

Towards a Chronology of Josephus*

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The stubborn problems that beset the chronology of Josephus' works have more than an antiquarian interest. They involve events of importance in the history of the Roman empire, and an author much studied by students of Judaism and Christianity, but rather less by those conventionally labeled 'classicists' and 'ancient historians'.¹ The present paper applies some tools that have perhaps been insufficiently exploited in this connection, in particular, Greek philology and Roman imperial prosopography. Using these, I try to review the dating of the four extant works, the *Jewish War* (*BJ*), the *Jewish Antiquities* (*AJ*), the *Life* (*V*) and *Against Apion* (*Ap*). Inevitably that will raise the question of the dates at which Josephus' principal patron, Agrippa II, and the author himself died. Current discussions of these dates now need to be revised in the light of Alla Kushnir-Stein's findings about the eras of Agrippa's reign. For several reasons, therefore, a fresh examination may be in place.²

BJ. In the *Life* (*Vita* 361), Josephus claims to have 'presented the volumes [of the *BJ*] to the Emperors themselves [Vespasian and Titus] when the events had hardly passed out of sight' (transl. Thackeray). What he goes on to say about Agrippa II shows that he at least received individual books as the work progressed, as well as the final product (*Vita* 463-67), and Josephus' language is consistent with Vespasian seeing a part, and only Titus seeing the whole. The latest event mentioned is the dedication of the Temple of Peace, which is known to have occurred in 75 (*BJ* 7.158-62).³ On the other hand, the unflattering depiction of Caecina Alienus, and the account of his 'betrayal' of Vitellius for the Flavians, seem unlikely to be earlier than 79, when he was executed on a charge of plotting against Vespasian (*BJ* 4.644);⁴ there is of course no way of telling whether Josephus might have gone back and revised passages already written. On

* I have a number of debts: to Timothy Barnes and Glen Bowersock for much useful advice and discussion, to the Editors of *SCI* for their comments, and in particular to Alla Kushnir-Stein, for allowing me to see her unpublished article on the eras of Agrippa II and for discussing many of these issues with me.

¹ Josephus is absent from *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature: Greek Literature* (Cambridge, Eng., and New York, 1985) and from the voluminous work of S. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire* (Oxford, 1996). There is a useful recent survey by H. Schreckenberg, *Reallex. f. Ant. u. Chr.* 18 (1998) 761-801.

² The discussions in E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, rev. ed. G. Vermes and F. Millar 1 (Edinburgh, 1973) 43-63 and 471-83 (henceforth 'Schürer'), are now out-dated, while that of N. Kokkinos, *The Herodian Dynasty* (Sheffield, 1998), 396-99 (henceforth 'Kokkinos'), is questionable on many points. See Alla Kushnir-Stein, 'The Coinage of Agrippa II', in this volume.

³ Cass. Dio 66.15.1.

⁴ Suet. *Tit.* 6.2; Cass. Dio 66.16.3; *PIR*² C 99.

balance, therefore, a *terminus ante* of 79 for some but not all of the work, and of 81 for its completion, seems likely.

A discussion of Seth Schwartz concerning the date of the seventh book may be noted. This largely turns on reviving a suggestion of Ritterling, that the Catullus who behaved disgracefully as governor of Cyrene (*BJ* 7.439-53) about 73 is identical with L. Valerius Catullus Messallinus, *consul ordinarius* in 73, *suffectus* in 85, and still alive in 93. However, that flatly contradicts Josephus' statement that Catullus died 'not long after' his tenure in Cyrene, and the identification has nothing else to recommend it.⁵

AJ. At first sight, the dating of this work, or at least of its completion, seems unproblematic, since Josephus gives an explicit date of 93/4, the thirteenth year of Domitian's reign and his own fifty-sixth of life (20.267). However, this raises difficulties connected with two of the author's patrons, Epaphroditus and Agrippa, and these two persons are best considered in turn.

