The Arch of Titus at Rome and the Fate of the God of Israel

JODI MAGNESS
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Abstract
There is perhaps no more iconic image in Roman art than the spoils of Jerusalem panel on the arch of Titus at Rome, which memorialises a key moment in Vespasian and Titus' triumphal parade of 71: the display of cultic vessels from the destroyed Jewish temple. In this paper I suggest that in the eyes of the Romans, the cultic vessels displayed in the spoils panel on the arch of Titus represented the God of Israel, captive and paraded through the streets of Rome. From the Roman point of view the destruction of the Jerusalem temple marked the end of the cult of the Jewish God, who was subjugated to Capitoline Jupiter. Hadrian's reconstruction and dedication of Jerusalem to Capitoline Jupiter sixty years later represent the culmination of this process. In contrast, Josephus' writings reaffirm a belief in the continued existence of the God of Israel and the anticipation of an eventual reestablishment of a sacrificial cult in the face of the contrary assumption among the Romans.

1. The Arch of Titus
Josephus gives a detailed account of the Flavian victory parade and the fullest surviving description of any Imperial triumph (B.J. 7.123–58). Titus and Domitian kept the victory over the Jews alive in the eyes of the Roman public by erecting monuments at key points along the parade route. A lost arch of Titus dedicated in 81 in the centre of the curved end of the Circus Maximus seems to have marked the spot where Vespasian and Titus passed

1 Unless otherwise indicated all dates refer to the Common Era. I wish to thank Jeffrey Becker, Jim Bucko, Steven Fraade, James McLaren, Zlatko Plese, James Rives, and the JJS's anonymous reader for their comments and advice on earlier versions of this paper, which have improved it greatly. Nevertheless, all responsibility for the content is mine alone.

during the triumph. The better-known arch of Titus apparently was erected by Domitian after Titus’ death. The dedication on the attic refers to the deified Titus: ‘Senatus populusque Romanus divo Tito divi Vespasiani f. Vespasiano Augusto’. 

Because of its single-bay design, the brief attic inscription, and the iconography of the reliefs, M. Pfanner suggested that the arch of Titus functioned mainly as a ‘consecration monument’ to the deified Titus rather than as a triumphal arch celebrating the Jewish war, with the panel at the apex of the arch’s passageway depicting Titus’ apotheosis on the back of an eagle. Nevertheless, the arch of Titus served also—and perhaps primarily—as a triumphal monument, for the Flavians based their claims to legitimacy on the victory over the Jews. F. Millar emphasises the triumphal nature of the arch, which straddled the triumphal route and connected it with the Colosseum, another Flavian triumphal monument. The eagle (alluding to Jupiter as well as apotheosis) and the triumphant, deified Titus at the arch’s apex literally rise above the cultic vessels from the Jerusalem temple. On the arch of Trajan at Benevento the connection between Jupiter and the victorious emperor is depicted even more explicitly.

The famous panels on the sides of the arch’s passageway depict Titus riding in a chariot and crowned by Victory (north wall), and the parade of spoils from the Jerusalem temple (south wall). The spoils panel mirrors Josephus’s description: ‘The spoils in general were borne in promiscuous heaps; but conspicuous above all stood out those captured in the temple at Jerusalem. These consisted of a golden table, many talents in weight, and a lampstand (λυχνία), likewise made of gold, but constructed on a different pattern from those which we use in ordinary life. Affixed to a pedestal was a central shaft, from which there extended slender branches, arranged trident-fashion, a wrought lamp being attached to the extremity of each branch; of these there were seven, indicating the honour paid to that number among the Jews’ (B.J. 7.148–49; Loeb translation).

Josephus’s emphasis on the showbread table and menorah as the highlights

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4 See Steinby, LTUR 1, p. 110; M. Pfanner, Der Titusbogen (Mainz, 1983); de Maria, Gli archi onorari, pp. 119–21.

5 For a translation see Millar, ‘Last Year in Jerusalem’, p. 123. R. R. Holloway, ‘Some Remarks on the Arch of Titus’, L’antiquité classique 56 (1987), p. 186, noted that parallels with the arch of Trajan at Benevento suggest the inscription appeared on both sides of the attic story.

6 Pfanner, Der Titusbogen, pp. 78, 98–101, 103; also see Steinby, LTUR 1, pp. 110–11; Aitken, ‘Portraying the Temple in Stone and Text’, p. 82, including n. 35.


8 D. E. E. Kleiner, Roman Sculpture (New Haven, 1992), pp. 227–28. This also reflects the Roman concept that the triumphator was the representative of Jupiter; see G. Gustafsson, Evocatio Deorum, Historical and Mythical Interpretations of Ritualised Conquests in the Expansion of Ancient Rome (Uppsala, 2000), pp. 30–31.

