Foreign Enemies of the Empire: The Great Jewish Revolt and the Roman Perception of the Jews

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The Great Jewish Revolt may be studied within a relatively large corpus of *comparanda*, a fact acknowledged in King Agrippa's speech, but often overlooked in modern research.[1] A likely reason for this phenomenon is the scant attention usually paid by scholars to the provincial rebellion as a distinct type of war – one whose characteristics do not necessarily correspond to those recognized in foreign wars, fought beyond the borders of the empire. We are only drawing half the picture, for example, when we present *Judaea Capta* coins as part of a wider corpus of *capta* type coinage, while neglecting to note that no other Roman victory in a provincial conflict was ever followed by such a commemorative measure.[2] Given Judea's established place within the Roman provincial system at the time of the outbreak of hostilities in 66, defining the Jewish Revolt in relation to other provincial rebellions may contribute to our understanding of the Roman perception of the Jews during the conflict — and, perhaps even more importantly, in its immediate aftermath.[3] Generalizations may be formulated in regard to various aspects of the Roman approach to provincial revolts, such as the employment of force; retributive measures; official appointments; commemoration; and the fortification and garrisoning of pacified areas. It is not until the Jewish revolt is viewed in juxtaposition with such generalizations that the prevailing notions regarding the Roman treatment of the Jews may be reread against a reliable background.

The task facing Vespasian in 67 was, in practical terms, the re-conquest of the rebelling region, roughly similar in size to the area which constituted the kingdom of Herod the Great. It was rarely the case that provincial revolts against Roman rule were as successful as to lead to complete indigenous control over local centres of power, and to allow the opposition movement, in the absence of all Roman presence, a long period of preparation for the imminent Roman counter-offensive. In most cases of the sudden eruption of tension there would have been sufficient Roman troops available, within a few days' march at the most, to react to any threat soon after it emerged. The empire depended heavily on the victory of such task-forces in their immediate confrontation with rebel forces. Untended revolts had the potential to spread rapidly, and the need for

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1 The king — in his reported attempt to dissuade the Jews from revolting — demonstrates significant knowledge regarding events surrounding other provincial rebellions throughout the Roman Empire (Joseph. *BJ* 2.345-401).

2 Cody (2003); see below.

3 All dates, unless otherwise indicated, are CE. Translations from the Greek and Latin texts are mine.

further backup would have had serious repercussions over the usual balance in the deployment of the legions.

In the case of the Jewish revolt, the expectations of the central government in Rome would not have been different. To be sure, earlier cases of local restlessness had been resolved along similar lines since the time of Judea's provincialization in 6, and even earlier, upon Herod's death in 4 BCE. Hypotheses regarding Roman notions of an exceptional Jewish rebelliousness appear largely exaggerated for the years preceding the Great Revolt, certainly when examined against the backdrop of local unrest in other provinces.[4] The idea, originating with Schürer, of general administrative incompetence, has proven to be far too crude a generalization.[5] By all accounts, during the six decades preceding the year 66, Judea had come to be a regular part of the Roman provincial system, and had been treated as such while peaceful routine was maintained, as well as when tension arose.

Cestius Gallus' costly failure in 66 confronted the Roman Empire with a loss seldom experienced before.[6] Some previous revolts, such as that led by Boudica in Britain in 60/1, had experienced brief local success; others persisted for several years, though usually at a safe distance from provincial centres of power — the case of the rebellion led by Tacfarinas in Africa during Tiberius' reign comes to mind. Even among ungarrisoned client kingdoms, it took the chaos of the year 69, for example, and a betrayal within the local royal house, to enable the temporary secession of the Brigantes from the Roman provincial system. For Roman decision-makers observing events in Judea in 66, the most notable precedent would have been the annihilation of Varus' three legions by Arminius' coalition of German tribes in 9.

Judea, though previously part of the provincial system, now had to be approached by force, as would any other hostile foreign power; the task was deemed to necessitate the use of a massive force. An appraisal of the size of the force put in the hands of Vespasian is therefore in place. Varus in 4 BCE and Gallus in 66 came to Judea in order to subjugate local revolts. Leaving on short notice, Varus brought with him the two legions still in Syria — a third had earlier been sent by him to Jerusalem, and was at this point under siege by the rebels; and this force was supplemented by 'whatever allied forces kings or tetrarchs could provide'.[7] Taking his time before launching his own campaign, Gallus marched at the head of a larger force — just short of thirty-thousand men: *Legio*

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4 E.g. an examination of the writings of Seneca, Martial, Tacitus, Juvenal, Suetonius, and others, shows no overwhelming indication for a particular Roman apprehension regarding Jewish rebelliousness, not even after the first revolt (Gruen 2002). For *comparanda* from Britain, see Gambash forthcoming.

5 Schürer (1973-1987), 459-66. It is no longer customary to approach the six decades that preceded the Judean revolt via such broad generalizations. The procuratorship of A. Felix, for example, has been shown to have suffered from banditry and internal strife, but not necessarily from anti-Roman tension: Goodman (2007), 406-9.

6 Bar Kochva (1976); Gichon (1981); Goldsworthy (1996), 87-90.

7 Joseph. *AJ* 17.286: ... ὁπόσα τε ἐπικουρικὰ καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς οἵτινες τετράρχαι τότε παρεῖχον. For the deployment of legions in Syria during this period see Millar (1993), 32, 41-2.

XII Fulminata, two-thousand men from each of the other three Syrian legions; six *cohortes* of infantry, four *alae* of cavalry, and some thirteen-thousand royal forces. Taking into consideration that, in both cases, both Galilee and Jerusalem could have presented fierce opposition, it may be assumed that Varus would also have preferred a force at least as large as that assembled by Gallus. His determination to act promptly, however, contrasted with Gallus' apparent sluggishness, serves to explain the small size of his force, and, on the other hand, his success in crushing a revolt at its very beginning.

It should be stressed that Roman generals did not usually have the benefit of employing large forces in the subjugation of local opposition. Instead, far greater importance was ascribed to an immediate first encounter with the rebels, even if this entailed numerical inferiority. The opening of the rebellion of Tacfarinas in Africa may serve well in demonstrating Roman action in the face of rising local opposition. In 17, the first year of that conflict, Africa's governor, Furius Camillus, reacted to the threat by gathering a force of 10,000 men, probably comprising most of the troops immediately available to him in and around the province.[8] The enemy — Maures, Cinithii, Musulamii, and quite likely others — consisted of a wide coalition that can hardly have been confined to a single category of antagonistic groups in north Africa, such as bandits, nomads, or expropriated farmers.

