses of his soldiers, and then by the rampant Flavian troops under Antonius Primus.⁷⁸⁷ It is thus genuinely striking that when we return to the scene we find happy unanimity and no trace of the bitter discord which had until recently riven the city. It is not that the enemies of the new order are denied a voice in Josephus so much as that they are denied existence. All the lingering bitterness and division we would expect to find in a city fractured by civil war seem to have evaporated completely. Such a narrative is, of course, highly conducive to the needs of a dynasty which took power through civil war. Josephus' fabrication of total consensus and consent for Flavian rule here must represent, from a Flavian perspective, a highly convenient fiction.

While his father is at the centre receiving the unanimous adulation of the *senatus populusque Romanus* and demonstrating his gentleness to all, Titus remains in the East, first settling affairs with his army and then undertaking an extensive and closely-detailed itinerary which consumes most of Josephus' attention in describing the movements of the dynasts. The earliest relevant section (7.1-20) describes Titus' dispensations at Jerusalem. Here he behaves, as elsewhere, as a conscientious and competent military commander, overseeing the final dismantling of the city, dispensing rewards to the soldiers, congratulating them in suitably soaring rhetoric, dispatching them to their respective stations and making arrangements for the booty and prisoners. More interesting are the

⁷⁸⁷ 189-190.

later sections describing his travels through the cities of the East in 70 and early 71 (7.23-42, 96-119). The first of these two sections emphasises, above all, Titus' *liberalitas*, with extravagant victory games being staged at Caesarea Philippi and Berytus.⁷⁸⁸ Later, at 7.96, we are told that Titus would further provide spectacles throughout all of Syria. But more than generosity is at stake in these games: the first set are held in honour of Domitian's birthday in October, the second in honour of Vespasian's in November. We have already seen filial *pietas* presented as a minor virtue in Josephus' portrait of Titus in Books 1-6; here it (or better, familial *pietas*) is writ large.⁷⁸⁹ Titus is being a diligent dynast here, not content merely to receive the honours due to a conquering general but eager to honour further his father, and also to pay tribute to Domitian, the first real indication in the *Jewish War* of the younger son's importance. This is all consonant with the general trend of *BJ* 7, which moves away from the contrasting but complementary individualised portraits of Vespasian and Titus in the earlier books and towards a more corporate dynastic identity, the three-headed monster which Steve Mason calls "The Flavians, Inc."⁷⁹⁰ The stress on dynastic unity is present elsewhere, too: in the three dynasts' rapturous reunion in Rome at 7.120, and in the suppression of any suspicion of tensions between the three Flavians which may undermine the picture of three great rulers working in perfect unison. We have already considered the historiographical traditions in other authors which assert deep tensions between the three leading Flavians in the early period of Vespasian's reign; no such material is present in Josephus.⁷⁹¹ Dynastic unity is a key theme of *BJ* 7, even in those sections when the dynasts are far apart. Titus' pious devotion on his father's and brother's birthdays signals this clearly enough from the outset.

⁷⁸⁸ Caesarea Philippi: *BJ* 7.23, 37-8; Berytus: *BJ* 7.39.

⁷⁸⁹ 239-240.

⁷⁹⁰ Mason (2016a) 122.

⁷⁹¹ 100-102.

Two episodes from the last section on Titus' travels merit comment. In addition to familial *pietas* and *liberalitas*, Titus' sojourn in the East is also marked by his dispensation of *iustitia*. This is seen in his handling of an acute inter-community crisis in Antioch. The Greeks of the city have been stirred up against the Jews by a Jewish apostate called Antiochus, who alleges that the Jews plan to burn the city down. With tensions at a high pitch, things deteriorate rapidly when a fire in fact does break out in the city. The case is referred to Titus.⁷⁹² Titus refuses to take either of the courses of action suggested to him by the Antiochenes, banishing the Jews or removing their civic privileges.⁷⁹³ This, it must be emphasised, is not a further manifestation of Titus' pronounced *clementia*, as the exercise of *clementia* presupposes guilt on the part of the accused and Josephus is clear that it was not the Jews who set the fire but non-Jewish malefactors who wanted to destroy evidence of their debts by burning down the records office.⁷⁹⁴ This is that sublimely imperial activity, the dispensation of *iustitia*. The story makes it clear that Titus' juridical dealings with Jews are fair, that he will not hear malicious charges against them and that he bears no grudge against them despite the recent war. This is exemplary Roman governance, and, if we accept the contention of a number of scholars that life under Domitian was particularly challenging for Jews, it may have been rather pointed exemplarity if Book 7 is Domitianic given the intensifying official hostility.⁷⁹⁵ The second noteworthy episode in Titus' later travels involves his return visit to Jerusalem, where he surveys the ruins of the city and pities it.⁷⁹⁶ This has sometimes been linked in the scholarship to Polybius' account of the tears of Scipio Aemilianus in the ruins of

⁷⁹² BJ 7.43-59.

⁷⁹³ BJ 7.96-111.

⁷⁹⁴ BJ 7.60-61.

⁷⁹⁵ Jews under Domitian: 103, with n.299. On Josephus' exemplary depiction of gentile rulers upholding Jewish rights in both Judaea and the Diaspora, see Cohen (1987), esp. 412-415.

⁷⁹⁶ BJ 7.112-115.

Carthage, but the parallel is not strong.⁷⁹⁷ Verbal reminiscences are non-existent, and the motivations of the principals widely differ. Titus' pity for Jerusalem (no actual tears are involved in his case) does not originate from his discernment of the future of Rome in the ruins of the enemy city; rather, as so often before, Titus regrets the length to which the rebels have forced him to go. This passage simply reinforces what we have already seen about Titus' moral innocence for the outcome of the revolt, and his humane lamentation for the regrettable extent of the destruction.

Thus the sections describing the travels of Vespasian and Titus both invoke qualities already emphasised in the portraits of these figures in Books 1-6 (Vespasian's popularity and status as saviour, Titus' humanity, administrative competence and regret for the lengths to which the war had progressed) while at the same time they highlight qualities which either had only been lightly sketched in the previous books or which seem to be wholly new (Vespasian's gentleness, and Titus' familial piety, *liberalitas* and *iustitia*). A further new quality in both men is reverence specifically directed at the Roman gods. We saw earlier that the only explicit and unambiguous instance of Flavian piety towards Roman deities in Books 1-6 was when Titus invoked his ancestral gods, in addition to the local gods, to bear witness that there was nothing impious in his assault on the Temple.⁷⁹⁸ In Book 7, however, we are fairly frequently confronted with the spectacle of both Vespasian and Titus engaging in acts of specifically Roman piety. Such episodes occur principally in the narrative of the triumph, but in the earlier sections of Book 7 too we see Titus sacrificing oxen as a victory-offering, and Vespasian sacrificing to his household gods upon his return.⁷⁹⁹ This sudden, explicit "paganification" of Flavian piety is new, and it, along with the other new qualities which Josephus associates with these figures in Book

⁷⁹⁷ Polyb. 38.22. Yavetz (1975) 420; Price (1992) 171; Mason (1994) 173.