9 For a description and discussion see Pfanner, Der Titusbogen.
of the spoils taken from Jerusalem corresponds with the depiction on the arch of Titus, where these objects provide a snapshot of the entire parade and commemorate the defining moment of the Flavian victory over the Jews.10

Why were the menorah and showbread table selected as symbols of the Flavian victory over the Jews? Aside from their preciousness, one reason must be that these objects were distinctive to the Jerusalem temple, unparalleled in other temples of the time.11 As such, they symbolised the cult of the God of Israel. The prominent depiction of the showbread table and menorah in the spoils panel not only alluded to the victory over the Jews and the destruction of the Jerusalem temple but served as attributes representing the God of Israel.12 The aniconic nature of the Jewish God was well-known to the Romans, as Tacitus (Historiae 5.9.1) indicates: ‘The first Roman to subdue the Jews and set foot in their temple by right of conquest was Gnaeus Pompey: thereafter it was a matter of common knowledge that there were no representations of the gods within, but that the place was empty and the secret shrine contained nothing’.13

Despite Josephus’ apologetic account, Titus seems to have ordered the destruction of the Jerusalem temple.14 In support of this view, J. Rives points

10 H. Schwier, Tempel und Tempelzerstörung. Untersuchungen zu den theologischen und ideologischen Faktoren im ersten jüdisch-römischen Krieg (66–74 n.Chr.) (Freiburg, 1989), p. 323; Pfanner, Der Titusbogen, p. 76. According to Eberhardt, ‘Wer Dienst Wem?’, Josephus’ description and the arch panels convey different ‘theological’ messages. Rives notes that although the arch of Titus was dedicated after Titus’s death, it ‘presumably provides a reliable indication of what the Flavians regarded as its key elements. It is therefore significant that the menorah and offering table are the focus of one of its two great inner reliefs, opposite to that of Titus in a triumphal chariot’, see J. Rives, ‘Flavian Religious Policy and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple’, in J. Edmonson, S. Mason and J. Rives (eds), Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome (Oxford, 2005), p. 152.

11 The Mishnah too singles out the showbread table and menorah for special attention compared with other items in the temple, notes S. D. Fraade in ‘The Temple as a Jewish Identity Marker Pre- and Post-70 CE: with Particular Attention to the Holy Vessels in Literary and Artistic Representation’ (presented at a conference in memory of Professor Menahem Stern on ‘Jewish Identities in Antiquity: Permutations and Transformations’, sponsored by the Department of Jewish History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 25–27 June 2007, Jerusalem, Israel). I am grateful to Fraade for sharing this unpublished paper with me and for his permission to cite it.

12 Rives, ‘Flavian Religious Policy and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple’, p. 152; Schwier, Tempel und Tempelzerstörung, pp. 323–26, 331. Schwier identifies the showbread table as the symbol of the cult and the menorah as the attribute of the Jewish God. However, Eberhardt believes that a theological message (the defeat of the Jewish God by the Roman gods) was not intended since the gods are represented in a secondary position on the arch of Titus. Instead she suggests that the arch of Titus shows the gods serving the Flavians, whereas Josephus depicts the Flavians as instruments of God; see Eberhardt, ‘Wer Dienst Wem?’, pp. 267, 277. Fraade, ‘The Temple as a Jewish Identity Marker’, argues that the overwhelming majority of Jews in the Second Temple period never saw the menorah and showbread table, which were kept from public view and were part of the temple’s ‘hidden inner mysteries’. In this case it is easy to imagine how these cultic objects might have come to represent the God of Israel.

13 Translation from M. Stern, Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1980), p. 28; also see Tacitus, Historiae 5.5.4.

out that Josephus does not mention Titus expressing any regret at destroying the temple.\(^\text{15}\) To the contrary, a depiction of the burning building apparently was paraded in the triumph (\textit{B.J.} 7.144).\(^\text{16}\) T. D. Barnes notes that Tacitus’ version (according to which Titus deliberately ordered the destruction of the Jerusalem temple) is the one that the Flavian dynasty commemorated in their monuments, coins, and literature.\(^\text{17}\) Cassius Dio’s report that the Romans held back due to superstition until Titus forced them to enter the temple probably is more accurate than Josephus’ version: ‘Nevertheless, the soldiers because of their superstition did not immediately rush in; but at last, under compulsion from Titus, they made their way inside’.\(^\text{18}\)

2. \textit{Evocatio Deorum} and the Importation of Gods to Rome

Foreign gods and cult images were sometimes introduced to Rome through conquest. The temple of Minerva Capta on the Caelian Hill was so-called because according to Ovid it contained a statue of Minerva that was brought to Rome in 241 BCE as part of the spoils of the town of Falerii.\(^\text{19}\) On the arch of Trajan at Benevento, which is modeled after the arch of Titus in Rome, the patron gods of the Dacians are shown welcoming Trajan in an attic panel.\(^\text{20}\) The cult of Apollo Medicus was introduced to Rome in 431 BCE on the occasion of a plague. Because Apollo was not a member of the Roman pantheon the temple was located outside the pomerium.\(^\text{21}\) The temple was renamed Apollo Sosianus in honour of C. Sosius, a consul who, according to Pliny (\textit{Nat. Hist.} 13.53), brought the cult statue of Apollo to Rome from the East.\(^\text{22}\) Like Vespasian’s Templum Pacis (below), the temple of Apollo Sosianus contained a...
Sometimes cults of foreign gods were introduced to Rome as a result of *evocatio deorum*, which involved summoning a patron deity away from a hostile city. Scholars disagree on how widespread this practice was, exactly what it entailed, under what circumstances it was used, and whether it was employed in the siege of Jerusalem. On the one hand, Rives thinks it is unlikely that the Romans carried out an *evocatio* in Jerusalem since it was unnecessary and because it was already believed that the God of Israel had deserted the Jews. Rives’ view might be supported by the fact that the cult of the Jewish God was not transferred to a temple in Rome (in contrast to the temples of Minerva Capta and Apollo Sosianus, for example), and his cultic vessels were displayed in a temple to Pax that was also a victory monument (see below). On the other hand, J. S. Kloppenborg argues that the Jewish God was called out (‘evoked’) prior to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. Because the Romans considered themselves a pious people, the evoking of the patron deity was a necessary prerequisite to the destruction of a hostile city.