Whether Camillus was the one offering or accepting the challenge of a set battle, it is clear that this would have been the scenario most desired by him, and the one perceived by him as being most likely to put a decisive end to an incipient insurrection of such an order of magnitude. It is of note that he was an inexperienced soldier; yet expectations of him were clear, and he answered them by breaking the backbone of the enemy coalition in the initial encounter. That hesitation under such circumstances would have been unacceptable is made clear by an incident which unfolded during the term in office of Camillus' successor, L. Apronius. Tacfarinas, now leading a smaller band of outlaws, attacked a Roman cohort, which reacted by turning its back on the threat. Apronius responded by reviving the traditional punishment of decimation, flogging to death every tenth soldier.[9]

Also of note is the fact that the long duration of the Tacfarinian conflict did not see large armies put at the disposal of the provincial governor; nor, for that matter, the special appointment of generals with *imperium maius*. Throughout the first years of the revolt, African governors had to deal with the problem and cover vast territories with only one legion — the *III Augusta* — and the complementary auxiliary forces under their command. In 20, a second legion, the *IX Hispana*, was sent by Tiberius to Africa, only to be withdrawn again early in 24, even though the revolt had not yet been quelled and Tacfarinas was still roaming free.[10]

Events in Britain during the Boudican revolt unfolded in much the same way. Q. Petilius Cerialis, commander of *Legio IX*, met the rebels soon after the outbreak of hostilities, immediately after Camulodunum was lost. His legion seems to have been

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8 Tac. *Ann.* 2.52.

9 Tac. *Ann.* 3.20.

10 On the allotment of an additional legion to Africa see Tac. *Ann.* 3.9. Tacitus (*Ann.* 4.23) later criticizes the withdrawal of *Legio IX*, 'as if not an enemy remained in Africa'.

divided at the time into two detachments, one based further to the north, either in Lincolnshire or in Nottinghamshire, the other apparently based in Longthorpe in Peterborough (Cambridgeshire).[11] In the rash charge that he led against the enemy, it is usually agreed that he lost 1,500-2,000 men — all the infantry that he had brought with him.[12] When notified of the revolt, Britain's governor at the time, Suetonius Paullinus, rushed with his vanguard from Wales to Londinium. He soon realized that he could not defend the city with the few troops available in the south-east of the island, and found it unavoidable to abandon it to the rebels.[13] Even after waiting for reinforcements from the *XIV* and *XX* legions to join him from the west, he appeared for the decisive battle with no more than 10,000 troops.[14]

At 60,000 troops, Vespasian's task-force was twice as large as that under Gallus just a year earlier. It assembled in Ptolemais and was ready for action early in 67. Three legions constituted the core of the force, only one of which, the *X Fretensis*, was taken from Syria's regular garrison.[15] This meant that three legions remained in Syria under the charge of Syria's recently appointed legate, Mucianus. Vespasian's legionary forces were supplemented by twenty-three auxiliary *cohortes*, and six *alae* of cavalry. In addition, some eighteen-thousand troops were sent by four client kings — Antiochus IV of Commagene, Agrippa II, Sohaemus of Emesa, and Malchus II of Nabatea.[16]

In attempting to realize the full significance of the dimensions of such a force, it is important to be reminded once again of those smaller forces mentioned above. In most provincial operations — even those not hastily arranged — we witness the employment of one or two legions and the auxiliary forces attached to them: that is, normally between 10,000 and 15,000 troops. Gallus' larger force of approximately 30,000 clearly created the expectation — evident from Josephus' account — that Jerusalem would not hold up under siege. Why was the subjugation of the same revolt a year later considered to require a force twice as large, when at least some of the blame for Jerusalem's endurance in 66 was to be ascribed to the incompetence of the Syrian governor? The answer should not be sought solely in the increasing intensity of the revolt, but also in the Roman perception of the conflict. With Gallus' defeat by the Jews, cases of provincial campaigns should cease to apply as a basis for comparison with events in Judea.

Vespasian's army was similar in scale to forces assembled for the purpose of foreign campaigns. It was an army similar in scope to that which invaded Britain in 43.[17] Much

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11 Frere and St. Joseph (1974), 38-9.

12 Mattingly (2006), 110.

13 Tac. *Ann.* 14.33.

14 For the numbers see Tac. *Ann.* 14.34. Dio (62.2) claims that Boudica first had at her disposal 120,000 men, which number grows by the time of the final battle to 230,000 (62.8). Tacitus reports that the 10,000 Roman troops consisted of all of *Legio XIV*, the veterans of *Legio XX*, and auxiliaries from the neighbourhood. It has to be assumed that the rest of *Legio XX* stayed behind to secure accomplishments in the west.

15 The other two legions were the *XV Apollinaris*, brought by Titus from Alexandria, and the *V Macedonica*, which participated in the Armenian campaign in 61/2.

16 Millar (1993), 72.

17 For the comparison see Millar (2005), 101.

as such a fact informs us of the perceived seriousness of the Jewish revolt itself, it also reflects on the official Roman approach towards this conflict, since the revolt of Galilee and Jerusalem cannot account for the mobilization of an army fit for the invasion and occupation of vast foreign regions. It has been suggested that the campaign was allocated such a strong force because of the fear that unemployed troops, available in the region after the conclusion of Corbulo's eastern campaigns, would lose morale and go soft.[18] But in the general routine of garrisoning the empire legions frequently found themselves not participating in warlike activities for long periods. The risk of slackness among the troops was always present, and was often treated by commanders in ways other than forced participation in unnecessary campaigns.[19] Besides this, various sources report Nero's intention of launching an eastern campaign of his own in 66: mobilization of troops to that end had already started when he left for Greece.[20] The presence in the east of a great number of 'unemployed' troops would have allowed him to pursue his plan even as the subjugation of a provincial revolt was being carried out by the standard means of a small force, taken from Syria's regular garrison of four legions.

In point of fact, Vespasian's mission was to conquer a region generally perceived as inimical, and the central government allocated troops to the General in accordance with this circumstance. The fact that in the past this same enemy had been trusted under the rule of low-rank officials with but small auxiliary forces at their command would have made no difference in the estimation of the force required for the conquest of the region. To be sure, the nature of this task-force would have been determined by the size and intentions of the enemy. Moreover, perceiving the rebellious population of the region as a dedicated enemy would have had implications on the projected process of the future establishment of peace in the region. Nero's decision must have taken into consideration the likelihood that, once pacified, cities and districts within the region would have to be strictly secured, possibly remaining heavily garrisoned for at least a few years.

It is not the size of Vespasian's army alone, but also various aspects of the way in which it was employed, that create a noticeable difference between the Judean campaign and other Roman operations aimed against provincial populations. Despite its size, the army operated for the most part as a single unit, without breaking into divisions that could treat several foci of opposition simultaneously. This caution practiced by Vespasian dictated not only sequentiality in attacks made on different regions, such as Galilee and Jerusalem, but also the concentration of force in simple, seemingly less demanding operations. In Galilee and Gaulanitis, most of the army moved from one

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18 Goodman (2007), 425.

19 Corbulo, for example, knew to keep his troops busy once ordered to cease from harassing the Chauci (Tac. *Ann.* 11.20): 'To keep his soldiers from idleness, he dug a canal between the Rhine and the Meuse at a length of twenty-three miles, in order to avoid the uncertainties of the ocean'.