⁷⁹⁸ BJ 6.127. 228 above.

⁷⁹⁹ BJ 7.16, 72. For "pagan" ceremonial at the Triumph, see 7.123, 128-9, 131, 136, 153, 155.

7, could be seen as distinctly imperial. *Liberalitas*, *iustitia*, a key role in the Roman state religion and more generally in the mediation between Rome and its gods, all are important aspects of an imperial *persona* more than they are requirements of a Roman general. This shift in emphasis in the dynastic half of Book 7 perhaps results from the fact that the roles of Titus and Vespasian have changed from being generals on active duty to being dynasts.

The remarkable sketch of Domitian's travels and activities in Gaul in response to the Civilis-Classicus revolt at *BJ* 7.75-88 merits some attention. In order to appreciate just how extraordinary the narrative is, however, it first needs to be compared to the three brief references to Domitian in the earlier books of the *Jewish War*, discussed at the end of the previous chapter.⁸⁰⁰ It will be recalled that the Domitian we encounter in *BJ* 1-6 was a decidedly minor character, treated politely, certainly, but whose portrait was restrained, proportionate and free from any trace of panegyric. This is all very different from the way Domitian's Gallic exploits are reported in Book 7. After a brief account of the origins and development of the revolt, Josephus very summarily describes the military campaigns of Petillius Cerialis against the Batavi and their allies.⁸⁰¹ He then goes on to opine that, had Cerialis not been so efficient in suppressing Civilis the "Germans" would soon have suffered punishment anyway, because Domitian was eagerly on his way to take command, a hypothetical statement which serves no conceivable purpose other than flattery of the younger dynast.⁸⁰² He proceeds to recount Domitian's eagerness for combat:

ἡνίκα γὰρ πρῶτον ἢ τῆς ἀποστάσεως αὐτῶν ἀγγελία τῇ Ῥώμῃ προσέπεσε,
Δομετιανὸς Καῖσαρ πυθόμενος οὐχ ὥς ἄν ἕτερος ἐν τούτῳ τῆς ἡλικίας, νέος

⁸⁰⁰ 267-268.

⁸⁰¹ The best classical source for the Civilis revolt is Tac. *Hist.* 4.12-37, 54-79, 5.14-26. See also Dyson (1971) 264-267; Levick (1999) 107-113. Cerialis: *PIR*² P.260.

⁸⁰² *BJ* 7.75-84.

γὰρ ἦν ἔτι παντάπασιν, τηλικούτον ἄρασθαι μέγεθος πραγμάτων ὥκνησεν,
ἔχων δὲ πατρόθεν ἔμφυτον τὴν ἀνδραγαθίαν καὶ τελειοτέραν τὴν ἀσκησιν
τῆς ἡλικίας πεπονημένος ἐπὶ τοὺς βαρβάρους εὐθὺς ἤλαυνεν. οἱ δὲ πρὸς τὴν
φήμην τῆς ἐφόδου καταπεσόντες ἐπ’ αὐτῷ σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐποιήσαντο μέγα
τοῦ φόβου κέρδος εὐράμενοι τὸ χωρὶς συμφορῶν ὑπὸ τὸν αὐτὸν πάλιν
ζυγὸν ὑπαχθῆναι.

When first news of their revolt arrived in Rome, Domitian Caesar did not
hesitate to undertake responsibilities on such a scale, as someone else of his
age might have (he was still very young), because he had his father’s innate
excellence and a more complete education than is usual for one his age.

Rather, he marched immediately against the barbarians. They, dispirited by
news of his approach, prostrated themselves before him with great fear,
finding it advantageous to be subjected once again to the same yoke without
suffering a calamity.⁸⁰³

Thérond is right to infer from the fulsome language and notions of exceptionalism in the
first part of this passage that Domitian is characterised here as a veritable legendary hero;
we note also that his prodigious gifts and his fearless eagerness to engage the enemy recall
nothing more than the way that his brother has been characterised throughout Books 3-
6.⁸⁰⁴ The picture of Domitian as a fearless warrior-prince here is remarkably consonant
with the military emphasis strongly discernible in every other contemporary representation
of him from his reign.⁸⁰⁵ Thus this passage in Josephus is recognisable as wholly in
harmony with other specimens of regime representation under Domitian on this score, and
perhaps out of harmony with the picture under Vespasian, when Domitian’s expedition

⁸⁰³ *BJ* 7.85-87.

⁸⁰⁴ Thérond (1981) 236.

⁸⁰⁵ 102-106.

seems to have been decidedly played down. It is significant that, in the only episode which was available for Josephus (given the chronological range of his history) in which he could depict Domitian as a military figure, he takes such extravagant advantage of the opportunity.

There is certainly distortion and exaggeration in this picture, but it is important to establish precisely what Josephus does and does not distort. Mary Beard suggests that Josephus slights Petillius Cerialis by claiming the full credit for the suppression of the revolt; likewise, Bernard Thérond accuses Josephus of wanting to create the impression that the pacification of the North was a solely Domitianic achievement.⁸⁰⁶ These readings do not seem quite right; they obscure a distinction which Josephus always clearly maintains. Josephus is clear that there are two groups involved in these risings, the “Germans” (i.e. the Batavi) and the “Gauls” (i.e. the Treveri *et al.*).⁸⁰⁷ The revolt among the Germans is put down by the prompt military actions of Cerialis (though it would have been suppressed by Domitian had Cerialis failed); it is solely the revolt among the Gauls which Domitian is credited with arresting. Again, Josephus does not fabricate a military victory for his emperor. He is always perfectly clear that Domitian did not fight in Gaul, despite his eagerness, but that the Gaullish rebels were cowed merely by their knowledge of the proximity of the great imperial presence.⁸⁰⁸ Thus, while exaggeration and distortion are clearly detectable and ostensibly work in Domitian’s favour, Josephus is not as mendacious as sometimes claimed. Cerialis is given a share of the glory rather than edged out totally in favour of Domitian, even though his glory is rather diminished here as it was Cerialis’ defeat of Civilis, Classicus and Tutor, rather than the fear of Domitian, which in

⁸⁰⁶ Beard (2003) 547; Thérond (1981) 236.

⁸⁰⁷ It is not quite as straightforward as him being aware that Civilis was Batavian and Classicus Treveran; *BJ* 7.80 seems to suggest that Josephus thought that Classicus was also a Batavian!