The Jews, Greeks, and Romans believed that defeats were a consequence of the patron deity abandoning his city or people. When the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant at the battle of Ebenezer, the Israelites lamented that ‘the glory [God’s presence] is departed from Israel’ (1 Sam. 5: 21–22). Plutarch says that Mark Antony’s downfall occurred when Dionysos abandoned him (*Antony* 75). Livy (*Historiae* 5.15) refers to gods deserting the walls of Veii. According to Plutarch (*Alexander*), the temple of Artemis at Ephesus burned down because the goddess was absent.

Tacitus describes how ‘the gods’ deserted the Jews just before the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed: ‘Contending hosts were seen meeting in the skies, arms flashed and suddenly the temple was illuminated with fire from the clouds.

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23 See Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary*, pp. 13, 286–87, for descriptions and references to both temples. See Vermeule, *The Cult Images of Imperial Rome*, pl. 1, fig. 1, for a coin showing the cult image.

24 For a comprehensive discussion see Gustafsson, *Evocatio Deorum*.

25 Rives, ‘Flavian Religious Policy and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple’, p. 149; also see Schwier, *Tempel und Tempelzerstörung*, pp. 302–03. This presumes that Josephus’ references to the God of Israel abandoning the Jews reflect views that were held before the temple’s destruction and are not a post-destruction rationalisation to account for the disaster. As J. McLaren pointed out (personal communication), the offering of sacrifices in the Jerusalem temple until the 17th day of Tammuz (July 70) indicates that many Jews believed that God was still present in the temple.

26 See E. M. Orlin, *Temples, Religion and Politics in the Roman Republic* (Leiden, 1997), p. 12, who notes that the Romans were ‘choosy’ about which foreign gods and cults were introduced to Rome.

27 Kloppenborg, ‘*Evocatio deorum* and the Date of Mark’, pp. 434–47; Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, p. 452. The question of whether an *evocatio* was carried out in Jerusalem may be moot in light of Gustafsson’s observation that gods did not have to be evoked to avoid a sacrilege, and cults could be moved after the destruction of a city; see *Evocatio Deorum*, p. 105.

28 The notion that deities could abandon their earthly dwellings in anger or rejection had a long history in the ancient Near East. Sometimes these gods were thought to have returned to their heavenly abodes or went into exile in a foreign land; see M. Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 78–79, 144–45.

29 For a discussion see Gustafsson, *Evocatio Deorum*, pp. 46–55.
Of a sudden the doors of the shrine opened and a superhuman voice cried: ‘The gods are departing’; at the same moment the mighty stir of their going was heard’ (*Historiae* 5.13.1). Josephus portrays Titus as sharing this belief: ‘I call the gods of my fathers to witness and any deity that once watched over this place—for now I believe that there is none’ (*B.J.* 6:127). Josephus repeatedly expresses the view that the God of Israel had deserted the Jews (see below).

3. *The Fate of the God of Israel in Rome*

*Evocatio deorum* sometimes involved the transplantation of the defeated deity’s cult to Rome. The practice of *evocatio* reflects the Roman belief that a patron deity could be enticed to desert his city and people with the promise of an improved cult. Macrobius’ description of the destruction of Carthage is frequently cited as an example of *evocatio* (*Saturnalia* 3.9.7–8). In this case it is not clear whether the cult of Juno Caelestis was transplanted to Rome, although it was established in Roman Carthage, where the goddess was identified with Tanit as indicated by coin depictions. The promise of an improved cult was necessary not only to lure away the patron deity of an enemy city and people but was dictated by the Roman concept of *pietas*, which demanded that gods be honoured, not humiliated or angered. Macrobius expresses as follows this concern for *pietas*: ‘the city could not be taken after all or . . . were the capture possible, [the Romans] held it to be an offence against the divine law to make prisoners of gods’ (*Saturnalia* 3.9.2).

Plutarch’s description of the conquest of Tarentum in the third century BCE indicates that the consul Marcellus was condemned because he failed to treat the enemy’s gods with respect: ‘The elders blamed Marcellus first of all because he made the city an object of envy, no only by men but also by the gods whom he had led into the city like slaves in his triumphal procession’ (*Vit. Marcell.* 21). Josephus refers to statues of gods (presumably taken from non-Jewish temples in Palestine) displayed in the victory parade of Vespasian and Titus: ‘Then, too, there were carried images of their gods (*θεῶν*

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30 Translation from Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, vol. 2, p. 31. Kloppenborg, *Evocatio deorum and the Date of Mark*, pp. 443–45, cites this and other passages from Josephus in support of his view that Titus conducted the ritual of *evocatio* in Jerusalem. In my opinion, these passages reflect the belief (among Jews and Romans) that the Jerusalem temple was destroyed because the God of Israel had abandoned his people but are not necessarily evidence of *evocatio*.


34 See Kloppenborg, *Evocatio deorum and the Date of Mark*, pp. 435–37; J. B. Rives, *Religion and Authority in Roman Carthage from Augustus to Constantine* (Oxford, 1995), 65–69 (who says that in Rome her cult was not part of state religion).