At *AJ* 1.8, Josephus pays high tribute to a certain patron called Epaphroditus, 'a man who has embraced every form of culture, and who takes especial pleasure in experience of affairs (διαφερόντως χαίρων ἐμπειρίας πραγμάτων), since he himself has been involved in high affairs and a variety of fortunes; in all things, however, he has displayed extraordinary strength of character, and an unswerving inclination to virtue'. He addresses the same person in the *Life* (430) and the *Against Apion* (1.1, 2.296). Some have identified Epaphroditus with Nero's *a libellis* of this name; this freedman helped his master commit suicide, and then lived on in Flavian Rome until Domitian first exiled and then executed him, apparently in 94 or 95.⁶ This identification is just reconcilable with the chronology of the *Antiquities*, completed in 93/94, but not with that of the *Life* and the *Against Apion*, and it no longer has many supporters.

More recently, another person of the name has found favor, a *grammatikos* known as a prolific commentator on Homer and other poets, who lived until the reign of Nerva. He for his part might be recommended by Josephus' claim to have studied Greek literature and *grammatikē* (*AJ* 20.263).⁷ The name 'Epaphroditus', however, is very common in the imperial period, and belongs to a class of lucky names such as 'Abascantus' or 'Eutyches'; it is not confined to slaves or freedman, as is sometimes thought, though equally it is not found in the highest ranks of society. The evidence seems insufficient to identify Josephus' patron with either of these two, or with any of the several other

⁵ S. Schwartz, 'The Composition and Publication of Josephus's *Bellum Iudaicum* Book 7', *HThR* 79 (1986) 373-86. On Messallinus, *PIR*¹ V 41 and now A.R. Birley, *Onomasticon to the Younger Pliny* (Leipzig, 2000) 96-7. On his second consulship, R. Syme, review of Degraffi, *I Fasti consolari*, *JRS* 43 (1953) 155 = *Roman Papers* 1 (Oxford, 1979) 243; L. Vidman, *Fasti Ostienses* (Prague, 1982) 78-9.

⁶ *PIR*² E 69; W. Eck, 'Nero's Freigelassener Epaphroditus und die Aufdeckung der pisonischen Verschwörung', *Historia* 25 (1976) 381-4; R. Syme, 'Domitian: The Last Years', *Chiron* 13 (1983) 134 = *Roman Papers* 4 (Oxford, 1988) 266; on his tomb, Eck in E.M. Steinby, ed., *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 5 (Rome, 1999) 289. Suetonius, *Dom.* 14.4, places the execution of Epaphroditus before that of Flavius Clemens in early 95, Cassius Dio, 67.14.4, after it (Syme, loc. cit., requires correction). The notion that he was a *libellis* to Domitian rests on a misunderstanding of Suet. *ibid.*

⁷ The *grammatikos*: *PIR*² M 563; Suda, E 2004 Adler; G. De Spirito in Steinby (n. 6), 5.251.

known Epaphroditus of the Flavian period.⁸ A candidate who deserves serious thought is a freedman Epaphroditus, who served in the office of the *ab epistulis* under one or more of the Flavian emperors, and was commemorated at Rome with a large funerary altar, last seen in Florence. Several of Domitian's freedmen receive addresses from Latin authors of the period, though it is true that they are more important than this Epaphroditus.⁹

As for Agrippa II, it will be best to begin with the external evidence for his reign, especially its final years. By the time that he appears in *Acts* and in the *Jewish War*, he had acquired a considerable kingdom centered on Galilee, with privileges also in Jerusalem, but this power had come only in stages. Josephus implies an era beginning with the king's accession in 49. Inscriptions usually employ two eras, five years apart, and the latest is from Aere (Sanamein) in Batanaea, giving the double date of Year 37 and 32. The latest year given by any coin is 35, and since one group of coins certainly uses an era beginning in 60, it is normally assumed that there was another era beginning in 55, and that the inscription just mentioned refers to 91/2. The coins dated by Agrippa's Year 35 would represent 94/5 if reckoned by the era of 60. An inscription from the Hauran, previously in the museum of Soueida, is dated to the sixteenth year of Domitian, 96, and one from Aerita in Trachonitis is dated to the first year of Nerva, that is, 96/7. Together, these show that the king's rule had ended at least in these two areas by 96.¹⁰