⁸⁰⁸ Mason (2005a) 260–262 sees the idea that Domitian cowed the Gauls out of rebelling simply through fear of his approach as self-evidently exaggerated to the point of mocking ridicule. Levick (1999) 191 sees a perfect ambiguity of tone here, a passage which could be read as either sincerely courteous or as self-evidently excessive and mocking.

fact led to the end of the rebellion in Gaul. Also slighted, perhaps, is Mucianus, who was present with Domitian in Gaul and who, as is clear from Tacitus, was the senior partner on that expedition, but who does not even merit a mention in Josephus' account.⁸⁰⁹ The conclusion of Josephus' account is likewise very misleading. Josephus represents Domitian returning triumphant from the north and receiving unanimous approbation in Rome, where his achievements are compared to those of his father.⁸¹⁰ In fact, as we have seen, it seems clear from other sources that this expedition was controversial in its day, and seems to have displeased Vespasian.⁸¹¹ As elsewhere in Book 7, we here see Josephus making instances of tension or division within the dynasty disappear. What we are left with is a depiction of three highly gifted men acting in perfect unison, linked by mutual appreciation and by the quality of their stunning achievements.

Having considered each of the dynasts' journeys in the first part of Book 7 individually, a few observations can be made about the cumulative effect of everything discussed so far. What we are witnessing in the first part of Book 7 is nothing less than the establishment of a new, Flavian order, which is being spread to all corners of the Roman world by the senior representatives of the new dynasty in person. Vespasian is at the centre, being hailed by the Roman people for his restoration of honour, stability and good governance to Rome. Titus traverses the exultant East dispensing largesse and justice to his happy subjects there. Domitian extends the dynasty's reach and blessings into the troubled West, bringing stability and order. It is instructive here to take note of Josephus' vagueness when describing Domitian's journeys, in contrast to his very detailed information about the movements of his father and brother. The closest that he comes to locating the revolt

⁸⁰⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 4.52.

⁸¹⁰ *BJ* 7.88.

⁸¹¹ 101.

among the Gauls is to note that the rebels were those “closest to” the rebellious Germans (7.76), thus suggesting the vicinity of the Rhine.⁸¹² We are informed that Domitian immediately marched against them; that the news of *his approach* terrified them, and that they prostrated themselves before him.⁸¹³ Josephus cannot be indicted of positive mendacity here, in that he nowhere explicitly states that Domitian travelled to the Rhine, but this, I suggest, is the impression created here. Everything that Josephus writes strongly suggests Domitian’s presence at the location of the revolt, in that part of Gaul which neighboured Germany. This impression is misleading, if we can trust Tacitus’ statement that Domitian never progressed beyond Lugdunum.⁸¹⁴ In his uncharacteristic vagueness here, Josephus appears to be masking the truth about Domitian’s (negligible or non-existent) actual contribution to the suppression of the Northern revolts. We also note that the furthest reaches of Titus’ itinerary take him as far as Zeugma, on the Euphrates.⁸¹⁵ Thus we have Titus bringing the blessings of Flavian rule to the very limits of Roman rule in the East, and Domitian (ostensibly) doing the same in the West: the Flavian embrace encircles the entire empire.⁸¹⁶ Good governance, generosity, justice, order, stability, peace, prosperity: all of the benefits which the Romans and their subject populations could possibly expect from their emperors are being established and distributed by representatives of the *gens Flavia*, right across the Roman world. This sets the scene for 7.120, where Josephus finally brings his three principals together at the centre, offering the ecstatic populace of the city (and the reader of the *Jewish War*) their first sight of the three

⁸¹² The sentence in question as found in most manuscripts and followed in the Loeb is οἷς καὶ Γαλατῶν οἱ πλησίον συμφρονήσαντες, “and the Gauls closest to them conspired with them”. A variant reading has πλείστοι rather than πλησίον, meaning “most of the Gauls conspired with them”.

⁸¹³ *BJ* 7.85-86.

⁸¹⁴ *Tac. Hist.* 4.86.

⁸¹⁵ *BJ* 7.105.

⁸¹⁶ For the Rhine-Danube and the Euphrates as the extreme markers of Roman power, see Philo, *Leg.* 10; Plin. *Pan.* 14.1; Stat. *Silv.* 5.1.89-90; Millar (2004) 188-189.

Flavians together. Now, with the establishment of universal peace, Josephus is ready to show us the dynasty acting as a collective, The Flavians, Inc.

The first scene depicting the united dynasty acting together is the celebrated narrative of the Flavian triumph in 71 (7.123-157). Whether we think of Book 7 as Vespasianic or Domitianic, this theme would have been topical. For Vespasian, the triumph was the great legitimising moment in the establishment of the new dynasty; for Domitian, it retained its relevance as the foundation of the dynasty, and it even acquired new resonances through renewed Judaeian commemoration in the early years of the reign.⁸¹⁷ One of the key themes in the Book 7 triumph continues to be harmony and unity within the regime. This is clearly signalled at the outset, at 7.123, when the two senior Flavians are referred to collectively and suggestively as *αὐτοκράτορες* (*imperatores*); thereafter in the description of the triumph they always appear together, usually as the subjects of the same plural verbs. At 152, after the long and detailed account of the contents of the procession, we are finally given a view of Vespasian and Titus in their triumphal regalia and their twin chariots, the source of and reason for all of the marvels processing before them. Domitian is also depicted on a magnificent horse. The attention which Josephus draws to the spectacular qualities of Domitian's horse may go some way towards compensating for the fact that he was not in a chariot; it may also have had a further contemporary architectural resonance in Domitian's reign in the *equus Domitiani*, the colossal equestrian statue of Domitian erected in the Forum some time after his Dacian victory in 89.⁸¹⁸ Thus the three Flavians, as much a part of the spectacle as the wonders which they have marshalled for their parade, display themselves before their city. The dynasty's absolute mastery of

⁸¹⁷ Full discussion at 84-90 and 103 above.

⁸¹⁸ Stat. *Silv.* 1.1; Darwall-Smith (1996) 227-233.

nature is here on display, another major theme of the triumphal description, expressed best in their ability to displace, replace, reframe and invert the regular order of things. We have already seen how the magnetism of Vespasian is capable of emptying Rome of its citizens; here, he and his sons fill Rome in turn with the alien and the exotic, with treasures explicitly said by Josephus to come from all of the provinces, not just Judaea.⁸¹⁹ The dynasty can bring distant battles into the heart of the festive metropolis, making the spectators feel as if they were present at the events being represented.⁸²⁰ They can invert the distinction between natural and artificial, when they make such a profusion of man-made treasures flow through the streets as to resemble rivers.⁸²¹ They make the rare common, so common that the audience feels foolish for ever believing that rarities were rare.⁸²² Later, when describing the dedication of the Temple of Peace, Josephus marvels at how the emperors could bring together the artistic treasures of the world (again not just Judaea), so that spectacles which people once travelled all across the globe to see could now be taken in at a single gaze, invoking the old *urbs est orbis* paradigm for expressing imperial power, while further suggesting the perpetual continuation of the dynastic bounty put on public display at the triumph.⁸²³ This is the new dynasty as absolutely established, fully in control of whatever the empire contains, providing it as spectacle and benefaction to the awed populace of Rome.