36 Translation from Kloppenborg, *Evocatio deorum and the Date of Mark*, p. 441.

37 Translation from Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture*, p. 29.
ἀγάλματα, of marvellous size and no mean craftsmanship, and of these not one but was of some rich material’ (B.J. 7.136). Evidence for such a display can be seen in the victory parade depicted on the small frieze of the arch of Titus, where a statue of a river god is carried on a litter.38

In the eyes of the Romans, the destruction of the Jerusalem temple meant that their gods, and in particular Jupiter, had defeated the God of Israel.39 As S. Mason puts it, ‘the irrefragable defeat of the Judaeans and their protective deity was due to the virtue of the Roman generals (now pricipes), their military superiority, and the favour of the Roman deities’.40 The Roman belief that their victory over the Jews was due to the support of Jupiter, who sent Victory, is expressed visually on the arch of Titus, with Titus at the apex of the passageway rising on the back of an eagle above the spoils panel and Victories hovering in the spandrels.41

The God of Israel was already closely identified by the Romans with Jupiter, as expressed for example by Varro (Res Divinae 72b, apud Augustine): ‘Since the Romans habitually worship nothing superior to Jupiter, a fact attested well and openly by their Capitol, and they consider him the king of all the gods, and as he perceived that the Jews worship the highest God, he could not but identify him with Jupiter’.42 However, in contrast to the other foreign (non-Roman) gods discussed here, the cult of the Jewish God was not introduced to Rome after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. Instead his cult seems to have been subjugated to and replaced by that of Capitoline Jupiter.43 This explains why Vespasian transferred the payment of the Jerusalem Temple dues to the cult of Jupiter, using the money to finance the reconstruction of the Capitolium (which had burned down in 69): ‘All Jews paid to the Capi-

38 Pfanner, Der Titusbogen, pp. 84, 90; pl. 86. This god is usually identified as the Jordan River. Reclining river gods are also depicted on the arch of Trajan at Benevento; see F. S. Kleiner, The Arch of Nero in Rome, A Study of the Roman Honorary Arch Before and Under Nero (Rome, 1985), pp. 83–84.


42 Translation from Stern, Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism, vol. 1, p. 210. Perhaps in a similar (though not identical) way, the cult of Fortuna was introduced to Rome as an aspect of an old deity; see Orlin, Temples, Religion and Politics, p. 65.

43 See Rives, Flavian Religious Policy and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, p. 156. On p. 153 Rives describes the cult of the God of Israel as ‘held captive in Rome’. On the other hand, the Jewish God does not seem to have been assimilated to Capitoline Jupiter; as J. Scheid, An Introduction to Roman Religion, translated by Janet Lloyd (Bloomington, 2003), p. 158 points out, the assimilation of different deities was dangerous in the eyes of the Romans.
Rives notes that the Flavians must have realised that the destruction of the Jerusalem temple meant the end of the cult of the God of Israel. He suggests that even if this was not their original intention, it soon became a conscious policy. This is indicated by the fact that the cultic objects associated with the God of Israel (the menorah and showbread table) were not transferred to the Capitolium for ritual use but were put on display in the Templum Pacis (B.J. 7.158; see below). Vespasian placed the Torah scrolls and purple hangings from the Jerusalem Temple in his palace (B.J. 7.162). As M. Goodman observes, 'in the eyes of ordinary pagans, such actions were most naturally interpreted as the end of worship of the Jewish God. . . . By both symbolic and practical actions the Flavian state had brought Jewish worship to an end.' Vespasian's decision to close the Oniad temple at Leontopolis in Egypt reflects this new policy, whereas the suspicion of revolutionary activity was apparently a secondary consideration if it was a factor at all (as Josephus reports in B.J. 7.421).

The Flavians put an end to the sacrificial cult of the Jewish God, but what did they believe was the fate of the deity himself? If this were an example of interpretatio, it would mean the Romans considered Capitoline Jupiter and the God of Israel to be the same deity but worshiped with different cultic practices and names. This possibility might find support in Vespasian's transfer

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44 See Rives, 'Flavian Religious Policy and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple', pp. 152–53. On p. 164 n. 28, Rives observes that the new tax 'clearly worked to link the Jews to Rome and its god'. Schwier, Tempel und Tempelzerstörung, pp. 327–28, 330–32, notes that this was viewed as a victory of Jupiter over the Jewish God, whose attributes and income were now turned over to Jupiter. Also see Cassius Dio, Hist. Rom. 66.7.2, in Stern, Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism, vol. 2, pp. 375, 377; Goodman, Rome and Jerusalem, p. 454.

45 Rives, 'Flavian Religious Policy and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple', pp. 151–54, who concludes that within a year of the temple's destruction, the goal and conscious policy of the Flavians 'was apparently the permanent abolition of the Jewish sacrificial cult'. Also see Goodman, 'The Fiscus Iudaicus', p. 170: 'whether or not the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple had been in the end an accident . . . the public actions of Vespasian and Titus made abundantly clear their intention not to permit it to be rebuilt'.


48 Goodman, 'The Fiscus Iudaicus', p. 170; also see Schwier, Tempel und Tempelzerstörung, p. 329.


50 I owe this suggestion to David Levenson. In this case the Romans would have thought they
of the Jerusalem temple tax to the cult of Capitoline Jupiter and Hadrian’s establishment of a Capitolium on Jerusalem’s temple mount (see below). On the other hand, there is no evidence that after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple the Jewish God was worshiped as Capitoline Jupiter. There is nothing analogous, for example, to the Carthaginian example of coins showing Juno Caelestis holding the sign of Tanit. There is no indication that the Romans thought they were now worshiping the Jewish God in another guise or with different cultic practices.

