WORRIES ABOUT VESPASIAN: 
THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF AN EMPEROR*

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ABSTRACT

Did Vespasian justify the high reputation he has enjoyed in medieval and modern times ("Tacitus is cool")? Choice of officials, liberality with citizenship, promotion of trade, 'provincial administration' have been lauded. But it is Domitian who is commended by Suetonius for controlling his governors. Interpretative problems hamper judgment on what Vespasian did towards the development of Africa, while Agricola's activities in Britain had precedents; alleged efforts to bring Italy and the provinces into partnership are not well supported. The Latin right given Spain had advantages for Vespasian. Benefits to cities need not have cost much; for Vespasian financial considerations were prime. Distinctions between Italy and the provinces were maintained; the provincialisation of the legions was not part of policy, and the rise of provincials to high places was helped by the crisis of 69. As to the imperial cult, Vespasian may have been less active in promoting it than has been supposed; the lex from Narbo favours the local initiative. Circumstances, not imperial policy, benefited provincials in the years after 70.

1. The Emperor's reputation

Vespasian's reputation was ambiguous, so Tacitus famously says, and he was the first Emperor to change for the better: 'solusque omnium ante se in melius mutatus principum'. Surely this means that as Emperor he turned out better than his career as a private citizen would have led one to expect, rather than, as Ceausescu argues, that the Emperor at Rome proved an improvement on the oriental autocrat in Alexandria.

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1. Tac. Hist. 1.50; Ausonius, De XII Caes. 10 Vesp.

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All the same, Tacitus could allow only that the ideal emperor would rather have been made up of merits combined from those of Vespasian and his ally C. Licinius Munatius. Military success was all that Vespasian had going for him until 70. His aedileship, in which Gaius Caligula had allegedly strewed mud down his toga, had made him ridiculous, his praetorship was marked by servility and his governorship of Africa was notorious for another pelting, this time with turnips from the populace of Hadrumetum in their marketplace. What won him Tacitus' praise as Emperor, offsetting acknowledged stinginess, would have been his comparatively good relations with senators and his modest, hard-working way of life, civility in fact. From Suetonius and Dio Cassius he has a good press on these scores, and later writers of the fourth to sixth centuries are all very favourable, elaborating Suetonius' claim that he left nothing undone first to stabilize, then to embellish the state, 'stabilire...deinde et ornare'. This goes well beyond mere civility to the elite. They specify the restoration of cities, the construction of mighty roads.

2. The reputation exploited

The high reputation of Vespasian passed into verse and romance, Ausonius, Dante, and medieval romance, The Destruction of Jerusalem, exploited in Africa (at least in intention: it was 'in a consignment of books destined for Prester John the Emperor of Ethiopia, in 1515) and certainly in Central America for the edification of the heathen. Vespasian, cured of leprosy by the handkerchief of St Veronica, captured Jerusalem in revenge for the execution of Jesus, punished Pontius Pilate, and converted the Empire to Christianity.

3. Tac. Hist. 2.5.1. 4. Suet. Vesp. 3.3; Dio Cass. 59.12.5 (aedileship); Suet. Vesp. 2.3 (praetorship); 4.3 (proconsulship); cf. Tac. Hist. 2.97. For the date of the proconsulship see U. Vogel-Weidemann, Die Statthalter von Afrika und Asia in den Jahren 14-68 n. Chr. (Bonn 1982) 205, 63-4.


Modern writers have also exploited Vespasian as a medium for viewing contemporary history in terms of their own political views. In the portraits of Bersanetti, published during the War, and of Homo, soon just after, one can see the lineaments of Mussolini and De Gaulle. For Bersanetti the English were still in Vespasian's debt for the civilizing work performed on them by Vespasian's governor Agricola, while Homo quotes Napoleon's favourable judgment on his title page.

3. The problem of change

Scholars without axes to grind and working with other evidence, such as inscriptions, have to set their conclusions against this combination of ancient testimony and medieval and modern exploitation. Not that official inscriptions of the Flavian period or coins have anything to say against it: on the contrary. And the most scrupulous modern scholars have another phenomenon to deal with. Looking at the Empire with hindsight, they have to account for the changes that overtook it. Giving credit to an individual ease that problem, so does assigning titles to periods of time; but it raises another, that of defining what it is that makes those periods distinct.