Mastery and unity; to these can be added the third persistent theme of Josephus' triumph, tradition. Mary Beard has astutely pointed out the frequency with which Josephus deploys the language of tradition and custom in this passage.⁸²⁴ She explains this as "cover" for the shocking novelty of the new Flavian settlement, and it is, but it also covers a more

⁸¹⁹ *BJ* 7.69, 132-3.

⁸²⁰ *BJ* 7.142-146.

⁸²¹ *BJ* 7.134.

⁸²² *BJ* 7.132-133.

⁸²³ *BJ* 7.160. For further thoughts along these lines, see Schmidt (2010) 1-6; Ash (2014) 144.

⁸²⁴ Beard (2003) 554.

immediate and concrete form of shocking novelty, the shocking novelty of the ceremony which inaugurates the new order, the triumph itself. As we have seen, this sort of commemoration was supposed to mark the annexation of new territory; a triumph for the suppression of a provincial revolt was unprecedented and, if one thought about it too much, illegitimate, perhaps even a scandalous *exposé* of just how short of legitimacy the new masters of the world really were in 71. Moreover, a joint triumph was also non-traditional, not a complete innovation but certainly an unusual arrangement.⁸²⁵ But there is nothing scandalous or novel about the triumph in *Jewish War* 7. We are repeatedly informed, with grinding regularity, that almost every detail (the robes worn by the *triumphatores*, the prayers after the acclamations, the breakfast for the soldiers, the sacrifices, the arrival at the Capitol, the prayers and sacrifices at the Capitol) are traditional and customary.⁸²⁶ In a culture in which conservatism, especially in matters religious, carried a high value, this is the language of reassurance. This is the difference between regime representation in *BJ* 7 and in the rest of the work: elsewhere, Josephus is often awkward, despite his courtesies, drawing attention (wittingly or otherwise) to the holes in and shortcomings of the Flavian narrative; in Book 7, he smooths rather than ruffles feathers. He conjures harmony and unanimity out of apparently rather fractious family relations; he couches scandalous innovation in the language of custom and conservatism. Papering over cracks and smoothing rough edges, Josephus constructs in the dynastic section of Book 7 a seductive (or soporific?) narrative of the seamless triumph of his patrons, progressing from their Judaeian victory to their rightful mastery over the Roman world amid the universal acclamations of their subjects.

⁸²⁵ 86-88. On the last point, Josephus does obliquely acknowledge the unusual nature of the joint triumph by claiming, at *BJ* 7.121, that the Senate voted individual triumphs to both Vespasian and Titus, but they opted for a joint display.

⁸²⁶ *BJ* 7.123, 128, 129, 153, 155.

So far, I have been reading the Flavian triumph in the context of Book 7, as part of Josephus' account of the establishment of Flavian rule, and what has emerged has tended towards the conclusion that Josephus' triumph narrative is highly complimentary to the needs of the dynasty. However, there is another context in which the triumph narrative can be read, and that shift in perspective somewhat complicates the picture discerned thus far. As a representation of the way in which the Flavians represented the Jewish war, the triumph narrative demands to be read in the light of Josephus' own representation of that war in Books 3-6. When this is attempted, what immediately becomes apparent is that there are some very significant discrepancies between the Flavian version of the war and what Josephus has presented his readers with in the earlier books. Steve Mason has itemised most of these discrepancies, and they amount to a substantial catalogue of details both large and small which seem out of keeping with Josephus' own account.⁸²⁷ A full restatement of Mason's observations is not necessary here: what follows is a sample, leading into a consideration of what these divergences might mean.

Most of the differences concern Josephus' description of the *pegmata*, the tall wheeled floats which carried multi-media representations of scenes from the war through the streets.⁸²⁸ Josephus claims that the Flavian *pegmata* depicted "rivers" (plural) running through cultivated land, but his own geographical excursuses have made it clear that there is only one significant river in Judaea.⁸²⁹ Plurals elsewhere are problematic, too: the Flavians depict temples being burned, a vivid trope in representations of city-sackings, but clearly singularly inappropriate for a Judaeian setting.⁸³⁰ One of the floats depicts "phalanxes" (φάλαγγας) of Jewish rebels being put to the sword by the Romans in pitched battle; in Books 3-6, we have not encountered a single pitched battle, but rather a sequence

⁸²⁷ Mason (2016a) 27-30.

⁸²⁸ BJ 7.139-147. On *pegmata*, see Ostenberg (2009) 245-262.

⁸²⁹ BJ 7.145; cf. 3.509-515; 35-57. Mason (2016a) 27-28.

⁸³⁰ BJ 7.144.

of sieges.⁸³¹ Later, we are told that at the rear of the procession came a number of enemy ships (νῆες), an impressive spectacle no doubt but one unanchored in any form of reality.⁸³² As previously noted, the only naval engagement in the *Jewish War* is the skirmish on the Sea of Galilee at *BJ* 3.522-531, and in that account Josephus studiously avoids using the word νῆες, preferring instead to use the rather less impressive-sounding σκεδίαι and σκάφη.⁸³³ Distortions of a different kind are in evidence in the description of the prisoners marched through the streets: having already been told that only the tallest and most aesthetically-pleasing prisoners were selected, we are further informed that they wore clothing designed to conceal the disfigurements they had incurred in battle.⁸³⁴ What seems to be at stake here is image: the Flavians want a procession of visually impressive warriors to showcase their own might in crushing so formidable a foe, and a procession of the maimed and the crippled would not create the required impression. Indeed, the language of aesthetic trickery, of artistry and artifice, is pervasive all through the triumph narrative: on a loyalist reading, this might be taken as Josephus' tribute to the impressive nature of his patrons' display, but it may additionally further heighten the implications of trickery and dissimulation already suggested by the disjunction between the Flavian narrative of the war and that of Josephus.⁸³⁵ One crowning dissimulation, imposed by established triumphal convention, completes the picture. Just before ascending the Capitol, the procession pauses to wait for the execution of the "enemy king", Simon bar Gioras, in

⁸³¹ *BJ* 7.143. Mason (2016a) 28.

⁸³² *BJ* 7.148. Mason (2016a) 29-30. On ships in triumphs see Ostenberg (2009) 46-57.