It seems, therefore, that from the Roman perspective the Jewish God had been subjugated to Capitoline Jupiter and was captive in Rome. This is precisely the view expressed by the early Christian writer Minucius Felix in the late second or early third century: ‘The lonely and miserable nationality of the Jews worshipped one God, and one peculiar to itself; but they worshipped him openly, with temples, with altars, with victims, and with ceremonies; and he has so little force or power, that he is enslaved, with his own special nation, to the Roman deities’ (Octavius 10.4; my emphasis). In this case the cultic vessels depicted in the spoils panel on the arch of Titus should be understood as representing (in the eyes of the Romans) the God of Israel, paraded as a captive through the streets of Rome. This message was reinforced by the images in the opposite panel depicting Titus riding in a chariot and crowned by Victory. The elimination of the cult of the God of Israel and his subjugation to Capitoline Jupiter were exceptional for the Romans, who usually treated all gods with piety and respect.

4. Jews and Judea

D. Schwartz notes that the connection between Jews and the Judean homeland seems to have been lost in the Flavian period. Roman writers refer to the country as Idumaea or Palestina instead of Judea, whereas Jews are referred to in connection with Jewish practices but not with Judea. Schwartz substituted the proper worship and cultic rituals of the deity for the incorrect Jewish cult; see for example Gustafsson, Evocatio Deorum, p. 157. For interpretatio see J. B. Rives, Religion in the Roman Empire (Malden, MA, 2007), p. 144.

51 For ancient Near Eastern and biblical references to gods being exiled and taken into foreign captivity see Fishbane, Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking, pp. 78–79, n. 36.


53 According to Goodman, Rome and Jerusalem, p. 443, ‘Titus set about depicting the religion of the Jews as not worthy to exist, and the Temple’s destruction as an act of piety to the gods of the Roman world’. Could it be that the Jewish God was treated differently because he was known to be a jealous God who would not tolerate the worship of other gods alongside him?

54 D. R. Schwartz, ‘Herodians and Ioudaioi in Flavian Rome’, in J. Edmonson, S. Mason and J. Rives (eds), Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome (Oxford, 2005), p. 69. For references to Idumaea and Palestina by Flavian writers see Stern, Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism, vol. 1, pp. 505 (Valerius Flaccus); 507 (Silius Italicus); 518–20 (Statius); 523 (Martialis). However, Judea and Idumaea were often interchanged by Roman poets even before this, beginning with Virgil; see for example Stern, Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism, vol. 1, p. 316. By Cassius Dio’s time the connection between the Jews and Judea was obscure (Hist. Rom. 37.15.5; 37.17.1).
attributes the loss of a connection between Jews and Judea to the notion that
the Jewish God had abandoned his people, which is a central theme of Jose-
phus’ *War*.\(^{55}\) Eventually the term Ioudaioi (Jews) came to denote not peo-
ple from Judea but people of a certain religion.\(^{56}\) The references to Idumaea
or Palestina by Flavian writers suggest that from their point of view, Judea
cessated to exist after the elimination of the domicile and sacrificial cult of the
national deity.\(^{57}\) Even Josephus uses the term ‘Palestine’ when referring to
the period after 70 at the end of *Antiquities*: ‘us Jews in Egypt, Syria, and
Palestine’.\(^{58}\)

Hadrian’s actions should be understood in light of developments under the
Flavians. The province already was widely known as Palestina or Idumaea, so
officially changing its name to Syria Palestina was the next logical step in this
process.\(^{59}\) Hadrian’s foundation of Aelia Capitolina and his establishment of
a shrine or temple to Capitoline Jupiter on Jerusalem’s temple mount reflect
the Roman view that the cult of the God of Israel had been extinguished and
replaced by that of Capitoline Jupiter.\(^{60}\)

5. Judaism Without a Sacrificial Cult

Rives notes that the Romans distinguished between ethnic customs and tradi-
tions on the one hand and sacrificial cultic practices on the other. Therefore,
although the destruction of the Jerusalem temple meant the end of the sacrifi-
cial cult of the Jewish God, Jews were still permitted to live according to their

\(^{55}\) Schwartz, ‘Herodians and Ioudaioi in Flavian Rome’, p. 72.

\(^{56}\) Schwartz, ‘Herodians and Ioudaioi in Flavian Rome’, p. 77.

\(^{57}\) Perhaps this is why Vespasian and Titus did not assume the title ‘Judaicus’ as Cassius Dio,
375, 377: ‘In consequence of this success both generals received the title of emperor, but neither
got that of Judaicus’. Or perhaps it was because Judea was already a subject province; see B.
in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 21–22, observes
that until the end of the first century emperors only used the title Germanicus.

\(^{58}\) *Ant.* 20.259. See Barnes, ‘The Sack of the Temple in Josephus and Tacitus’, p. 132. However,
Cassius Dio sometimes used the term Judea although by his time Palestina was the official name
of the province; see Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on the Jews and Judaism*, vol. 2, pp. 393, 403.

\(^{59}\) See Schwartz, ‘Herodians and Ioudaioi in Flavian Rome’, p. 70.