20 A significant number of troops from Germany and Africa reached Alexandria — apparently the assembly point for the task-force. By the end of 66, *Legio XV Apollinaris* was in Alexandria; a new legion — the *I Italica* — was recruited in Italy late in 66; and in 67 *Legio XIV Gemina* was withdrawn from Britain and sent to the Balkans. See Griffin (1984), 228-30.

stronghold to the next, starting with Jotapata, which was indeed strong enough to withstand a six-week siege; continuing with Tiberias, which opened its gates when faced with the Roman army; and ending with Gamala, which was conquered some four months after the fall of Jotapata.[21] Only weak and insignificant strongholds, located in the immediate neigbourhood of the main force, such as Gischala and Itabyrion (Mount Tabor), were assigned detachments of the army under the command of Vespasian's legates. These smaller forces usually did not take more than a few days to complete their mission of conquest and subjugation.[22]

The same pattern persisted in 68, when Vespasian marched through Perea, western Judea, Idumea, and Samaria.[23] Most of the troops available to the general commander appear to have been involved in these operations, while smaller detachments were used only occasionally, when opposition was slight, or already partially pacified.[24] On the other hand, it is significant that, throughout the various stages of the campaign, up to the laying of a siege on Jerusalem, substantial forces were frequently allocated for the garrisoning of recently pacified areas, or ones that were still considered to be at risk of falling into the hands of the rebels. Even before the first encounter with rebels in Galilee, Sepphoris was garrisoned with a detachment of six-thousand soldiers — a unit outnumbering a whole legion in size. Some three-thousand infantry and five-hundred cavalry were left in Perea when Vespasian left the region with the bulk of the army, and the entire Fifth Legion remained in Emmaus while the rest of the army campaigned in Idumea and Samaria.[25] We rarely hear of the duration of the absence of such troops from the main operative force. While it is perhaps unlikely that such great numbers as witnessed, for example, in Sepphoris, were still necessary once Galilee as a whole had been taken, nonetheless substantial Roman presence must be imagined in most initially garrisoned places — at least up to the point of the fall of Jerusalem in 70.[26] By the conclusion of the war, Judea's status preceding the rebellion had been fundamentally altered: a whole legion, the *X Fretensis*, was now stationed on the site of the destroyed city of Jerusalem, and a legate of senatorial rank took over the governorship of the province.

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21 On Jotapata (Joseph. *BJ* 3.145): αὐτὸς δὲ μετὰ μίαν ἡμέραν ἀναλαβῶν πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμιν εἵπετο καὶ μέχρι δείλης ὁδεύσας πρὸς τὴν Ἰωταπάταν ἀφικνεῖται ('Having taken his whole army, [Vespasian] followed the next day, and arrived at Jotapata after marching until late in the day'). On Tiberias see Joseph. *BJ* 3.443-52. On Gamala: Joseph. *BJ* 4.11.

22 Placidus had six-hundred horsemen when he took Mount Tabor (Joseph.*BJ* 4.54-61). Titus rode to Gischala with a thousand horsemen, and captured the place promptly (Joseph. *BJ* 4.84-112).

23 E.g. the march on Antipatris (Joseph. *BJ* 4.443): 'At the beginning of the spring he led most of his army (τὸ πλέον τῆς δυνάμεως) from Caesarea to Antipatris, where for two days he looked after the affairs of that city, and then, on the third, he moved on, ravaging and burning that entire region'.

24 Thus, Vespasian marched to Perea with his army, but retreated when he had secured the cooperation of Gadara, leaving behind Placidus with a small division of the army to subjugate the rest of the region (Joseph. *BJ* 4.419).

25 Other examples include the garrisoning of Jericho, Adida and Gerasa (Joseph. *BJ* 4.486).

26 Joseph. *BJ* 4.442. See Schürer, (1973-1987), 366.

Such cautious conduct on the part of a conquering army is hardly unfamiliar. It is very much reminiscent of the advance of the Roman force that invaded Britain, especially insofar as regards the initial concentration of effort, and the garrisoning of problematic areas during the first decade after the invasion. In the campaign of 43-47 in southwestern Britain, Vespasian, as legion commander, was confronted with the decentralized societies of the Durotriges and the Dumnonii; archaeological evidence suggests that he was at first bound to garrison and control each subsidiary centre separately.[27] However, in Roman operations conducted against hostile provincial populations, the deployment of forces often followed different guidelines. Despite the limited size of the force stationed in Africa, Roman tactics in the war against Tacfarinas included the simultaneous employment of multiple small detachments in separate areas. Blaesus in 22 and Dolabella in 24 used such a tactic even though it resulted in the Roman side frequently finding itself fighting with small numbers.[28] Tiberius acted similarly in Pannonia in 6-7.[29] As will be shown below, the garrisoning of recently rebellious areas was not always deemed necessary.

It would appear that greater risks were taken by Roman commanders when dealing with rebellious provincial populations, both in respect to the size of the forces with which they chose to march into battle, and in their readiness for a prompt return to a routine based on trust in the locals.[30] At least prior to the accomplishment of pacification in disturbed provinces, considerations of time would have played a major part in dictating the adoption of risky guidelines. Should such conflicts have been allowed to extend over a prolonged period, important aspects of local routine — such as the flow of tribute, and the security of traffic along trade routes — would have suffered. Petronius' care for the cultivation of the land in Judea during the crisis between Gaius and the Jews is of particular interest. Though in disagreement regarding the exact chronology, all accounts of the crisis report that the Jews were neglecting their agricultural labours as a result of the tension.[31] The Syrian governor's fear of a resulting famine is mentioned as

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27 See Millett (1990), 47-9. Cf. Suet. *Vesp.* 4: *inde in Britanniam translatus tricies cum hoste conflixit. duas ualidissimas gentes superque uiginti oppida et insulam Vectem Britanniae proximam in dicionem redegit* ('Having been moved from there into Britain, he fought thirty battles with the enemy. He reduced to subjection two most powerful tribes, and more than twenty towns, as well as the Island of Wight, which lies close to the coast of Britain').

28 Tac. *Ann.* 3.74: *tunc tripertitum exercitum pluris in manus dispergit praeponitque centuriones virtutis expertae* ('[Blaesus] then further divided his tripartite army into several detachments and placed them under the command of centurions of proven valour'). See also Tac. *Ann.* 4.24.

29 Dio 55.32.4: 'The Romans next divided into detachments, in order to assail many parts of the country at once'. See also Vell. Pat. 2.111.4: 'We avoided their united forces and routed them with our separate detachments, enjoying such great opportunities through the prudence of our general'.

30 This observation is shared by Goldsworthy (1996), 79-95; his interpretation (88) of Cestius Gallus' march on Jerusalem as a 'bluff', merely intended to frighten the rebels, is therefore puzzling.

31 Philo (*Leg.* 249) talks about harvest time (May-June), whereas Josephus (*BJ* 2.200, *AJ* 18.272) refers to the time of sowing (October).

one of the factors that encouraged him to resolve the situation as efficiently as possible. Considerations of loss of revenue were surely involved; yet Petronius' conduct throughout the crisis suggests also general thoughtfulness regarding the welfare of the province and its inhabitants.[32]

Furthermore, persistent insurrection could have had a destabilizing effect beyond the boundaries of the area initially disturbed. Literary evidence of provincial populations' awareness of problems elsewhere in the empire is available.[33] To be sure, ever-open channels of communication rendered knowledge of insurrection available to neighbours possibly interested in joining ongoing opposition movements. Tacfarinas was joined by the Maures and the Garamantes as late as in 24; the Trinovantes joined Boudica's revolt soon after its outbreak in 60/61; the Zealots in Jerusalem recruited the Idumeans to their cause in 68.[34] The disturbances caused by the Jews of the Diaspora between 115 and 117 demonstrate how unrest could spread gradually far beyond regional boundaries.