However, the question has now been re-examined by Dr. Alla Kushnir-Stein, whose conclusions I follow here. She argues that the era beginning in 49, the one used by Josephus, is the earlier of the double eras, and the one used on Agrippa's coins minted in Caesarea Paneas; the second, reflecting Agrippa's transfer to the former tetrarchy of Philip late in the reign of Claudius, fell in 54; the era of 60 reflects a further addition made in 60/1, and the coins using this era were largely for the use of Roman troops stationed in the kingdom. The coins dated by Agrippa's Year 35 may therefore refer to the era of 49, i.e. to 83/4, and thus be earlier than the last coin definitely referring to the era of 60 (Year 29, i.e. 88/9). The latest inscription, with the double date of 37 and 32, will refer to 85/6. These convergent conclusions have a considerable bearing on the chronology of Josephus.

Other evidence external to the author's text may be considered here. A lead weight from the territory of Tiberias uses an era of Agrippa and was originally dated to Year

⁸ Note the scepticism of P.R.C. Weaver, 'Epaphroditus, Josephus, and Epictetus', *CQ* 44 (1994) 468-79.

⁹ The freedman *ab epistulis* (*PIR*² E 70): *CIL* 6.1887 = *ILS* 1944 ('in museo Florentino': I do not find the stone in G.A. Mansuelli's catalogue, *Galleria degli Uffizi: Le sculture* [Rome, 1958-1961]). Freedmen addressees: M. Griffin, *CAH*² 11 (2000) 80.

¹⁰ On Agrippa's accumulation of territories, see especially T. Frankfort, 'Le Royaume d'Agrippa II et son annexion par Domitien', in *Hommages à Albert Grenier*, Collection Latomus 58 (Brussels, 1962), 659-72. Era of 49: Jos. *BJ* 2.284. Inscription of Aere: *OGIS* 426 = *IGR* 3.1127. On the evidence of the coins, Kushnir-Stein (n. 2). Inscription from Soueida: M. Dunand, *Mission archéologique au Djebel Druze: Le Musée de Soueïda*, Bibl. arch. hist. 20 (Paris, 1934) 49-50 no. 75; this inscription is not in the latest catalogue of the Soueida Museum: *Le Djebel al-'Arab*, ed. J.-M. Dentzer et J. Dentzer-Feydy (Paris, 1991) 113-52. Inscription from Aerita: *IGR* 3.1176.

43, which on the assumption of the era of 55 would be equivalent to 97/8. Dr. Kushnir-Stein has now inspected the object, and kindly informs me that the correct date is Year 23, that is, 71/72 at the earliest (assuming the era of 49), or 82/83 at the latest (assuming the era of 60). Both of these dates are consistent with the evidence of Josephus.¹¹

Photius, summarizing Justus of Tiberias, cites him for the view that Agrippa died in the third year of Trajan, that is, in 100/01. Given the importance of Agrippa in *Acts*, Photius should have been interested in this information, and *ceteris paribus* it would probably not have been called into question. Various ways around it have been proposed, some more plausible than others. If they are rejected, the only way to reconcile Photius' statement with the supposition that Agrippa had already lost his kingdom is to emphasize the word 'died', and to assume that he lived on as a titular king.¹² This was suggested by Henri Seyrig, and it receives some support from the existence of other kings and queens of the Trajanic era who lacked kingdoms. The best known is 'King Philopappus', grandson of Antiochus IV, the last king of Commagene, a friend of Plutarch and commemorated by a famous monument in Athens. Another such may be the 'King Alexander' who as 'C. Julius Alexander' was consul in the year 108. A 'queen' called Claudia Capitolina may have been a sister of Philopappus. A certain L. Julius Agrippa from Syrian Apamea enjoyed 'royal honours' in Trajan's reign.¹³

Lastly, an enigmatic inscription from the Hauran or Djebel Druze commemorates, in faulty Greek, a man who served for eighteen years under a King Agrippa as centurion, and then for ten under Trajan as *strategos*. This must be Agrippa II, but nothing indicates that the man went immediately from his service to the emperor's. That is, the inscription fails to show that Agrippa's rule ended only after the beginning of Trajan's sole rule in early 98.¹⁴

If the latest inscription of Agrippa refers to 85/6, and the latest coin to 88/9, then most of the difficulties vanish for the year 93/4 as the *terminus ante* for the completion of the *Antiquities*. On the assumption of a later date, one passage had caused especial difficulty. At *AJ* 17.28, Josephus relates how Herod the Great settled a group of Babylonian Jews in Batanaea at a place called Bathyra; his purpose was to protect his kingdom from attack by bandits from Trachonitis, but the settlement also served to protect Jewish pilgrims traveling from Babylon to Jerusalem.¹⁵ Herod's son Philip, 'after taking

¹¹ On this weight, see now Kushnir-Stein, (n. 2), n. 33.