\(^{60}\) See Schwier, *Tempel und Tempelzerstörung*, p. 348: ‘so kann er [Hadrian] die flavische
Konzepion voraussetzen, dass erstens kein Jahvekult mehr existiert, und dass zweitens der jüdis-
che Gott durch Jupiter gerichtet sein’. The establishment of a Capitolium, usually on a hill as in
Rome, was a characteristic feature of Roman colonies; see Rives, *Religion and Authority in Roman
Carthage*, pp. 39–41. It is immaterial to my argument whether Jerusalem’s Capitolium was a large
temple building or a small shrine. However, I reject the claim that no Hadriamic temple or shrine
at all was erected on the temple mount; see Y. Z. Eliav, *God’s Mountain: The Temple Mount in
Time, Place, and Memory* (Baltimore, 2005), pp. 116–18. The absence of identifiable remains of a
Hadriamic structure does not constitute evidence of absence, as on the same basis we would have
to conclude that the first and second Jewish temples never existed either. For a recent argument
in favour of the existence of a Hadriamic temple or shrine on the temple mount, see A. Kloner,
‘The Dating of the Southern Decumanus of Aelia Capitolina and Wilson’s Arch’, in E. Baruch,
Z. Greenhut and A. Faust (eds), *Ingeborg Rennert Center for Jerusalem Studies, New Studies on
ancestral customs and laws. Rives suggests that the transfer of the Jerusalem temple dues to the cult of Capitoline Jupiter and the closing of the temple at Leontopolis represent a conscious attempt by Vespasian to integrate the Jews into the Roman empire by making them more like other national groups. This policy failed because the observance of God’s law (based on ancient scripture) provided the basis for continued Jewish religious observance and national identity without a sacrificial cult. Thus Judaism survived as it had after the destruction of the first temple, even as Jews awaited and anticipated the rebuilding of the temple and the renewal of the sacrificial cult (an event that may have nearly occurred during the Bar Kokhba revolt and later under Julian the Apostate). Furthermore, although there is no denying the trauma caused to Judaism by the destruction of the second temple, sects such as the Essenes and (by this time) early Christianity may have helped Judaism survive and adapt by providing models for the worship of the God of Israel without a sacrificial temple cult.

Perhaps the Roman view that the cult of the God of Israel no longer existed underlies the charges of atheism leveled by Domitian against the consul Flavius Clemens and his wife Flavia Domitilla, in an episode related by Cassius Dio (Hist. Rom. 67.14.1–2): 'And the same year Domitian slew, along with many others, Flavius Clemens the consul, although he was a cousin and had to wife Flavia Domitilla, who was also a relative of the emperor. The charge brought against them both was that of atheism, a charge on which many others who drifted into Jewish ways were condemned'. Of course the charge that Jews were atheists had a long history in the Greco-Roman world. But whereas Jews had participated in a sacrificial cult until 70 (albeit to only one God), after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple they no longer offered...
Perhaps the payment of the Jerusalem temple dues to the cult of Capitoline Jupiter protected Jews from being brought up on formal charges of atheism in Flavian Rome, although Josephus’ defence in Against Apion (2.145–48) shows that this sentiment circulated. In my opinion the charge against Flavius Clemens and Flavia Domitilla makes the most sense if we assume they were non-Jewish ‘Judaisers’ who stopped participating in sacrificial cults to other gods.

6. The Templum Pacis and Flavian Peace

‘The triumphal ceremonies being concluded and the empire of the Romans established on the firmest foundation, Vespasian decided to erect a temple of Peace (τέμενος Ἐιρήνης)’ (B.J. 7.158; also see Cassius Dio, Hist. Rom. 66.15.1). So Josephus concludes his description of the triumphal parade of 71, despite the fact that the Templum Pacis was not dedicated until 75. Whereas other Imperial fora were dominated by a temple on a raised podium at one end of an elongated plaza, the Templum Pacis had a broad apsidal cella with an open colonnaded porch facing onto a large square enclosure surrounded by porticoes and exedras.68

The enclosure of the Templum Pacis was planted with a garden that contained an altar and water canals or basins connected to fountains, which are depicted on the Marble Plan as six longitudinal strips.69 The layout and design of the Templum Pacis—which in addition to the cultic vessels from the Jerusalem temple housed treasures from Nero’s Domus Aurea—resembled porticoes such as the Porticus Octaviae and Porticus Liviae.70 The porticoes in the Circus Flaminus were established by victorious generals of the Late Republic for propaganda purposes and were filled with works of Greek art brought to Rome as the spoils of war.71 The Templum Pacis belongs to this tradition, with the cultic vessels from the Jerusalem temple displayed like other works of art.72 The peculiar design of the Templum Pacis may be due

67 For the meaning of polytheism and atheism in this context see Barclay, Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora, p. 432.


72 For the works of art in the Templum Pacis with sources, see Steiby, LTUR 5, p. 68; Millar,
to the fact that the goddess Pax did not usually receive temples. 73

Scholars have observed that Vespasian’s dedication to Pax was a deliberate allusion to the Ara Pacis and represents his attempt to connect himself with Augustus. 74 The destruction of Jerusalem has even been described as the ‘Flavian Actium’, as it provided an ideological basis for the establishment of the Flavian dynasty. 75 Although Pax is a logical choice for celebrating a victory, Vespasian’s decision to dedicate his victory temple to this goddess is not obvious. After all, other deities that were personified allegories such as Victoria, Virtus, and Honos, who are depicted on the arch of Titus and on Vespasian’s coins, could have served this purpose equally well. 76 And what about a family deity such as Minerva, who Domitian preferred? 77

Perhaps another factor influenced Vespasian’s dedication of his temple to Pax. According to various ancient traditions, Jerusalem’s name comes from the word for ‘peace’ (salem). 78 In Greek the name became Ierosolyma (Holy Solyma) or just Solyma, which is frequently used by Flavian poets. 79 The etymology provided by Josephus suggests that Solyma generally was understood as meaning ‘peace’. 80 Sometimes Hierosolyma was understood as meaning ‘the temple of Solyma’, as indicated by passages in Livy (Periochae 102), ‘Cn. Pompeius conquered the Jews and captured their temple Jerusalem, never invaded before’ (fanum eorum Hierosolyma, inviolatum ante id tempus) 81 and Polybius, ‘there also came over to him those Jews, who live near the temple