For historians as well as Vespasian's contemporaries, the Civil Wars of 68-70 were a traumatic break, in which the very solution that had been devised to end civil war had collapsed. Potentially our best source for the Flavian era, Tacitus breaks off before Vespasian even returned to Rome in the late summer of 70, and this damages our chances of seeing how the regime developed. Restraints are removed and we are free to put as much emphasis on 'ornare' as on 'stabilire'. Scholars have seen activity as characteristic of the Flavians, notably Vespasian, and that is true even of writers hostile to Roman imperialism, such as M. Bénabou. Several features of the reign have been lauded: the choice of governors and other officials, liberality with the citizenship, the promotion of trade; D. Magie entitled Chapter XXIV of his Roman Rule in Asia Minor (1950) 'Centralization and prosperity under the Flavians'; decisive steps towards Romanization have been noted in Africa. Certainly something positive must be indicated by the indubitable advance in the 'epigraphic habit'.

during this period. But that needs interpretation. A rise in the number of inscriptions under a new régime may mean enhanced prosperity, increased confidence in the future, keenness to display loyalty, or a combination of these and other factors.

But scholars following ancient or modern predecessors, or constrained by the historian’s problem of making sense of history, may have overestimated the contribution of the new régime, reinforcing claims made for the Flavians. But it is not obvious how large a role the Emperor played in developments in Roman administration and political and cultural changes. This is not an isolated problem. It is raised by any attempt to estimate the achievement of any Roman emperor, any Napoleon or De Gaulle. It was vividly raised by Tolstoy in his essay at the end of War and Peace, in which he reduced Napoleon to the status of a stick floating on the stream of the popular will.

Each case is peculiar. Whatever we find about Vespasian will not provide a formula adapted to any other figure. But it is worth enquiring what difference he really made.

4. Appointments and control on the provinces

In the area of provincial administration Vespasian has been particularly highly praised, to start with for the quality of men in post. One governor is known to have been charged with repetundae, and one subordinate official, but Antonius Flamma was probably appointed by one of Vespasian’s predecessors, and he was brought down by local political opponents in the provincii’s home province. C. Julius Bassus, former quaestor in Bithynia, was acquitted. We cannot be sure that either was innocent; and in other provinces the victims of imperial legates, the emperor’s own choice, as P.A. Brunt has insisted, may have been afraid to prosecute. Want of evidence forbids us to laud Vespasian for keeping a tight rein on his governors; it is Domitian who is commended for that by Suetonius. The continuation in office of T. Clodius Eprius Marcellus for two years beyond the norm in Asia (71-4) may have been a reward for a man in ill repute among senators, but

12. ‘Epigraphic habit’: S. Mrozek, Epigraphica 35 (1973) 113-8, esp. 114; C. Eilers, Roman patronage of Greek cities (Oxford, forthcoming), should be read.
15. PIR² I 205.
that did not make him a bad governor. The need for stable government in Asia after the civil wars may have prompted the decision, or the wish to have him out of Rome, to gratify a loyal servant, or to spite the senate, or all four. Continuity was certainly desirable in Cyrenaica, where the proconsul C. Arinius Modestus was also prorogued (73-5?), presumably in the wake of the Jewish unrest that his predecessor Catullus had put down.

Domitian's governors of Asia Minor, in particular those men promoted by Vespasian, also attracted praise from D. Magie, but proconsulships normally came to ex-magistrates by seniority and the lot, not as a reward for merit. And the men prorogued in and after 69 and commended by Tacitus are simply referred to in unspecific terms as 'egregii viri', 'excellent men'.

5. The development of the provinces

In the development of the provinces under Roman rule, the processes of 'Romanization' or 'acculturation' are a perennial problem. How conscious were the processes for rulers and ruled, where did the initiative lie, and what were the motives? For Africa the evidence is considerable, but a survey by D. Mattingly and R.B. Hitchner disturbingly suggests that it has not been satisfactorily treated, in part because of authors' political bias, colonialists versus anti-colonialists. But even laying this aside, it has proved possible for such distinguished scholars as M. Leglay and C. Gasco to look, at the evidence at a distance of only a few years from each other, to come to divergent formulations.