⁸³³ 146 n.413. On the exaggeration implicit in the parade of ships in the Flavian triumph, see Ostenberg (2007) 52.

⁸³⁴ *BJ* 7.118, 138; see also 6.417. Suetonius also stresses the importance of tall and aesthetically pleasing prisoners in his discussion of Caligula's proposed German triumph (*Cal.* 47.1)

⁸³⁵ Θεαμάτων (132); μεγαλοπρέπειαν (132); τεχνῶν ἔργοις (132); θαυμαστά (133); ἐν παντοίαις ιδέαις κατασκευασμάτων (134); πεποικιλμένα (134); τέχνη (134); θαυμαστά (136); τέχνην (136); πεποιημένα (136); κόσμον (136); περικειμένων (136); κόσμου (137); ποικιλία (138); κάλλος (138); θαῦμα (139); κατασκευή (139); πολυτελεία (140); ἐναργεστάτην (142); ἡ τέχνη δὲ καὶ τῶν κατασκευασμάτων ἡ μεγαλουργία (146).

the Tullianum.⁸³⁶ But any reader of the *Jewish War* knows that casting Simon as the leader of the Revolt is tremendously misleading. Josephus has given us a complex, bitter, fragmented and multilateral war, in which the bewildering proliferation of rebel factions are constantly at odds with each other. Although they might make temporary peace in the face of the Roman threat (as Simon, in control of the Upper City, did with John of Gischala, in control of the Temple Mount, during the climactic siege of Jerusalem), no established and universally recognised leadership hierarchy ever emerged.⁸³⁷ Josephus depicts both Simon and John being captured alive, and yet he nowhere explains why Simon was chosen to play the “enemy king” role while John was overlooked and sentenced to life imprisonment.⁸³⁸ Whatever the reason, the Flavians have fabricated an enemy “king” for the consumption of the Roman public, smoothing out many of the nuances and complexities of Josephus’ account in favour of a fictitious conception of a war fought against a unified enemy. In doing so, they have relegated John of Gischala, once master of the Jerusalem Temple, to the sidelines and to life imprisonment.

What is the cumulative effect of all this Flavian misrepresentation? It seems that the triumph comprises something like the Hollywoodisation of the Jewish Revolt, where a complex, nuanced and difficult conflict is reduced to a binary clash and inflated to heroic proportions. In the Flavian triumph, we see fictitious enemy fleets plying the seas and

⁸³⁶ *BJ* 7.153-155, On the enemy king, see Beard (2007) 133-139; Ostenberg (2009) 131-135 and 160-163, rightly stressing that (as so often with triumphs) we are not dealing with an inflexible rule, but rather with a custom or an expectation. Enemy kings were as often pardoned as executed.

⁸³⁷ On Josephus’ portrait of the rebel factions, see above all Rhoads (1976), and also Drexler (1925) 284-287; Parente (2005) 51-56. Smallwood (1976) 319 reads *BJ* 5.275-9, the passage which introduces the temporary truce between Simon and John, as indicating that Simon had been acknowledged supreme leader even by the faction of John, thereby justifying his playing the role of enemy king in the triumph. However, this appears to be based on a misreading. Smallwood takes 5.278 to mean that Simon proclaimed that the Temple, in John’s area of control, was now open to all of the rebels, indicating that he had superior authority over John. In fact, the passage merely states that Simon proclaimed to John’s followers in the Temple that they were now free to leave and man the city wall without fear of being attacked by his men (κηρύσσει μὲν ἄδειαν ὁ Σίμων τοῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ παρελθεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ τεῖχος).

⁸³⁸ Capture of John: *BJ* 6.433-434; capture of Simon: *BJ* 7.25-36. One may wonder if Simon’s remarkable physical strength, mentioned by Josephus at *BJ* 4.504, made him a more physically impressive specimen than John, leading to his designation as “enemy king” for essentially aesthetic reasons, as with the prisoners selected for the parade.

fictitious enemy battalions engaging in fictitious pitched battles in a fictitious landscape, under the command of a fictitious king. Perhaps a victory parade is not the place for nuance, but Josephus' own account of the war means that his readers should know better than to be duped by this version of events. Josephus refutes the Flavian version in two other respects, too. As previously noted, some key elements of the post-70 arrangements made by the Flavians imply that they wanted the fall of Jerusalem to be regarded as the end of the conflict in Judaea, and Josephus himself even endorses this conception in both *BJ* 6 and *BJ* 7.⁸³⁹ But immediately after the triumph narrative, he goes on to make it plain that the fall of Jerusalem was anything but the end of the Revolt, with strongholds still in rebel hands in Judaea and trouble spreading to the cities of the Diaspora. Moreover, the notion that the Flavian triumph was being celebrated for the annexation of new territory (86-87 above) is a fiction which nobody who has read *Jewish War* 1-2 could possibly endorse. As always, the extent to which this sort of dissonance with the Flavian message (or at least the Flavian message as represented by Josephus himself) is intentional and subversive is impossible to establish. However, it is worth observing that it is Josephus himself who gives his readers all the information they need to see through (his version of) the Flavian version, and thus to construe his work as a critique of the manipulation of recent history by his imperial patrons.⁸⁴⁰

Two narratives in the second, rebel-focused section of the book remain to be examined, one concerning Vespasian's annexation of Commagene, and the other Vespasian's and Titus' administration of justice. *BJ* 7.219-243 describes the termination of the client kingdom of Commagene. This story's inclusion in the *Jewish War* is slightly puzzling: it

⁸³⁹ 135-136; *BJ* 6.403 and 7.5.

⁸⁴⁰ Further intimations of disquiet in Josephus' triumph narrative are detected and discussed in Ash (2014) and Lovatt (2016).

does have a loose correspondence to Josephus' theme at this point of the necessity of subjects submitting to Roman rule, and in addition we might observe that the Commagenian royals did contribute to Vespasian's war efforts both against the Jews and in 69 and so do occur as characters in *BJ* 1-6, but their earlier appearances would not seem to be frequent enough to justify so detailed an account of their fate.⁸⁴¹ The annexation arose, Josephus tells us, from the Syrian legate Caesennius Paetus' false claim that King Antiochus was plotting with Vologaeses of Parthia, and looked set to defect from his allegiance to Rome. Josephus professes to be agnostic as to whether Paetus made this claim because he genuinely but mistakenly believed it to be true, or rather that he was motivated by malice to spread a deliberate lie. Influenced by this false information, Vespasian grants Paetus the authority to proceed as he sees fit, and so he invades the kingdom.⁸⁴² Josephus is eager, repeatedly, to stress Antiochus' innocence of the charge; however, Antiochus' hot-headed sons (one of whom, Epiphanes, has already revealed his hot-headedness at the siege of Jerusalem at *BJ* 5.460-465) attempt resistance. When this fails, they flee to Vologaeses.⁸⁴³ At 7.239-40, when Vespasian hears of the apprehension of King Antiochus, he arranges for his old friend to be released and resettled in Laconia with a handsome revenue; later, Antiochus' sons are brought to Rome, reconciled with their father and Vespasian, and allowed to settle there. This is a curious story in which Josephus seems eager to present both Antiochus and Vespasian (whose instructions to Paetus are justified by Josephus at 7.223-224) as innocent of any breach of friendship, even at the cost of potentially impugning Caesennius Paetus' intentions. After the debacle, Josephus stresses Vespasian's generosity to the royals and the full reconciliation that takes