¹² Phot. *Bibl.* 33; Jacoby, *FGrHist* 734 T 2; excerpt in Schürer, 1.478 n. 36.

¹³ Seyrig, 'Les ères d'Agrippa II', *Rev. Num.* 1964, 63 = *Scripta numismatica*, IFAPO *Bibl. arch. hist.* 126 (Paris, 1986) 133. Philopappus: *PIR*² I 151. Julius Alexander: see below. Capitolina: *PIR*² C 1086, cf. I 650. Julius Agrippa: J.-P. Rey-Coquais, *Ann. arch. arabes syr.* 23 (1973) 41-6, no. 2 (J. and L. Robert, *Bull. épigr.* 1976, 718); republished by J.Ch. Balty, *Guide d'Apamée* (Brussels, 1981) 205-6, no. 20; not in *SEG* or *Ann. ép.* Note also the inscription of 116 mentioning Julia Berenice, a descendant of Seleucus I (*OGIS* 263 = *IGLS* 4.1264; *PIR*² I 653).

¹⁴ Published by H. Seyrig, 'Un officier d'Agrippa II', *Syria* 42 (1965) 31-5 = *Antiquités syriennes* (Paris, 1966) 147-51; cf. Schürer, 1. 483 n. 47 (8). Contrast Kokkinos 397, 'This text ... has not been translated or carefully analysed' (*sic*).

¹⁵ On Bathyra: R. Dussaud, *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale* (Paris, 1927) 330-31, identifying it with Bašir, ca. 10 km. east-south-east of Sanamein, followed by

over rule (παραλαβὼν τὴν ἀρχήν), subjected the colonists to some taxes, but ‘Agrippa the Great [i.e. Agrippa I] and his son of the same name wore them down completely (πάνυ ἐξετρώχωσαν), and yet were unwilling to alter their free status. The Romans, having received rule from these (two) (παρ’ ὧν Ῥωμαῖοι δεξάμενοι τὴν ἀρχήν), also preserve the honor of freedom, but by the imposition of tribute have totally crushed them (πάμπαν ἐπίεσαν)’. While it is possible, as again Henri Seyrig suggested, that the Romans had taken over only a part of the kingdom,¹⁶ the natural inference is that they had taken over the whole.

In general, it is notable that the *Antiquities*, unlike the *Jewish War*, never clearly state that Agrippa is among the living; and Book 20 in particular contains a number of hostile remarks about him and his family of a type which has no equivalent in the earlier work. It is worth seeing what these passages might imply about the end of his rule, in order of occurrence:

AJ 16.187. Josephus is criticizing Nicolaus of Damascus for his flattery of Herod the Great. He continues, in a sentence that is rather rambling and almost certainly corrupt:¹⁷ ‘But I myself, being of a family near to the kings descended from Asamoneos [i.e. the Hasmonaeans], and therefore holding the priesthood with honor, not considering it proper to falsify anything about them, am setting out their (*or*: his) deeds impartially and justly, holding in respect many of his descendants while they were (*or*: are) still ruling (βασιλεύοντας ἔτι), but honoring the truth above them, even when (?) it has happened that I incurred the wrath of those very people’. One of the ambiguities of this sentence is whether ‘his descendants’ refers to Asamoneos or to Herod, though the former seems more likely; another is whether the present participle βασιλεύοντας adheres to the preceding clause, and so refers to the time of writing, or to the following, and so might refer to some past time. Since Agrippa was certainly not the last descendant of Herod with the title of ‘king’ (see below), the passage is of little help for determining the date of composition.