At another end of the Empire, a famous chapter of Tacitus' Agricola shows Vespasian's governor unambiguously occupying his winter season in 'privately encouraging his subjects and helping them as communities' to adopt ways that were part of Graeco-Roman humanitas. This is in strong contrast with the picture of ruthless exploitation that we have from Britain before the revolt of Boudicca. But as recent scholars have pointed out, Agricola was doing nothing new. His measures for 'civilization' were prudent and were already being put into practice a decade and a

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18. Epigraphia Asiae, PI R 2. E 64.
half previously by Trebellius Maximus in the aftermath of the Boudiccan revolt. Tacitus finally reveals that the Britons' taste for Roman amenities led to slavery (servitus); he does not say that that was Agricola's aim, but then he would hardly do that in public.24

6. Italy and the provinces

Suetonius' tribute to Vespasian's achievement in restoring Rome and provinces, and the elaborations of his followers, have led scholars to consider that Vespasian's reign brought about a change in the relation between provinces and Italy. It is strikingly expressed by D. Fishwick, who writes of efforts to bring Italy and provinces into 'partnership'. To be sure, in the end Italy sank virtually to the status of a province, as it appears in the Verona List of 312-4.25 Here, too, re-examining Vespasian's role in the process may cool enthusiasm.

Two tests can be applied: first, a rise in privileges and material benefactions granted to provinces, with Italian privilege diminished or diluted; then the takeover by provincials of authority once monopolized by Italians in the senate, equestrian positions, and army.

Of all the privileges granted to provinces and cities the best known is the Latin right (Latium) granted to Spain.26 Large scale grants were not new: there was a striking case of one made by the father of Pompey the Great, and probably smaller-scale grants under Claudius, certainly under Nero to the Maritime Alps. But Vespasian's to the whole of Spain was a particularly wide-ranging enactment.27 The motive and date are disputed, but probably A.D. Baworth was right to put it at the beginning of Vespasian's principate, in 70, not during his censorship of 73-4.28 The purpose cannot have been to promote so-called 'Romanization': only annual magistrates received the Roman citizenship. Nor was it intended to encourage loyalty to Rome: it would only do that if the provincials wanted it in the first place and were already oriented towards Rome.29 Rather the clue is provided by the passage of Pliny in which he describes the privilege: 'Vespasian Imperator

Augustus bestowed the right of Latium on the whole of Spain when it had been storm-tossed (iactatum) by civil disorders. A.B. Bosworth suggested that the word should be iactatus, meaning that Vespasian himself was tossed about in the Civil War and so obliged to make the grant. Despite the Virgilianism—the reminiscence of the opening of the Aeneid that an editorial reader has pointed out as a feature of Pliny's style—that favours Bosworth's suggestion, it is unacceptable, given Pliny's respectful attitude toward the Flavians. The very suspicion that Bosworth was entertaining the idea would keep Pliny turning in his grave. I suggest on the contrary that Pliny is quoting a speech made by Vespasian on the subject on which he described the promise as mooted (by his predecessors during the Civil Wars of 68-69), but that he is going actually to grant. The measure then is oriented towards attracting the loyalty of the targeted provincials, specifically towards the new Princeps. They had been Galba's supporters, or Otho's, and it was part of Vespasian's campaign to present himself as the vindicator of one or other of the Emperors who had been challenged by Vitellius—depending on his audience. In Spain Galba or Otho was to be vindicated, for the Danubian legions. Benefactions to cities trumpeted by our sources need looking at in the light of this prudential attitude. Clearly they were one half of a transaction in which loyalty was the due return. One question is what price he was prepared to pay for it. And Vespasian not only declared the Empire to be in dire financial straits when he came to power, but made himself and his adviser Luidius Mucianus notorious for a grasping attitude towards money, not only during the period of the Civil Wars but throughout his reign. It was his great failing. Benefactions did not necessarily mean expenditure by the Emperor. A local benefactor might pay for a building, but the Emperor was informed of the project and consented to be associated with it. Everyone benefited: the local populace had a material gain in the form of some new amenity, a bathhouse or aqueduct, the local benefactor had gratitude from them and the kudos of being associated with the Emperor, and the Emperor would be seen as the pivot of the entire operation, as indeed he was.