⁸⁴¹ An attractive, though unprovable, additional explanation for this story's inclusion is that the Commagenian royals may have been among their acquaintance Josephus' initial readership. At *BJ* 7.243 we are told that, after the family's reconciliation with Vespasian, they settled in Rome, after Antiochus' temporary sojourn in Laconia.

⁸⁴² *BJ* 7.219-224.

⁸⁴³ *BJ* 7.224-238.

place in Rome; but still, despite Josephus' best efforts the reader cannot help but conclude that the annexation of his kingdom was a rather shoddy recompense for the extensive support which Antiochus had given Vespasian in Judaea, and to notice that, for all his apparent generosity to his old friend Antiochus, Vespasian does not restore his kingdom.⁸⁴⁴ Josephus appears to be trying his best to make Vespasian emerge from this rather shoddy conduct looking as good as possible. It may be appropriate to note that, rather than being an isolated incident or an unusual catastrophe, the annexation of Commagene was one part of what looks like a concerted Flavian effort to dissolve Eastern client kingdoms.⁸⁴⁵ Vespasian may have thus been rather more proactive in the Commagenian business than Josephus wants us to think, and bad intelligence from his legate was by no means the only thing which might have motivated the emperor to turn on his loyal friend in this way.

The last narrative in *BJ* 7 also concerns the Flavians in their capacity as rulers. After apprehending the troublemaking sicarian refugee Jonathan, Catullus, governor of Crete and Cyrene, conceives a desire to win a reputation for himself by winning his own Jewish war. Thus he induces Jonathan to implicate a large number of Cyrenean Jews on false charges of sedition; he has three thousand of them put to death without trial, confident that he will not face imperial justice for this because of the profits which his confiscations bring in to the *fiscus* (one wonders if this could be construed as a nod to Vespasian's reputed avarice). He then persuades Jonathan to accuse some leading Alexandrian and Roman Jews, including Josephus.⁸⁴⁶ When the charges are brought to the αὐτοκράτορες (Vespasian and Titus), they immediately see through the scam. They flog and burn alive Jonathan, and yet Catullus escapes with a reprimand, scarcely, one feels, an adequate

⁸⁴⁴ Stern (1987) 74 explicitly condemns Vespasian on these grounds.

⁸⁴⁵ Rey-Coquais (1978) 48-53; Millar (1993) 80-90; Levick (1999) 165-166.

⁸⁴⁶ Josephus is here silent on the nature of the accusations against him, but at V.424 he states that he was accused of supplying money and weapons to Jonathan and his seditious associates in Cyrene.

chastisement for a man who has had three thousand people put to death without trial on accusations which he knew to be spurious.⁸⁴⁷ Fortunately, the deity can supply what is lacking in imperial justice; not long after his reprieve, we are told, Catullus is struck down by divine vengeance, imagining in his final delirium that he was suffering the exact same punishments as his erstwhile accomplice Jonathan.⁸⁴⁸ This focus on divine intervention may suggest that there is a theological rationale for Josephus' inclusion of this story. Strikingly, it enables Josephus to close his narrative with an account of a post-70 divine intervention carried out by God in defence of good Jews, thus directly demonstrating the falsity of the analysis of Eleazar ben Yair, the sicarian commander on Masada, who had a little earlier argued that the failure of the Jewish Revolt showed that God had definitively turned his back on the Jewish people.⁸⁴⁹ So Josephus' decision to close with this story is not perhaps quite as odd as it is sometimes reckoned to be; but for our purposes here it is interesting to note that, in order to make a space for this clinching divine intervention, Josephus is obliged to depict a failure of imperial justice (and it clearly *is* a failure of justice, as Josephus encourages us to view the corrective punishment of God as appropriate at 7.453). He softens the blow by attributing Vespasian's and Titus' failure to administer an appropriate punishment to their *πραότης* ("gentleness", "clemency"). This in itself further illustrates one of the features we have already noted about Vespasian and Titus in Book 7, the convergence of their once clearly distinct characters. In Books 1-6 we have become quite used to seeing excessive *clementia* hampering Titus' performance, but this is a wholly unprecedented failing for his father.⁸⁵⁰ But this softening of the blow is not

⁸⁴⁷ *BJ* 7.437-450.

⁸⁴⁸ *BJ* 7.451-453.

⁸⁴⁹ *BJ* 7.355-377. On Eleazar as a "preacher of death" whose pessimistic theology needs correcting, see Vidal-Naquet (1978) 14-21. For important interpretations of the Masada passage which identify signs of Josephus' disapproval of Eleazar and his followers, see Cohen (1982b) 391-396 and Ladouceur (1987), followed and expanded by Chapman (2007) 96-99. Note D. Schwartz (2011) 342-346 on the increase in interest in stories of divine intervention in *BJ* 7 compared to the rest of the work. See also Davies (2013) 60-65.

⁸⁵⁰ *BJ* 7.451.

quite enough to obscure the fact that Josephus closes Book 7, in many ways, ostensibly at least, a consistently Flavian-friendly book, with an instance of Flavian failure which has to be corrected by the Jewish God. This perhaps serves as a reminder to attentive readers that behind and above the apparently idyllic new Flavian settlement whose establishment Book 7 has so admiringly chronicled there existed a higher government of world affairs.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

Perhaps the clearest fact to emerge from this consideration of Flavian representation in the *Jewish War* is Josephus' independence. Promulgating an understanding of the war and the theology behind it which is radically different from that promoted by the Flavians, Josephus hardly comes across as a "propagandist", a slave to the party line. Most clearly visible in his radically deviant version of the destruction of the Temple in 70, we have noted marked differences between Josephus and the Flavians on a range of questions, including such crucial topics as the nature of the divine backing for the Flavian accession and the role played by the Jewish God in the suppression of the Revolt.⁸⁵¹ Furthermore, another weakness of the "propaganda" model has emerged, the notion of the monolithic representational needs of the regime. In truth, there may well have been competing goods from a Flavian perspective, and it may not always have been possible for an author to promote one aspect of the imperial character without appearing to denigrate another. Thus Titus' need to come across simultaneously as clement and as a competent military commander in the reign of his father may lie behind Josephus' highly distinctive Titus, with his mixture of reckless bravery, assured competence and kind-hearted clemency, and one aspect of this positive characterisation persistently interferes with the other.⁸⁵² The idea of Josephus as a paid propagandist, always in service of a single and clearly identifiable Flavian line, cannot stand. Rather we need to emphasise Josephus as an independent author, capable of taking the interests of the regime into account, certainly, but above all concerned with shaping his own narrative and analysis of events. This recalls the work of Karl Galinsky on Augustan culture, which emphasises authors and artists as independent agents inflecting their works with reference to the guiding *auctoritas* of

⁸⁵¹ 245-266; 153-164; 226-236.