Time, then, would have been a critical factor in determining the nature of official Roman reaction to an outbreak of local opposition. Time, on the other hand, appears to have been Vespasian's least important consideration once he embarked upon his campaign to regain control over the Jewish rebels. The mere decision to allocate disproportionate numbers of troops to each offensive operation, and to avoid simultaneous attacks on insignificant strongholds, probably prolonged the campaign considerably, while extensive use of troops for the purpose of garrisoning pacified areas would have slowed down his pace still further.

To these delaying elements one must add more specific indications of Vespasian's seemingly unhurried conduct. After the conclusion of the prolonged siege on Jotapata, the contented general marched with all of his force — presumably without those troops left to garrison those areas of Galilee already pacified — back to Ptolemais, and from there all the way to the friendly Caesarea Maritima.[35] While part of the army was left there, and another part was sent to Scythopolis, Vespasian joined King Agrippa in Caesarea Philippi for three weeks of festivities. Josephus relates that this long rest was interrupted only when Vespasian was informed that Tiberias had joined the rebellion.[36] Even if the Roman commander had planned to resume activity at this point, it may be appreciated that this pause in active operations came very early in the campaign, parts of

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32 Cf. the aftermath of the Boudican revolt (Tac. *Ann.* 14.38): 'But nothing discouraged the enemy more than famine, negligent as they were about sowing crops, and having sent people of every age to the war while counting on our provisions as their own'.

33 King Agrippa, for example, is credited by Josephus with a great degree of such knowledge in his reported attempt to dissuade the Jews from revolting (Joseph. *BJ* 2.345-401). And Tacfarinas is said by Tacitus (*Ann.* 4.24) to have spread rumors that 'also elsewhere the Roman Empire was being destroyed by nations, and that therefore it was gradually retiring from Africa'.

34 Regarding the chronology and duration of the Boudican revolt see Carroll (1979), 200-201. On the evolvement of Tacfarinas' campaign see Tac. *Ann.* 4.23. On the arrival of the Idumeans to Jerusalem see Joseph. *BJ* 4.224-352.

35 Joseph. *BJ* 3.409.

36 Joseph. *BJ* 3.443-452.

Galilee and Gaulanitis having still not been subjugated, and the army having achieved only one significant victory in conquering Jotapata.

If, on the other hand, Vespasian was indeed awaiting developments in the region in the aftermath of his primary victory, it becomes clear that he had no plans to achieve much more than the pacification of Galilee during the first campaigning season of his term in office. In either case, such a lack of urgency can be sharply contrasted to the rapid campaigns of Varus and even Gallus, who marched without any significant breaks through Galilee, the coastal plain, and the low lands, continuing without pause into Judea, in order to confront the core of opposition in Jerusalem still within the same campaigning season. When acting against Tacfarinas, Q. Iunius Blaesus, governor of Africa in 22, went so far as to break the Roman habit of moving the army into winter quarters, thus maintaining through the winter the widespread pressure gained during the summer.[37]

As far as Vespasian was concerned, the attack on Jerusalem could wait, not only in 67, when operations continued in Galilee, but also in 68, even when internal struggles in the city had led some of his commanders to reappraise the circumstances as favourable for attack.[38] Strengthened by the arrival of John of Gischala, the Zealots in Jerusalem continued to advocate fierce struggle against the Romans, and thus found themselves at odds with the more moderate leadership of the rebel government. Their appeal to the Idumeans and the arrival of the latter in Jerusalem shortly thereafter resulted in fierce fighting within the walls. This situation appears to have convinced the Roman higher command that Jerusalem was now more vulnerable to attack, and that action must take place promptly, before unity could return to the Jewish forces and their allies. Vespasian, however, refused to be hurried, believing that such circumstances played into his hands in exhausting the energy and resources of the rebels inside the city. Yet this line of reasoning, while valid in itself, ignored the realistic possibility that the city would eventually fall into the hands of the most extreme elements among the Jews. Such a development, as later events in Jerusalem and Masada indeed proved, would hardly have made the work of the Roman army easier or the campaign shorter.

The examination of Vespasian's campaign of 68 reveals hardly any evidence of great military efforts on the part of the Roman side, other than the mere investment of time. Quite to the contrary, Vespasian's incessant meandering from north to south and from west to east suggests that no single area demanded the attention of his great force for too long. While it is plausible that the entire region was better controlled after activity of such a nature, involving the stationing of garrisons in key locations, it is impossible to ignore the impression, apparently shared by Vespasian's leading commanders, that Jerusalem could have been put under siege early in 68. Josephus does ascribe added urgency to the Roman general's activity once news from Gaul informed him of the revolt of Vindex.[39] News of Nero's death — arriving some time after that event took place on 9 June — found Vespasian in Caesarea, engulfed in early preparations for laying siege to

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37 Tac. *Ann.* 3.74.

38 Joseph. *BJ* 4.353-388.

39 Joseph. *BJ* 4.440.

Jerusalem.[40] If not interrupted by the news, the siege itself probably would have been laid later that summer.

Vespasian's conduct during the twelve-odd months that followed the news of Nero's death may also demonstrate his view of the campaign as an operation that required none of the urgency normally demanded by the subjugation of a provincial insurgence. Both Josephus and Tacitus report that Vespasian put all operations on hold during this period, awaiting developments in Rome and other key provinces.[41] It is noteworthy that this cessation of activity had started long before Vespasian began to further his own interests in Rome. Is it possible to imagine — even for the years 68-69 — such an approach being adopted in the case of a provincial rebellion, putting at risk one of Rome's established imperial assets? In Judea, rather, Vespasian brought to a temporary halt an operation that for two years by that point had been run as the conquest of a new territory. Foreign campaigns frequently came second in the Roman order of priorities when there was trouble at home or in the provinces, even in those cases where this entailed a hurried conclusion of operations that had already begun. Such an order of priorities is well attested by Tiberius, who hastily abandoned his German campaign in the year 6, as soon as he was notified of the outbreak of the Pannonian-Dalmatian revolt. Likewise, Suetonius Paullinus quickly returned from Mona when the Boudican revolt broke out, a move that resulted in the loss of the recently conquered island, and in the need to re-conquer it two decades later by Agricola.[42]

The important issue to emphasise, then, is that Vespasian had never adopted urgency as a method from the onset of his Judean campaign, and he may very well have been supported in the issue by Nero. To a large extent, once an immense task force was put together for the subjugation of the revolt, and once a general with *imperium maius* was put at its head, the Jews were no longer considered a provincial population with the potential for immediate re-assimilation into the existing system. Vespasian would treat their insubordination just as thoroughly and suspiciously as he had handled — as the commander of *Legio II Augusta* — that of the Durotriges and Dumnonii in Britain during the years following the Claudian invasion of 43.