Vespasian's letter to the people of Sabora in Spain, who in 77 requested permission to move from their hilltop to a more accessible site on the plain below, also bears a second look. They are allowed to move and entitle their settlement 'Flavium' after Vespasian, but are not given any help in doing so. They also wish to resume some local taxation (vectigal) permitted them by Augustus, but Vespasian is cautious about allowing anything beyond that and refers them to the governor. His concern is evidently their viability.

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21. Suet. Vesp. 16. 3, the largest sum known from antiquity, if the text is correct.
as imperial taxpayers. It was similar with colonies; some had no
Italicum, which exempted their territory like Italy itself from land tax. Not even
even Vespasian's old base of Casarea Maritima received this privilege when it
was made a colony.32
This provides a neat example of a distinction between Italy and the
provinces being maintained, and the financial reason for keeping it. It was
observed by Domitian more than a decade after Vespasian's death in his
dict extending citizenship.33 provincials had to cut down half their vines, Itali
merely might not plant new ones. Sentiment went hand in hand
with imperial policy. It was just in Vespasian's reign that the Italian Pliny
chose to publish his eulogy on Italy: the curdling and the mother of all
other lands, chosen by the providence of the gods to make heaven itself
more glorious, and so on.34
A more promising theme is the rise of men of all ranks from the provinces
into jobs previously held by Italians. Not much is to be had from the lowest
level, that of the soldiery. The change that took place in the composition
of the legions is well-known,35 but the supposed 'exclusion' of Italians from
the legions by Vespasian because of the brutal behaviour of legionaries
in 69-70, especially in their sack of Cremona, has been discarded. The
legionaries were not angry proletarians slaughtering Italian bourgeoisie but
men intent on celebrating the fact that they were still alive after a ferocious
battle. Italians had long been hard to recruit: either they were unwilling
to join up or they were unsuitable. Tiberius had found that by A.D. 23
when he made as if to go into the provinces to hold a levy.36
Higher up the social scale, Tacitus, writing about the financial problems
of the Roman elite in 23, looks back on a gradual change in the composition
of the senate to include men from all over Italy and the provinces, and
he anachronistically makes Otho refer to the senators as 'decora omnium
provinciarum'.37 There was also a gradual increase in the number of
equestrian posts held by provincials, notably men from Narbonensis.38 The

32. ILS 8892; Dig. 50. 15. 1. 6. 2.
2 by P.M. Fraser (Oxford 1957) 572 n. 8.
36. Tac. Ann. 4.4.4; G. Webster, The Roman Imperial Army, ed. 3 (London 1985)
108, after G. Forni, II Recupitamento delle legioni in Aquileia e Dacia (Milan-
Rome 1953) 177-86 and ANRW 2, 1 (1974) 360-65, shows a gradual change from
Aquileia to Trajan.
170-178.
two leading politicians of the first years of Nero's reign, Burrus and Seneca, came respectively from Vasi and Corduba.

But the rise of Seneca and his relatives the Annaei shows how one man from a town could help his fellow citizens. It was not only the Emperor who counted. So what is the role of Vespasian? In crisis like the Year of the Four Emperors created special opportunities for senatorial magistrates and officers, equestrian officers, and civilians. They arose in East and West, and the criteria for advancement were, as always, loyalty and competence. If a man was an energetic soldier of keen loyalty he would rise like P. Sulpicius Quinctius under Augustus. In crisis the processes were speeded up. Since the main effort made on Vespasian's behalf came from the East, whose nine legions and corresponding auxiliaries had to be paid, fed, and equipped, civilians arose who showed loyalty through their contributions. In Tiberius' words, some of the men Vespasian favoured had more money than merit.