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77 Suetonius, Domitian 15. See E. D’Ambra, Private Lives, Imperial Virtues. The Frieze of the Forum Transitorium in Rome (Princeton, 1993), pp. 4, 10, who notes that Minerva is prominent in Domitian’s Forum Transitorium; Mattingly, Coins of the Roman Empire, pp. lxxiv, lxxxv, xciii. The fact that Pax is often depicted on coins with poses and attributes similar to Capitoline Juno suggests a deliberate allusion to Capitoline Jupiter; see Vermeule, The Cult Images of Imperial Rome, p. 31.
78 The fact that Salem might refer to the original patron deity of the city is immaterial here; what matters is how the name was later understood.
79 See for example 1 and 2 Maccabees, Flavius Josephus, the New Testament, and the Jewish Sibylline oracles. Also see Stern, Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism, vol. 1, pp. 305 (Valerius Flaccus), 520 (Statius), 526 (Martial).
80 According to Overman, ‘Josephus’ was known, or known of, by the leading figures of the Flavian literary circle’, including Suetonius and Titus; see J.A. Overman, ‘The First Revolt and Flavian Politics’, in A. M. Berlin and J.A. Overman (eds), The First Jewish Revolt. Archaeology, History, and Ideology (New York, 2002), p. 216. For the opposite view see Cotton and Eck, ‘Josephus’ Roman Audience’.
81 From Stern, Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism, vol. 1, p. 329.
of Jerusalem, as it is called’ (οἱ περὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τὸ προσαγορευόμενον Ἱεροσόλυμα κατοικοῦντες) (apud Jos., Ant. 12.136). 82

Josephus provides the same etymology (Ant. 7.67): ‘It was David then who first expelled the Jebusites from Hierosolyma and named the city after himself. For in the time of our ancestor Abram it was called ‘Solyma’. The temple, however, they named ‘Solyma’, which in the Hebrew language means ‘security’ (ἀσφάλεια). Securitas as a concept was synonymous with Pax. 83 Pax was therefore an appropriate choice for a temple that housed the cultic vessels from the Jerusalem temple. B. Chilton notes that Josephus presents the Jerusalem temple as the counterpart to the Templum Pacis in Rome. 84

The Flavians advertised their victory as the beginning of a new era of peace. 85 Josephus makes this connection explicit by referring to Vespasian’s construction of the Templum Pacis immediately after concluding his description of the triumph. 86 The Roman victory over the Jews and the Flavian peace were celebrated in literary works and commemorated by the construction of monuments around Rome. 87 G. Alföldy’s decipherment of the original dedicatory inscription of the Colosseum, which was begun by Vespasian and completed by Titus in 80, indicates that it was paid for out of the spoils of the Jewish war. 88 Thus, both the Templum Pacis and Colosseum are victory monuments connecting Vespasian with Augustus while contrasting (and disassociating) Vespasian and Nero. 89

To which peace did the Flavian Pax refer? On the one hand, Millar notes that, ‘The name of the Temple, ‘Peace’, could not fail to be a reference to the Jewish War’. 90 On the other hand, A. Overman believes that the peace included the restoration of order after the civil wars. 91 M. Beard suggests that the Flavian celebration of victory in a civil war was disguised as a triumph over a ‘proper’ (non-Roman) enemy, analogous to Octavian’s negative depiction of Cleopatra in the civil war with Marc Antony. 92 Her observation is

82 From Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, vol. 1, p. 113.
86 Edmonson, ‘Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome’, p. 11, suggests that Josephus’s War not only celebrated the establishment of peace by the Flavians but ‘served as a key text for the explanation’ of the Templum Pacis.
87 Overman, ‘The First Revolt and Flavian Politics’, p. 214, observes: ‘once enthroned Vespasian is portrayed as the ruler who brought Pax to the world by Flavian literary figures’. Also see Noreña, ‘Medium and Message in Vespasian’s Templum Pacis’, p. 25.
90 Millar, ‘Last Year in Jerusalem’, p. 112; also see Noreña, ‘Medium and Message in Vespasian’s Templum Pacis’, p. 34.
supported by the fact that the Flavians used barbarian types to depict the Jews on Judea Capta coins, although Judea had become a Roman province long before the Jewish war. 93

7. Conclusion

The arch of Titus is one element of an extensive Flavian building program proclaiming the establishment of an era of peace under the new dynasty. The Flavians used their victory over the Jews as a means of legitimisation. Victory was bestowed on the Flavians by Capitoline Jupiter, who vanquished the God of Israel. Vespasian created deliberate parallels with Augustus' victory over Antony, symbolising the triumph of the west over the east. The spoils of Jerusalem panel on the arch of Titus not only displays treasures taken from the Jewish temple and placed in the Templum Pacis but to ancient viewers represented the God of Israel, defeated and carried away as a captive to Rome.

Of course the Jews thought otherwise. They believed that God had temporarily deserted them, analogous to earlier instances in Jewish history when (so they believed) their failure to observe God's laws properly had resulted in their punishment, including the destruction of the first temple. 94 This is the view that Josephus expresses throughout his works (see for example B.J. 5.412; Ant. 20.166). 95

In blaming the Jewish revolt on fanatics, Josephus not only tried to distance himself and other Jews from the revolt in the eyes of the Romans but expressed the belief that the God of Israel had only temporarily abandoned his people due to the misbehaviour of radical extremists. 96 Thus, Josephus' writings reaffirm the continued existence and power of the Jewish God in the face of the contrary assumption among the Romans. This is why in his exhortation to the defenders of Jerusalem Josephus portrays himself (retroactively) as drawing parallels with previous disasters, including the destruction of the

dacum', pp. 98–99, suggests that in War Josephus consciously drew a parallel between the end of the civil war in Rome and the end of civil war in Judea.