An additional characteristic of this approach is the harshness demonstrated by Roman authorities towards the local population. Severe measures such as the burning of settlements and the enslavement of extensive parts of the population are not frequently reported to have occurred during active operations among rebelling provincials. There should be little doubt that, when it was the future relationship of Rome with well-established residents of the empire that was at stake, the tendency of the Roman administration was often to avoid unnecessarily brutal acts. Pannonia and Dalmatia, which gave Rome a cause for great alarm in their uprising between the years 6 and 9, are thought to have been treated leniently after the subjugation of their revolt. No brutal acts of violence are reported in the aftermath of the Roman victory; leaders of the revolt were spared as well as their followers; and the population as a whole does not appear to have paid a price, with no mass enslavement occurring and no settlements burned that had not

40 Joseph. *BJ* 4.491.

41 Joseph. *BJ* 4.502; Tac. *Hist.* 5.10.

42 Vell. Pat. 2.110; Dio 55.29.

served as strongholds during the revolt.[43] Notably, when we do hear of a governor's brutal subjugation of provincial unrest, we witness an immediate moderating reaction of the Roman administrative system as a whole. In 60/1, a process started by the procurator of Britain, and culminating with the interference of the emperor himself, resulted in the cessation of fierce reprisals undertaken by the governor, Suetonius Paullinus, towards the end of the Boudican revolt, and with his ultimate removal from the province.[44]

Josephus' account of Roman actions during the years 67-70, on the other hand, abounds with reports of severe acts carried out against the Jewish population. Vespasian's treatment of Gabara is a case in point:[45]

> Vespasian went to Gabara and conquered it upon the first assault, finding the place empty of warriors. Entering the city, he had all the men killed, the Romans pitying no age on account of their hatred towards the Jews, and remembering their crime against Cestius. He also burned not only the city, but also the surrounding towns and villages, some of which he found empty, the others he reduced to slavery.

The abundance of such reports is even more striking when compared to other provincial campaigns.[46] The elaboration of the fate of the Jews in each particular case adds to the credibility of Josephus' account; and so does the fact that parts of the Roman elite, as well as members of the Flavian family itself, should be imagined as his potential audience.[47] To be sure, Vespasian and his sons after him were also intent on monumentalizing the brutality shown towards the Jews during that campaign — much in the way that gladiators from Britain filled Claudian arenas after 43, and images of Dacian slaves flooded Rome after Trajan's conquest of the region.[48]

On the above evidence, it becomes clear that, once six-thousand troops of Cestius Gallus' retreating army had been killed by the rebels and Judea had shaken itself free of Roman control, the Jews effectively ceased to be considered normal subjects of the empire. They were attacked and treated as though they were a barbarian population on or beyond the frontiers of the Roman world, arguably with the added brutality owed to the Roman administration's unchecked vindictiveness. It is interesting that shades of this attitude appear to have found their way into the discourse of those ancient historians who describe the revolt, where the Jews are referred to as 'foreigners,' constituting an

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43 Dio 55.34.6; 56.13-16; Suet. *Tib.* 20. Of note is Dio's statement that very little booty was taken (56.16.4: … καὶ λεία ἐλαχίστη ἐάλω). See Wilkes (1969), 70-76; Wilkes (1992), 207-218; Dzino (2005), 155.

44 Gambash (2012).

45 Joseph. *BJ* 3.132-134.

46 Joseph. *BJ* 3.62-3; 3.304-5; 3.338-9.

47 Much has been written on the topic, e.g. Bilde (1988) and cf. Mason (2003); Cotton and Eck (2005).

48 Joseph. *BJ* 6.417-18: '[Fronto] executed all the rebels and robbers, who accused one another; but from the young he chose the tall and handsome and saved them for the triumph; out of the rest of the crowd he sent in bonds those over the age of seventeen to perform labour in Egypt. Additionally, Titus sent many as presents to the provinces, to find their death by the sword and by wild animals in the amphitheatres. But those below the age of seventeen were sold into slavery'.

'external' problem. Thus, Josephus ascribes to Vespasian and Titus the insight that after Nero's death an attack upon foreigners would be untimely; and, after the civil war of 69 had been brought to an end, Tacitus says that 'foreign affairs were once more recalled' specifically in regard to the unsolved problem of Judea.[49]

The unique nature of the Roman treatment of Judea in the final stages of the revolt and after its conclusion needs next to be emphasised. The Roman attitude towards Judea and the Jews, identified above with their general attitude towards foreign enemies, appears to have persisted and even intensified after the victory and once the Jews had been pacified. The burning of the Temple in 70 is said by Josephus to have been an accidental occurrence, unplanned and unwished for by Titus.[50] Josephus has managed to convince some modern scholars of the plausibility of this claim, and to leave others doubtful.[51] However, it is an undisputed fact that the destruction and looting of Jerusalem was deliberately and elaborately presented as a glorious achievement in the celebrations that followed the Roman victory over the Jews. Titus may have been appreciative of Josephus' literary representation of his actions in 70 as having been guided by a wish to save the Temple. It is possible that he would not have objected to being represented in this way within the circles of Josephus' readers.[52] But, at the same time, Titus consciously supported a universal representation of himself as the intentional destroyer of the Temple, and it is this preference — to commemorate the event on grand scale in Rome and to publicize it across the empire — that should absorb our attention here.

The Flavians could no doubt imagine their public image as benefitting from an association with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.[53] It is therefore perhaps more advisable, for the purpose of understanding the Roman way of thought and action at the conclusion of the campaign, to raise this question in a slightly modified form: would Titus, or any other Roman general, for that matter, have deemed it at all imaginable to burn a central religious precinct such as the Jewish Temple? We are used to thinking that the Roman policy towards local cults was one of tolerance, and, as a broad generalization, this observation is usually accurate enough.[54] But treating this practice as invariable is incongruous with the intense Flavian employment of the event of the destruction of the Temple in the propaganda of the new dynasty's ascent to power.