AJ 18.127-142. Josephus justifies this long digression on the descendants of Herod the Great as proof that ‘neither number nor the support of any other mortal contingency is of any use without acts of piety towards the divine; for within a period of a hundred years all but a few of Herod’s descendants had perished, despite their numbers’. This passage could only be later than the death of Agrippa II if there were at least some such descendants still alive. Under Trajan, one such may be the ‘King Alexander’ who became consul about 108, if he is identical with the Alexander whom Vespasian installed in the tiny kingdom of Cietis in Rough Cilicia (*AJ* 18.140), though he seems more likely to be that man’s son or other relative. His own son, not called ‘king’, was proconsul of Asia in 132/33.¹⁸

Th. Bauzou in J.-M. Dentzer, *Hauran* 1 (Paris, 1985) 150; apparently overlooked by *The Barrington Atlas, Map-by-Map Directory* 2 (Princeton, 2000) 1070.

¹⁶ Seyrig (n. 13) 62 = 132, ‘une annexion partielle, survenue du vivant d’Agrippa II (ce qui est possible, bien qu’il n’y ait aucune raison de le croire)’.

¹⁷ For the various attempts to emend the last words of the sentence, see Wikgren’s apparatus (Loeb *Josephus* VIII 282).

¹⁸ ‘King Alexander’ *PIR*² A 498 = I 136 (where *Armeniae* is a slip for *Cietidis*); R. Syme, *Tacitus* 2 (Oxford, 1958) 510 n. 6. His son, consul in 116: *PIR*² I 141. The Julia Crispina

AJ 20.141-47. This passage contains a number of hostile reflections on Berenice, the sister of Agrippa II. Jealous of her sister Drusilla's beauty, she did her much harm. When a rumor arose that she [Berenice] was incestuously linked with her brother, she married Polemo of Cilicia, 'thinking that in this way she would prove the slanders false'. However, 'the marriage did not last long, since Berenice left Polemo, because of her unchastity, so it was said'.¹⁹

AJ 20.211-14. Agrippa enlarged Caesarea Philippi, and renamed it 'Neronias' in honor of Nero, built a theater for Berytus, and 'transferred very nearly all the adornments of his kingdom there, so that he increased the hatred of his subjects for him'. At the same time, his deposition of the high priest Jesus son of Damnaios in favor of Jesus son of Gamaliel caused a feud between the two. In addition, two brothers of royal lineage called Costobar and Saul became gang-leaders, but went unpunished because of their royal connection, and 'from that time above all it was the fate of our city to fall sick, everything progressing downhill'. None of these transactions finds a place in the *War*, though there Josephus had much to say about the misrule of the procurators Festus and Albinus.

If Agrippa was deposed or died in 88/89, and the date given in book 20, 93/94, is valid for the whole of the *AJ*,²⁰ it becomes uncertain how many of these passages Josephus wrote after the removal or death of his old patron. Since, however, they all occur in the last quarter of the work, and Josephus presumably began to compose it in the early 80's, he could well have written them all after 88/89.

Vita. Near the end of the *Antiquities* (20.266), Josephus announces his intention 'to recount briefly my lineage and the events of my life', and it seems clear that the resulting work is the so-called *Life*, though this is less an autobiography than an *Apologia pro vita sua*.²¹ It must therefore be later than 93/94, though not necessarily written immediately thereafter. Two passages clearly show that it follows the death of Agrippa. In *Vita* 2, the author claims to be 'of royal blood' on his mother's side as a descendant of Asamoneos, and the Hasmoneans 'were for a very long time high-priests and kings of our nation'. At *Vita* 359, attacking his rival Justus of Tiberias, Josephus asks why he did not publish his history of the Jewish War 'in the lifetime (ζώντων) of Vespasian and Titus, the generals conducting the war, and when king Agrippa was surviving (περιόντος) and all those of his family'.