⁸⁵² 224-225.

Augustus, rather than as propagandists constructing a centrally-directed ideological vision of a new Golden Age.⁸⁵³

Such a model, of course, still allows for consideration to be paid to the interests of the regime, and we saw in Chapter 2 that such consideration was generally recognised as necessary under the emperors.⁸⁵⁴ We have seen that Josephus is certainly capable of showing courtesy to the Flavians, but also that he has a pronounced knack for configuring that courtesy in such a way as to advance his other, Josephan rather than Flavian, narrative tendencies. For instance, the highly positive presentation of Vespasian's generalship may, at first, seem like straightforward obsequiousness, but emphasising Vespasian's competence both excuses Josephus' own poor military performance in Galilee and, by having the highly competent Vespasian highly rate Josephus' own competence, enhances the authority of Josephus the historian to evaluate military affairs.⁸⁵⁵ We also noted Josephus' willingness to endorse the claims that Vespasian's accession was backed by the divine and marked by omens; however, we also saw that he re-attributes responsibility for the Flavian accession from the "pagan" gods to the Jewish God, all part of Josephus' project to rehabilitate the reputation of his God and to combat perceptions that God had been defeated or was in some way an enemy of Rome.⁸⁵⁶ These examples excellently illustrate how Josephus' courtesies to the Flavians so often advance his own agendas; the latter example, in particular, even encodes a certain amount of discourtesy amid all the courtesy, in its flat denial of the Flavian interpretation of the Jewish God.

It was argued in Chapter 2 that the free invention of factual content for purposes other than vivid description would have amounted to a violation of widely-held standards of

⁸⁵³ Galinsky (1996), esp. 10-41.

⁸⁵⁴ 22-30; 49-68.

⁸⁵⁵ 150-153.

⁸⁵⁶ 153-164.

historiography in antiquity, especially if that invention was undertaken for the purposes of burnishing the reputation of the powerful.⁸⁵⁷ We are now in a position to assess how Josephus' Flavian portraits perform on this score. Conclusively demonstrating active mendacity in Josephus is difficult, in part because he is so often our sole source for the events he describes. We have seen how the most commonly-suspected instance of Josephan mendacity, the account of Titus' council of war, cannot be conclusively shown to be mendacious; furthermore, even if it is mendacious, the lie does not seem likely to have been motivated by a desire to improve Titus' reputation, but was more probably meant to advance objectives wholly distinct from Flavian *apologia*.⁸⁵⁸ Other than this, the most likely candidates for outright deception we have found do not concern the Revolt itself, but topics of broader interest in Roman politics. Josephus creates the mendacious impression that Domitian travelled to the Rhine during the period of the Civilis Revolt, largely in order to magnify Domitian's achievement, although he stops short of actual malpractice by implying this rather than stating it openly.⁸⁵⁹ Josephus' claim that Vespasian conquered Britain is certainly mendacious, and certainly enhances his emperor's image, although other possible reasons for that mendacity have also been identified.⁸⁶⁰ Josephus' most egregious probable untruth would seem to be his misdating of the Vespasianic campaign against the Jewish rebels in 69, which he appears to have dated late primarily in order to suggest that Vespasian's decision to initiate civil war was made later than it actually was, an unambiguously apologetic move.⁸⁶¹ These episodes suggest that Josephus was prepared on occasion to flout the standards of historiographical good practice on behalf of his patrons; however, demonstrable instances are so infrequent as to suggest that Flavian apologetics, while present in some parts of the text, can scarcely

⁸⁵⁷ 49-55.

⁸⁵⁸ 245-266.

⁸⁵⁹ 279-280.

⁸⁶⁰ 142-143.

⁸⁶¹ 177-179.

be said to have been a primary motivation in composing the work. If Josephus is a Flavian propagandist, he is so infrequently and often ambiguously, and largely on his own terms.

Josephus seems at his most “propagandistic” when writing specifically about Roman politics. Thus we argued that his account of the Roman civil war of 69 is, of all surviving accounts, the most consistently favourable to the needs of the dynasty; Book 7’s vision of the establishment of a new, universally-welcomed Flavian world order extends these themes, already gestured at in Book 4, while (if the book is Domitianic) allowing him to “correct” Books 1-6 by including appropriate appreciation of Domitian, whose praises could be found in the earlier books but which had been somewhat too muted for the prevailing climate in the younger Flavian’s reign.⁸⁶² It might be noted that Josephus has no dog in this fight: he had nothing to gain (and everything to lose) by suggesting, for instance, that Vitellius would have made a better emperor than Vespasian, or by acknowledging the continuing existence of those after 69 who were unhappy about the new dynasty’s success. However, even here Josephus embodies a certain amount of dissonance. By linking the Flavian accession to the Jewish God, Josephus further extends the rehabilitation of that deity. Vespasian’s accession is both the salvation of Rome and the will of the God of the Jews, a brilliant way of aligning Roman and Flavian interests with God, and a powerful challenge to those who believed in the misanthropic and hostile version of YHWH depicted in some classical sources. Likewise, when Josephus suggests that the accession of Titus had been foreordained by that God, Josephus both marks out his narrative as a pro-regime statement at a time when opponents of the Flavians were questioning the correctness of Titus’ accession, and makes it clear that it is *his* God who determines who will or will not rule at Rome.⁸⁶³ Thus even when he is at his most ostensibly obsequious, Josephus is still capable of advancing objectives which are

⁸⁶² 164-193; 269-283.