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49 Joseph. *BJ* 4.502: καὶ οἱ μέν μετέωροι περὶ τῶν ὅλων ὄντες ὡς ἄν σαλευομένης τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίας ὑπερεώρων τὴν ἐπὶ Ἰουδαίους στρατείαν, καὶ διὰ τὸν περὶ τῆς πατρίδος φόβον τὴν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀλλοφύλους ὁρμὴν ἄωρον ἐνόμιζον ('[Vespasian and Titus], uncertain as they were about public affairs as a result of the unstable condition of the Roman empire, put aside their campaign against the Jews; fearing for their own country, they judged it untimely to conduct an attack upon foreigners'). Tac. *Hist.* 5.10: *pace per Italiam parta et externae curae rediere.*

50 Joseph. *BJ* 6.220-70.

51 Goodman (2004), 16.

52 Rives (2005), 145-54.

53 This is the orthodox interpretation of the Flavians' actions; Goodman (2004) provides the theory in essence.

54 Rives (2005), 145-66.

The Flavians, it is widely agreed, sought endorsement through return to the traditional — a fact that would have made them reluctant to publicize the destruction of the Temple had they believed that such an act went against common Roman practice.[55]

In fact, the intentional destruction of religious sites was not a practice entirely unfamiliar to the Roman army, and, by implication, to the Roman public as a whole. When campaigns entailed the taking of cities by storm, and when punitive measures included the burning of whole settlements, sacred precincts would have been at an equal risk of destruction.[56] In the year 60, Suetonius Paullinus, the governor of Britain, arrived at the northwestern shores of Wales, from which point he launched his attack on the island of Mona (modern Anglesey). The island was home to a powerful population, and served as a refuge for fugitives from other parts of Britain, already under Roman control. In addition, Mona hosted groves sacred to the Celtic religion, and was therefore also populated by Druids — members of a highly organised priestly class that was responsible for the preservation of oral knowledge and for mediating between Celtic society and its gods. The Druids were present at the battle scene, and took active part in the opposition to the approach of the Roman army, 'pouring out terrible curses, their hands raised to the sky'.[57] This would have been by no means an unfamiliar role to Celtic priests, who are thought to have led resistance to Roman encroachment on their sphere of influence both in Gaul and in Britain.[58]

The confrontation ended with a Roman victory. Tacitus tersely reports that Suetonius Paullinus proceeded to burn the sacred groves.[59] The historian indeed mentions 'inhuman superstitions' practised in those groves, but it would be a mistake automatically to vest Paullinus' action as religion. Roman attitudes to human sacrifice in the first century CE are seen to have been far too ambivalent to result in such a direct and aggressive act against the Celtic religion and Druidism.[60] The burying alive of foreigners under the supervision of the *XVviri sacris faciundis* continued in Rome in the first century CE, and Pliny's report may well be ascribed to Britons buried by order of Claudius.[61] The severity of Suetonius Paullinus is more easily understood if interpreted on a political level. Given the recalcitrant position taken by the Druids and, more generally, given the local employment of Celtic religion in the war, the cult and its priests were necessarily perceived of by Rome as direct, active enemies of the empire. Seen from this perspective, the explanation for the burning of the sacred groves would lie in the wish of the Roman general to act against a centre of fierce local opposition,

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55 Griffin (2000), 20, has noted Republican motifs in Vepasian's building projects. See Gambash (2009) for other Republican and Augustan motifs adopted by the Flavians, such as the *capta* type coinage, and the dedication of buildings from the spoils of war.

56 Rives (2005), 149.

57 Tac. *Ann.* 14.30.1.

58 J. Webster (1999), 1-20.

59 Tac. *Ann.* 14.30.

60 Webster (1999), 13; Rankin (1996), 286-7. For the practice of human sacrifice among various religious groups across the Roman Empire see J. B. Rives (2007), 73-79.

61 Plin. *NH* 28.12. For the latter argument, see Syme (1958), 456-9.

whether as part of the punitive measures taken against the indigenous population or as an attempt to eliminate elements potentially disruptive to incoming Roman rule.

In this respect, Titus in Jerusalem faced a situation similar to that experienced by Suetonius Paullinus on Mona. The Jewish Temple and its priests were inseparable from the revolt from the very onset of hostilities in 66. If anything, it was figures strongly attached to the Jewish sacrificial cult who dictated the pace and direction of anti-Roman opposition at certain crucial moments. Indeed, it is arguable that the first public act of rebellion was instigated by Eleazar, the Captain of the Temple and son of the High Priest Ananias. He persuaded the Temple priests to cease to accept sacrifices from foreigners, thus rejecting the daily sacrifices made on behalf of the Roman emperor himself.[62] Having murdered the pro-Roman High Priest, the rebels in Jerusalem appointed to the office a person who was sure to be sympathetic to their cause; the final stand of the rebels took place within the very walls of the sacred precinct.[63] Although anxious to portray the burning of the Temple as unwished for by Titus, it is noteworthy that Josephus himself inserts into his account a report on deliberations held by the Roman general and his captains regarding the fate of the holy place. In the discussion, some of the commanders forward the opinion that the Temple should be destroyed, 'in accordance with rules of war'.[64] Since control over the Temple would have been a primary military objective, and since the building could only be occupied by violent means, the fact that it ended up in ashes could hardly have surprised anyone on the Roman side.[65] There should be no doubt that the destruction of the Temple was later publicized as intentional because it was perceived as legitimate to target a sacred precinct that had been an integral part of the opposition movement, from its emergence until its subjugation by the Romans.

The similarities between Roman action in Mona and in Jerusalem should be underscored, not least because of the parallels which may be drawn between the trans-regional nature of the corresponding religious systems.[66] To be sure, Suetonius Paullinus' achievement in Mona would in all likelihood have been celebrated grandly if not for the Boudican revolt that immediately followed it. Indeed, most of the evidence we possess for provincial revolts points towards far more subdued commemorative actions, limited for the most part to those individuals who had played a dominant part in the Roman victory, and to the locality of the disturbance. The burning of the Temple of the Jews characterized the brutality that often followed long and hard-fought foreign

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62 Joseph. *BJ* 2.409-10.

63 Joseph. *BJ* 2.647-8.

64 Joseph. *BJ* 6.239: τοῖς μὲν οὖν ἐδόκει χρῆσθαι τῷ τοῦ πολέμου νόμῳ. μὴ γὰρ ἄν ποτε Ἰουδαίους παύσασθαι νεωτερίζοντας τοῦ ναοῦ μένοντος, ἐφ' ὅν οἱ πανταχόθεν συλλέγονται ('Now some of these thought it would be the best way to act according to the rules of war [and demolish it,] because the Jews would never leave off rebelling while that house to which they used to gather from all over was standing').

65 Rives (2005), 148-9.

66 Rives (2005) refers to the civic cult of the Jews as a 'shadow *civitas*' on account of its empire-wide distribution.

campaigns. Subsequently, the entire victory over the Jews was commemorated universally and on a grand scale as a foreign achievement.[67]

Furthermore, the subjugation of the great Jewish revolt was celebrated in Rome as a victory over a barbarian foreign enemy. Such a hostile approach towards a well-established provincial population had little precedence in the long and varied history of the central Roman government's relationship with its dominions. A series of official measures worked to create a commemorative campaign similar in scope and spirit to that following the conquest of foreign territories. Fergus Millar has noted that the triumph celebrated by Vespasian in 71 was an anomaly, having been the only one ever to be held in celebration of a victory over a provincial population.[68] In fact, this anomaly pervaded the entire plan of commemoration that accompanied and followed the triumph. Monuments and building projects such as the Flavian amphitheatre, the *Templum Pacis*, and the triumphal arches erected in Rome, all emphasised the motif of war-spoils, which is highly atypical of available representations of victories over provincial resistance movements.[69] Additionally, the multiple series of *Judaea capta* coins issued under all three Flavian emperors are concordant with this line of commemoration — *capta* coins having been issued up to that point exclusively in celebration of foreign achievements.[70]

Another factor that sheds light on the problem is that of the measures taken by the Roman administration to secure the province of Judea. As noted above, in the course of his campaign, Vespasian made abundant use of his massive force in garrisoning settlements and areas recently pacified, or at risk of falling into the hands of the rebels. This course of action may be seen to have postponed the end of the war, since it must have significantly decreased the size of the force available for active operations. On the other hand, it must have been an efficient measure in asserting close control over a large region whose loyalty could not be trusted. After the war, a new scheme was devised for the deployment of forces, which represented a radical change in Rome's attitude to the region. It was a strategic revision of the province's status, involving the repositioning of vast numbers of troops — including legions — and an overhaul of the administrative structure of the province.