93 J. M. Cody, ‘Conquerors and Conquered on Flavian Coins’, in A. J. Boyle and W. J. Dominik (eds), Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text (Leiden, 2003), pp. 109–10, suggests this was a device intended to portray the Jews as worthy but uncivilised opponents.

94 See J. J. Price, ‘Some Aspects of Josephus’ Theological Interpretation of the Jewish War’, in M. Perani (ed.), 'The Words of a Wise Man's Mouth are Gracious' (Qoh 10, 12), Festschrift for Gunter Stemberger on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday (Berlin, 2005), pp. 116–17. Many Jews believed that God had retreated to his heavenly abode; see Fishbane, Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking, pp. 78–79, 134–45, 156–59. On pp. 172–73 Fishbane discusses a rabbinic tradition according to which God laments his failure to save the temple, noting that this may be a response to a widespread perception that the events of 70 were due to the Jewish God's weakness.


96 See for example J. J. Price, ‘The Provincial Historian in Rome’, in J. Sievers and G. Lembi (eds), Josephus and Jewish History in Flavian Rome and Beyond (Leiden, 2005), pp. 113–14; J. S. McLaren, A Reluctant Provincial: Josephus and the Roman Empire in Jewish War, in J. Riches and D. C. Sim (eds), The Gospel of Matthew in its Roman Imperial Context (London, 2005), pp. 37, 43. Rabbinic Judaism also understood the destruction of the temple as punishment for Israel's sins and transgressions; see Neusner, 'How Important was the Destruction of the Second Temple?', p. 86; Fishbane, Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking, pp. 144–45.
first temple (see B.J. 5.390–419; Ant. 10.183). 97

Although Josephus is usually understood as an apologist for the Flavians (and especially Titus), he is no less an apologist for Judaism. 98 Scholars have noted subversive elements in Josephus’ writings. 99 For example, Josephus robs Titus and the Romans of credit for the destruction of the Jerusalem temple by portraying them as instruments of divine justice. 100 Josephus also implies that Rome’s dominance would not last and that Fortune (τύχη) favoured Rome temporarily. 101 Josephus’ understanding of events as cyclical and his anticipation of the future reestablishment of the Jerusalem temple and sacrificial cult are consistent with rabbinic views. 102

As J. Price notes, Josephus’ explanation that the destruction of the temple was part of God’s plan reflects the manner in which Jews after 70 attempted to come to terms with this disaster. 103 These events were no less momentous


101 Price, ‘The Provincial Historian in Rome’, pp. 116–17: ‘Fortune, indeed, had from all quarters passed over to them, and God who went the round of the nations, bringing to each in turn the rod of empire, now rested over Italy’ (B.J. 5.367; translation from Hadas-Lebel, Jerusalem Against Rome, p. 101. On p. 103 she points out that Josephus did not believe God favoured Rome but that he had abandoned the Jews temporarily. Also see McLaren, ‘A Reluctant Provincial’, pp. 37–38.

102 This also follows from Josephus’ description of the restoration of the temple under Cyrus in Ant. 11.1–18; see Goodman, Rome and Jerusalem, p. 448. Chilton, The Temple of Jesus, p. 79, notes: ‘Josephus openly imagines conditions under which sacrifice might be offered again in Jerusalem’. For the rabbinic view and the cyclical, biblical pattern of thinking, see Neusner, ‘How Important was the Destruction of the Second Temple?; Hadas-Lebel, Jerusalem Against Rome, pp. 115–22; 152 (with similar views expressed in Jewish apocryphal works composed after 70); Fishbane, Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking, pp. 134–54. H. Eshel, ‘Josephus’ View on Judaism without the Temple’, in B. Egs, A. Lange and P. Pilhofer (eds), Gemeinde ohne Tempel, Community without Temple (Tübingen, 1999), pp. 229–38, argues that when Josephus wrote War he believed Judaism would not survive without the temple, whereas by the time he wrote Antiquities his outlook was much more optimistic.

for early Christians, who believed that Jesus predicted the destruction of the
Jerusalem temple, which had been abandoned by God when Jesus expired on
the cross.\textsuperscript{104} On the other hand, for Romans the Flavian victory must have
reinforced the view that Rome’s greatness and destiny as the eternal centre
\textit{(Rome aeterna)} were due to the favour of all of the gods.\textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{104} As indicated by the darkening of the sky and the tearing of the temple’s veil; see Kloppen-
borg, ’\textit{Evocatio deorum and the Date of Mark},’ p. 449. A. Runesson, ‘The Flavius Silva Inscrip-
tion Found on the Temple Mount and the Desolating Sacrilege of Mark 13.14’, suggests that in
the view of the author of the Gospel of Mark the Romans were able to conquer Jerusalem only
because the God of Israel had abandoned the temple at the time of Jesus’ death. I am grateful to
Runesson for sharing with me this unpublished paper and for his permission to cite it.

\textsuperscript{105} This concept was given physical expression by Hadrian’s construction (or reconstruction) of
the Pantheon. For a discussion of the concept of \textit{Rome aeterna} see Gustafsson, \textit{Evocatio Deorum},