Much more difficult to assess is a passage near the end of the work (*Vita* 428-29), which needs to be read as a unit. Josephus retails the benefits he received from Vespasian, digresses to mention his three wives and the sons he had by them, and then proceeds: 'My treatment from the emperors remained unchanging (διέμεινεν δὲ ὅμοια καὶ

who appears in the Babatha papyri may well be a daughter of the consul of 116: G.W. Bowersock, 'The Babatha Papyri, Judaea, and Rome', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 4 (1991) 341 = *Studies on the Eastern Roman Empire* (Goldbach, 1994) 222.

¹⁹ On Berenice, *PIR*² I 651; on Polemo of Cilicia, *PIR*² A 864, I 472.

²⁰ The possibility of a second edition has often been canvassed: see most recently J. Sievers, 'Josephus, First Maccabees, Sparta, the Three *haireseis* — and Cicero', *JJS* 32 (2001) 241-51.

²¹ I agree with the view of Thackeray (Loeb *Josephus* IX 529 n. b) and others that Josephus alludes to the *Vita* at *AJ* 20.266.

τὰ παρὰ τῶν αὐτοκρατόρων). When Vespasian died, Titus succeeded to the throne (τὴν ἀρχὴν διαδεξάμενος), and accorded me honors similar to what his father had Domitian, succeeding Titus (διαδεξάμενος Τίτον), increased (*or*: has increased) my honors. He punished the Jews who had accused me, and when a eunuch slave, the *paedagogos* of my son, accused me, he ordered him to be punished, while giving me immunity for my property in Judaea; that is a very high honor to the recipient. Caesar's wife Domitia also continually conferred (*or*: has continually conferred) benefits on me (καὶ πολλὰ δὲ ἢ τοῦ Καίσαρος γυνὴ Δομετία διετέλεσεν εὐεργετοῦσά με).²²

The content seems to suggest a date before Domitian's assassination in September 96. Immediately after that event, Nerva proclaimed the restoration of liberty; the senate decreed the removal of Domitian's name from inscriptions, an act reflected in countless erasures all across the empire; Martial, who had consistently flattered the late emperor in his epigrams, withdrew the tenth book, and issued a new version in which he merely alludes to Domitian by contrast with Trajan, the real 'Caesar' who is now reigning.²³ It might therefore seem inconceivable for Josephus to speak of his imperial benefits as continuing without alteration from Vespasian onwards, and to make no reference to Nerva or Trajan. Moreover, since Domitia was widely believed to have been privy to the plot to murder her consort, it would seem very naïve to refer to her as 'Caesar's wife', or to boast of the benefits which she had 'continuously conferred'. Suetonius, by contrast, almost certainly writing when Domitia was still alive, has nothing good to say about her; for example, he infers that she cannot have had an affair with Titus from the supposition that 'she would have boasted about it, which she was ready to do with everything disgraceful'.²⁴

These arguments, though very strong, are not invulnerable. First, Josephus himself in the *Vita* speaks without embarrassment of a diplomatic success he had with Nero and the help that he received from Poppaea, the 'wife of Caesar', and yet Poppaea had an evil reputation after Nero's death, even if less than her husband's.²⁵ Secondly, it is certainly true that when senators and knights received benefits from Domitian, for example military decorations in his several wars, the inscriptions set up for them after his death invariably omit the name of the donor. By contrast, a centurion of one of the urban cohorts named Q. Vilanius Nepos has on his tombstone *donis donatus a Domitiano ob bellum Dacicum*.²⁶ This difference may reflect what Suetonius says about Domitian's

²² The Greek aorist can of course be used where English uses a perfect, cf. H.W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956) section 1940. The verb διατελεῖν means only 'to do something habitually or continuously', not 'to continue doing something after a specified time', as understood by Kokkinos, 396.

²³ Freedom: e.g. *ILS* 274, *libertati restituta*; Tac. *Agr.* 3.1, cf. Mart. 10.72. Erasures: Suet. *Dom.* 23.1. Martial's second edition: 10.2.1-2, and on the chronology of this book, R. Helm, *RE* 8 A (1955) 83. Trajan: 10.6.5, 7.8, 34.1, 72.8.

²⁴ Suet. *Tit.* 10.2; cf. Syme, *Tacitus* 2.780.

²⁵ *Vita* 16; *PIR*² P 850; note Pliny, *NH* 11.238; 28.183; 33.140, all concerned with her extravagance.