Prior to the war, for nearly sixty years from the time of the formal annexation of Judea to the imperial system, the province was perceived as one suitable to be governed by non-senatorial procurators. After the brief interruption of Agrippa's rule between 41 and 44, no reevaluation of this status appears to have taken place, and the region was again administered as it had been from the time of the establishment of the province in the year 6.[71] The prefects and procurators who governed the province were in command

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67 Gambash (2009).

68 Millar (2005), 102.

69 Gambash (2009), 67-9.

70 See Cody (2003), 103-23; Gambash (2009), 64-67; 69-70.

71 The attestation in the sources is to prefects (probably before 41) and procurators (probably after 44). See Cotton (1999).

of several units of auxiliary troops, which consisted mostly of indigenous recruits.[72] Small garrisons were stationed at several key locations, such as Jericho and Machaerus, while the main force that stood at the disposal of the governor was regularly quartered at Caesarea.[73]

It was not by reason of the recent rebellion that Judea of the year 70 could not revert to its previous status and remain as lightly garrisoned as before. *Legio IX Hispana*, it will be remembered, had been sent back from Africa to Pannonia in 24, as soon as local opposition had subsided, and even before Tacfarinas himself was captured. Ostorius Scapula, Britain's governor for the years 47-52, was faced upon his arrival in the province with a local rebellion in the region of Norfolk, led by the Iceni. The rebels were soon defeated in the battlefield, yet archaeological evidence suggests that garrisoning the Icenian territory in response to this revolt was deemed unnecessary by the governor.[74] Scapula left behind only an auxiliary detachment at Saham Toney, and his subsequent intense campaigning across northern Wales indicates that he did not fear an uprising in the east — even the colony at Camulodunum (modern-day Colchester) had not yet been founded. To this observation should be added the fact that the client kingdom status of the Iceni was not terminated by the Roman governor after their rebellion and defeat in the battlefield. Annexation was to await the natural death of king Prasutagus in 60. Even the fierce Boudican revolt — where the stakes at the decisive battle have been compared by modern scholars to those at the battle of Hastings — did not lead to the heightened presence of troops in the subjugated territories. Instead, it was answered by the central Roman administration with a whole decade of considerate official appointments to the province, of individuals who demonstrated sympathy towards local needs, and focused on the assimilation of the indigenous population into the provincial system.[75]

A significant difference between the Jewish and other cases is that the campaign against the Jews was conducted in a way certain to produce among the indigenous population strong alienation from Roman rule. Further Roman measures in the aftermath of the revolt were not designed with appeasement in mind and, in fact, worked to reinforce and prolong this alienation. Such Roman actions as the enslavement of large portions of the population and the burning of the Temple could not but create frustration and antagonism, now detached from the original fuel of the revolt, but in effect making it impossible to resume the routine that had prevailed in the decades prior to the revolt.

Vespasian and Titus must have known that, by the very way in which they ran their campaign and engineered its conclusion, post-war Judea would be as embittered as any recently conquered people. Following the destruction of Jerusalem, it was their conscious choice to punish the Jews still further and to publicize their victory across the

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72 Schürer (1973-87), 362-367. The *Sebastenes* (soldiers recruited in Samaria) appear to have constituted a considerable segment of the force; one cavalry *ala* and five cohorts of their number are attested from the end of Herod's rule, down to their removal by Vespasian (Joseph. *AJ* 19.356-66).

73 Joseph. *BJ* 2.484-5. Cumanus led from Caesarea one *ala* and four cohorts against the Jews: Joseph. *BJ* 2.236; *AJ* 20.122.

74 E.g. Potter and Robinson (2000).

75 Gambash (2012).

empire in a most humiliating way. Such a policy came with well-known consequences, and it is hardly surprising that Judea was garrisoned at this stage according to entirely new standards. *Legio X Fretensis* was stationed on the site of the destroyed city of Jerusalem. Additional auxiliary units were posted in the province, comprising troops originating in foreign regions.[76] Those auxiliary units that had garrisoned the region formerly and consisted of troops of local origin were transferred to other provinces.[77] Accordingly, the province was given a governor of propraetorian rank.

Most noticeably, a special tax is reported to have been imposed on the Jews by Vespasian. Josephus tells us that this tribute applied to Jews throughout the Roman sphere of influence, replacing the regular annual payment of two drachmae given by Jews to the Temple at Jerusalem.[78] Dio adds that the tax was levied from Jews who still observed their ancestral customs.[79] Much scholarly attention has been given to the nature of the group that was in effect liable to pay the *Didrachmon*, but the question of the tax's possible origins and significance remains debatable.[80] It is most likely that the Jews initially targeted were meant to be solely those practicing Judaism devoutly and openly — namely, religious Jews who declared themselves as such.[81] Ethnic Jews who relinquished public practice of the Jewish religion were thus probably not originally subjected to the tax.[82]

What might have been Vespasian's reason for designating only religious Jews as liable for the *Didrachmon* tax — and where did the inspiration for such a measure lie? The point made above regarding the part played by religion in the active opposition to the Romans should be our starting point in trying to answer such a question. A hint to the solution may lie in the Roman perception of the Jewish religion and its cult centre as major participants in, if not causes of, the opposition movement. The Temple was specifically identified with the Jewish rebellion itself in the Roman propaganda that followed the fall of Jerusalem. The words put in Titus' mouth by Josephus capture the circumstances as they were probably were perceived by the Roman administration:[83]

> But above all, we entrusted it to your hands to collect tribute and votive offerings for your God, and we neither rebuked nor stopped those carrying out these tasks, until you became richer than ourselves, and, with our own money, prepared to go to war against us.

Seen from such a perspective, it is plausible that Jews across the Empire who openly supported and funded the Temple — and thus, by implication, the revolt itself — would have been liable to be subjected to the *Didrachmon* tax. There would have been no simpler common denominator that could have grouped together both those punishable

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76 As indicated by a military diploma from the year 86 (*CIL* 16.33).

77 Joseph. *AJ* 19.366.

78 Joseph. *BJ* 7.218.

79 Dio 66.7.2.

80 Hadas-Lebel (1984); Mandell (1984); Goodman (1989); Goodman (2005).

81 Goodman (1989).

82 An example of such an apostate Jew would have been Tib. Iulius Alexander, the former prefect of Egypt. See Tac. *Ann.* 15.28; Joseph. *AJ* 20.100; Goodman (1989), 41.