⁸⁶³ 226-228.

fundamentally Josephan and not Flavian, and indeed so non-Flavian that they might even be construable as anti-Flavian. This can be linked with some of the scholarly tendencies briefly mentioned in the Introduction deriving from postcolonial theory, specifically Bhabha's notions of the inherently menacing and destabilising qualities of colonial mimicry, and the ways in which subsequent theorists have characterised mimicry as a practice with subversive possibilities, a strategic choice which can complicate, problematise and undermine dominant ideologies.⁸⁶⁴ Josephus is accomplished enough to mimic hegemonic ideologies, including, for instance, Roman notions of "winning over" enemy deities through overwhelming Roman piety, or of Roman respect for the rights and privileges of established foreign temples, or Flavian notions of the divine election of the dynasty.⁸⁶⁵ Josephus mimics these "Roman values" back at his Roman audience, but always with a twist, always reflecting the innate alterity of even the acculturated Judaeans in Roman elite discourse. The effect of such positioning could no doubt be disconcerting, as much because of its sameness as its difference.

So Josephus as regime propagandist would appear to be a difficult position to maintain. Equally difficult, it seems to me, is the notion of Josephus as regime panegyrist. Josephus' Flavians (at least in Books 1 to 6) are not mere collections of perfect virtues, but actual and distinguishable human beings, both clearly positively sketched overall but also both capable of being mistaken, of handling their tasks ineptly, even in the case of Vespasian of engaging in morally questionable tactics.⁸⁶⁶ The panegyric mode is further kept out of the *Jewish War* by Josephus' reluctance to engage in explicit virtue-talk. Certainly both of the elder Flavians are shown in possession of an enviable array of virtues, but these virtues are not catalogued and are rarely even identified by name, as is the case in panegyric, but are

⁸⁶⁴ 10-11.

⁸⁶⁵ 233-236; 262-266; 153-164.

⁸⁶⁶ 215-225; 147-149.

revealed in action, the procedure of the narrative historian.⁸⁶⁷ If we recall that Lucian's objection to contemporary history was that it usually fails to preserve the proper distinction between historiography and panegyric, we are forced to conclude that the *Jewish War* is not susceptible to this objection.⁸⁶⁸ Ancient discussions of historiography, we have seen, seem above all to express the idea that independence of authorial judgment is the necessary prerequisite of the true historian; Josephus' independence is not of the parrhesiastic type (explicit denunciations of imperial conduct were as unthinkable for historians as for authors working in any other genre), but it is nevertheless real independence, manifesting itself in the radical divergences from commonly-represented notions about the Flavian house expressed elsewhere, divergences which derive from his (in Roman literary circles) unusual background and perspective on events.⁸⁶⁹ Josephus avoids what Gedaliah Alon has somewhat dramatically called "the dread censorship of the Caesars", the spectre of *maiestas* or other radical forms of literary regulation, by always remaining ostensibly courteous about the Flavians, by producing no single passage which wears its dissidence on its surface, but at deeper levels he produces a version of the suppression of the Jewish revolt which differs markedly from the authorised version, and he remains committed to the practice of depicting his powerful friends as human beings rather than archetypes.⁸⁷⁰ In doing so, he undoubtedly retains the right to be considered a true historian.

The final point concerns reading practices. We have seen that a good deal of scholarship which aims to question the notion of Josephus as a propagandist has followed a model of figured critique which has involved looking for latent criticism of the characters or actions

⁸⁶⁷ 193-211; 236-245.

⁸⁶⁸ Luc. *Hist. Conscr.* 7.

⁸⁶⁹ 56-57.

⁸⁷⁰ Quotation: Alon (1977b) 268, n.46.

of Titus and Vespasian.⁸⁷¹ Some of this appears to have borne fruit: we have seen for instance that Josephus does seem keen to draw attention to the untrustworthiness of Vespasian, that his text betrays an awareness of the problems which both the clemency and the courage of Titus can generate, and that the very last narrative in Book 7 casts doubt on the competence of both Vespasian and Titus to administer justice correctly.⁸⁷² None of these criticisms, if that is what they are, are expressed in overtly critical language, making them good examples of possible figured speech. However, the problem with the figured speech model is that it is, by definition, impossible to identify figured speech definitively. Figured critique must at all times be capable of an innocent interpretation; in order to get behind this deliberately-cultivated polysemy and to pronounce on whether an author is or is not being “subversive” in any given part of their work, we would need access to that author’s thoughts and intentions, which we plainly do not have.⁸⁷³ In such cases, the best we can realistically do is to argue persuasively that a given passage *could* plausibly have been interpreted as critical by an ancient reader; this endeavour may end up telling us more about the interstices and inherent contradictions in ancient political thinking than about a given author’s intent or the “real meaning” of his work.

Even the overt discussion of material which Josephus’ patrons may have preferred him to pass over in silence need not indicate dissidence: we saw from our parallel case studies that contemporary historians were not expected to pass over such material or adhere to an official version of the past, as has been the case in more recent censoring regimes. All of our contemporary historians cover material potentially damaging to the reputations of their emperors (Nicolaus mentions the allegations of Octavian’s attempted assassination of Antony, Velleius discusses the difficult relations between Tiberius and the family of

⁸⁷¹ 12-13.

⁸⁷² 206-208; 214-225; 289-291.

⁸⁷³ 30-42.

Germanicus, Josephus discusses the Flavian sack of Cremona, Vespasian's breach of a treaty at Tarichaeae, and several episodes which could be interpreted as Titus' failures of command).⁸⁷⁴ It seems that contemporary historians were free to mention such episodes, provided that care was taken (at least ostensibly) to ensure that the emperor emerged looking as good as possible. Thus figured critique is impossible to detect with certainty, and even the overt discussion of awkward material is not necessarily a breach of courtesy, provided that appropriate attention is paid to impression management.

Those who want to find evidence of oppositional tendencies in Josephus may do better to concentrate less on Josephus' (suitably apologetic) inclusion of awkward material or figured critique of the conduct or character of individuals in his work and more on the deeper incompatibilities between the Josephan version of the revolt and the Flavian. On the one hand we find an officially-backed understanding of the Revolt which sees it as the final and total defeat of an anti-social people and their God, an event to be celebrated as the great triumph of Rome's salvific new dynasty, with the backing of Rome's superior array of deities.⁸⁷⁵ On the other, we find the deviant narrative of a necessary and justifiable but nonetheless regrettable and tragic conflict, where the conduct of a small number of "extremists" unleashes *stasis* in Judaea, and where their sins bring an external army against the holy city in punishment, a sequence of events presided over by no deity except that of the Jews himself, who manifests his power through his own apparent defeat.⁸⁷⁶ Shifting our focus onto this deeper plane, we see that, for all his ostensible courtesies towards the new ruling dynasty, Josephus is an author who retains a very high level of independence, and who politely but consistently opposes the world-view of those who would turn the denigration of his people into a form of regime legitimisation.

⁸⁷⁴ 66; 63-64; 188-189; 147-149; 215-225.

⁸⁷⁵ 89-90.

⁸⁷⁶ 159-164; 226-236; 262-266.

Word Count: 99, 900

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