²⁶ Senators: M. Cornelius Nigrinus (*Ann. ép.* 1973, 283); Ti. Julius Celsus Polemaeanus (*ILS* 8971, with Dessau's note); T. Julius Maximus (*PIR* I 426; *ILS* 1016; G. Alföldy, *Fasti Hispanienses* [Wiesbaden, 1969] 78); Satrius Sep- (*ILS* 2719). Knights: Cn. Titinius Capito (*ILS* 1448), C. Velius Rufus (*ILS* 9200). Centurion: *ILS* 2127.

memory, that the military was incensed at his death, while the senate exulted, ordering that all record of him be obliterated.²⁷ Like the soldiery, those closely associated with him as family, clients or servants might feel differently from the upper orders (modern parallels could be adduced). Domitia, the emperor's widow and reputedly involved in the final conspiracy, continues to call herself *Domitia Domitiani* on the brick-stamps produced on her properties in the reign of Hadrian; she appears with the same nomenclature on the memorial inscription of one of her slaves, and also in the decree whereby the municipality of Gabii votes a memorial to her in 140.²⁸ Since Josephus is perhaps to be classed rather among Domitian's dependents than with senators and knights, his language might not necessarily reflect a date before September 96.

Dating the work either before or after the death of Domitian raises another difficulty, this one insoluble, though it has to do more with Josephus as a person than with questions of history. The last years of Domitian, besides their general severity, were remembered for his rapacious collection of the two-drachma tax levied on Jews and payable to the *fiscus Judaicus*. Coins of Nerva advertise the 'ending of false accusations connected with the Jewish treasury' (*fisci Iudaici calumnia sublata*), and both Suetonius and Cassius Dio attest the judicial abuses which had occurred under Domitian. In the year 95, the emperor executed his own cousin, Flavius Clemens, Clemens' wife Domitilla, and many others on the grounds that they had 'drifted into Jewish ways', a step that proved the final catalyst of his own life and reign.²⁹ Readers of the *Jewish War* know how far Josephus regards himself as detached from the Jews who gave their lives in defense of Jewish freedom, and yet they may still wonder at the pride with which he mentions his favors from a persecutor like Domitian. If such boasts belonged to a time when the emperor's memory was under official condemnation, the paradox would be even greater.

Against Apion. Subsequent to the *Antiquities* (*Ap.* 1.1, 1.54, etc.); the references to Agrippa II and other members of the Herodian house (1.51) do not indicate whether they are still among the living; the description of Agrippa as 'the most admirable king' (ὁ θαυμασιώτατος βασιλεύς) is to be expected when the author is emphasising the honor of royal approval. Josephus' patron Epaphroditus is still among the living (1.1, 2.296), but as long as his identity is uncertain, that does not help with the date.

As for the date of Josephus' own death, there seems no clear *terminus post* beyond what is implied by the dates of his latest works. Yet the absence of any reference to the death of Domitian, or to the altered circumstances under Nerva and Trajan, make a date not later than September 96 likely.

To summarize, I propose the following reconstruction:

- *BJ*: some books completed before 79 (presentation to Vespasian), but the whole completed after 79 (death of Caecina) and probably before 81 (presentation to Titus).

²⁷ *Dom.* 23.1.

²⁸ Brickstamps: Syme, *Tacitus* 2.780. Slave: *ILS* 9518, on which see Syme, 'Domitius Corbulo', *JRS* 60 (1970) 34-6 = *Roman Papers* 2 (Oxford, 1979) 817-19, arguing that 'Longina' is the wife of Corbulo. Decree of Gabii: *ILS* 272.

²⁹ *fiscus Iudaicus*: good discussion by M. Griffin, *CAH* 11² (2000) 74-7. Clemens and Domitilla: Cass. Dio 67.14.1-2.

- *AJ*: completed in 93/94, after Agrippa's deposition or death in 88/89.
- *Vita*: subsequent to *Antiquities* (93/94) and to deposition or death of Agrippa, and probably though not certainly before death of Domitian (September 96).
- *Ap*: later than *Antiquities*, though not necessarily later than the *Life*.
- Death of Josephus: probably not later than September 96 (death of Domitian).

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