83 Joseph. *BJ* 6.335.

for the revolt, and those of dubious loyalty, indicating a potential for reigniting tension in the future.[84]

While such a solution may explain why the particular group of practising Jews had been assigned to pay the tax, the source of the concept of this punishment itself still remains in obscurity. It should be remembered that Vespasian recruited traditionalism to almost every symbolic move he had taken in the aftermath of the Jewish revolt. It is for this reason that relevant precedents must be sought, such as might have influenced the creation of the Jewish tax.

It appears that the most suitable context for such a tax would be that of war indemnity.[85] Under the republic, it was frequently the case that Rome imposed on defeated foreign enemies a payment that would have allegedly covered the cost of the war. The concept of '*indemnitas*' — or recompense for damages or loss — is often misleading in this respect, since these payments frequently far exceeded the actual Roman expenses. The sums involved could not always be provided at once, but were paid in annual installments over substantially long periods, in a process that has effectively been regarded as taxation.[86] Defeated enemies who expressed a will to disburse the full amount of the war indemnity in one installment were rejected, the semblance of a taxation system being insisted upon.[87] After the second Punic War, Carthage was subjected to such a 'tax' for fifty years. A Carthaginian offer to pay the remaining sum a decade after the conclusion of the war was rejected by the Senate.[88] It is plausible that Vespasian, viewing the Jews as foreign enemies who had forced Rome into a long and difficult war, had just such an act of punishment in mind when he conceived the idea of a Jewish tax.

Furthermore, the rechanneling of existing local taxes into the Roman *aerarium* as payment for war indemnity had been attested in the republican past: the Macedonians had to pay half the taxes previously paid to the monarchy after Perseus' defeat in 168; and the former subjects of the Illyrian Genthius were punished similarly.[89] In this regard, it is important to linger over the issue of the specific destination of the Jewish tax. Based on evidence provided by Dio, it has been conventional to assume that the tax was initially used for the rebuilding of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, which had been burnt down during the events of the year 69.[90] Once again, if that had indeed been the

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84 In 62 BCE, Lucius Valerius Flaccus, governor of Asia, confiscated a large amount of gold collected to be sent to the Temple at Jerusalem by the Jewish communities of four Asian cities. Flaccus seized the gold and deposited it in the *aerarium*, in an act that may be considered as a response to Jewish opposition to Pompey's approach a year earlier, and to the Roman wish to prevent Diaspora gold from financing further rebellion. See Marshall (1975), 149; Bellemore (1999); Rives (2005), 154-66.

85 Mandell (1984) discusses the parallels, taking for granted the treatment of the Jews as a foreign enemy.

86 Gruen (1984), 291-5; Harris (1979), 234.

87 Gruen (1984), 293.

88 Liv. 36.4.5-9: *de pecunia item responsum, nullam ante diem accepturos*.

89 Liv. 48.18.7, 45.26.14, 45.29.4; Diod. 31.18.3; Plut. *Aem. Paull.* 28.3.

90 Smallwood (1981), 375; Goodman (2004), 25.

case, it can be regarded as a testimony of Vespasian's adaptation of the exaction of war indemnity. The inspiration for such a measure could have been derived from the practical need to find a source of funds for financing his building project, or it could have been merely symbolic.[91] However, the meager information in the sources hardly allows us to assume with any confidence that the Jewish tax was indeed used to finance the building of the new Capitoline shrine.

The key passage from Dio reads: 'From that time forth it was ordered that the Jews who continued to observe their ancestral customs should pay an annual tribute of two denarii to Jupiter Capitolinus'.[92] However, unless he was referring here to 'Capitoline Jupiter' as a synecdoche for the Capitol Hill as a whole, Dio may very well have been inaccurate in his formulation, or in the interpretation of his sources. Josephus — reproachful of the Jewish revolt and its dire consequences as he was — would have had no reason to omit from his account the application of such symbolic retribution as the usage of Jewish Temple funds for the building of a shrine to Jupiter. Yet this is Josephus' comment on the tax: '[Vespasian] also enforced a tribute on Jews everywhere, ordering that each of them should send two drachmae every year to the Capitol, just as they had previously paid to the Temple in Jerusalem'.[93] Notably, this report is a part of an elaborate account of the calamities that befell the Jews, coming as it does after the description of the triumph of Vespasian and Titus. Had the historian known that Jupiter was the addressee of the tax, it is hard to see a reason why he should not have propagated the information as yet another token of the humiliation of the Jews.

It will be remembered that the *mons Capitolinus* hosted quite a few buildings in addition to the temple of Jupiter; most notably, the *aerarium*, which was located at its foot in the temple of Saturn, but is thought to have had branches also on the Capitol Hill itself. Livy reports that gold from the spoils of a war with the Gauls was dedicated and stored *in Capitolio*.[94] Still more significant is the fact that in 62 BCE a deposit of gold was made by Lucius Valerius Flaccus to the *aerarium* itself. The source of the gold was confiscated funds, collected by Diaspora Jews to be sent to Jerusalem as part of the regular payment to the Temple.[95]

A plausible possibility, then, would be that Josephus and Dio refer to an institution on the Capitol other than the temple of Jupiter, quite likely one of the branches of the *aerarium*, which would have been the natural destination of the Jewish tax. This possibility is reinforced by the fact that careful attention appears to have been paid to the sources of funding for the rebuilding of the temple on the Capitol. Tacitus' account reveals that deliberations over the project involved the issue of finances, and that it was moved that the temple should be restored at public expense, subsidised by Vespasian.[96]

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91 It is interesting to note that when the temple of Jupiter had burned, Druids in Gaul portended the fall of the Roman Empire, since it was believed that Rome had endured the past Gallic invasion of the city because the temple itself had survived it intact (Tac. *Hist.* 4.54).

92 Dio 66.7.2.

93 Joseph. *BJ* 7.218.

94 Liv. 7.15.

95 Cic. *Flac.* 67-69.

96 Tac. *Hist.* 4.9.

In a more specific passage, which describes the actual start of the project, Tacitus further specifies:[97]

> The foundations were showered with gifts of gold and silver and untouched, first-yield ores, never before put in a furnace. For the soothsayers had ordered that the building should not be desecrated by a stone or gold that had been intended for any other purpose.

These instructions, along with a long list of other measures that were taken to secure the auspiciousness of the building, should put in serious doubt Roman willingness to use Jewish funds for the purpose, especially those originally assigned as a contribution for the Temple at Jerusalem, now in ruins. Combined with the observations made above, the *Didrachmon* tax too may demonstrate the extent to which the Jews, while they were treated exceptionally harshly as rebels, did not elicit a unique reaction from the Roman administration. Most informed residents of the empire in the early 70s would have recognized the Jews' fate as one shared by other populations recently conquered and absorbed into the provincial system. That the demotion of this particular provincial group remained in many respects permanent is a fascinating problem in our understanding of Roman imperialism. It is this problem above all that encompasses the idiosyncrasy in the Roman-Jewish relationship.

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97 Tac. *Hist.* 4.53: *passimque iniectae fundamentis argenti aurique stipes et metallorum primitiae, nullis fornacibus victae, sed ut gignuntur: praedixere haruspices ne temeraretur opus saxo aurove in aliud destinato.*

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