In the West personal dynamism may have counted as much. The most famous case is Cornelius Fuscus, a knight from a colony, probably Veneta. He had never intended to enter the imperial service but in the struggle against Nero he had brought his colony over. This led on to procuratorships ultimately to the Prefecture of the Praetorian Guard.

Other knights rose into the senate, and existing senators found speedy promotion. Some were Italians, like M. Hirrius Fronto (Neratius Pansa), who had a career controversial in detail but indisputably meteoric (consulship of 73 and 74 and patriciate). Hirrius was an Italian in the right place at the right time as legatus legionis. In his speech to the senate on admitting Gauls, Claudius conceded to his audience, who had strong objections to the proposal, that Italian senators were to be given the preference over men from the provinces. He would show them his favour when he came to adopt them to patrician rank. But at the same time he asserted that provincials were not to be turned down, either (ne provinciales quidem reiciendos puto). So crisis provided new men with a chance or those already in with exceptional opportunities to be useful. An existing process was speeded up.

Agricola from Frigus was another Flavian adherent already in the senate, but a provincial. If not a secret adherent beforehand he joined the cause.

39. ILS 1329.
40. As the failed effort of Caligula to return elections to the people showed: Dio Cass. 59.2.6; 20.4.
41. Tac. Ann. 3.48: 'Impiger militiae, acribus ministeriis'.
42. Tac. Hist. 2.81: 'quibusdam fortuna pro meritis fuit'.
43. Tac. Hist. 2.86, with Levick, Antiquitas 22 (1997) 46, citing Tac. Hist. 1.68 for 'origo'.
immediately Vespasian declared and made himself useful in Britain as legate of XX at the beginning of the reign. Even more striking is the career of Trajan’s father, suffect |70, from Italica in Spain. He had left his post as legate of X in Judaea in t,he last half of 6946 but returned to the East under Vespasian to the highest posts available there, perhaps as governor of Galatia-Cappadocia, certainly as governor of Syria, with admission into the patriciate and triumphal decorations.

From Asia Minor and Syria there was an influx. About ten new men are known: C. Christianus Fronto of Pisidian Antioch, who was in charge of a unit of auxiliary cavalry in Syria, represents the merit that Tacitus speaks of.(57) (C. Iulius) Cornutus Tertullus of Perge perhaps the money.(48) Perge was quick off the mark for Vespasian.(49) But they were not the first: Acmonia had a senator under Nero, Attaleia under Titus, Mytilene under Augustus.(50)

The evidence that Vespasian did anything to alter the balance of power between Italy and provinces is thin. His declared concern of ensuring the stability of the Res Publica meant if anything maintaining the status quo.

The changes that we do observe seem to add up to something different from an emperor’s policy: it is about money and shifting prosperity. The Gauls admitted by Claudius in 48 were disliked because they had too much of it for Italian senators’ taste,(51) and Tacitus makes Claudius urge the Italians to let the Gauls contribute their resources. Trajan in about 105 actually did make them pay: one third of provincial candidates’ free cash had to go into Italian land.(52) Serving was a burden and duty, one that provincials were still grateful to perform. Senators of long standing were unwilling even to attend the House, and Augustus imposed a quorum. The problem was similar to that of finding suitable Italian army recruits. All emperors could do was subsidize impoverished senators. Vespasian did this too, though not with lump sums of a million HS (like Augustus, Titus, and Claudius: he made grants of income. It was easier to control behaviour that way and the Emperor retained the capital.(53)

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46. See G.W. Bowersock, JRS 63 (1973) 133-40.
48. Id. ab. 117.
49. AE 1986, 687.
50. See Halfmann (note 47) 120, 103.
51. Tac. Ann. 11, 25. 5f.
52. Pliny, Ep. 6, 19 of c. 105.

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7. The imperial cult

One of the most important and remarkable achievements that Vespasian has been credited with is the extension of the imperial cult and its imposition on provinces where it had not existed in province-wide form before. This is important because it is also taken to be part of the concern of the Emperor to bring provinces and Italy into line and to give the provinces that chance of entering into partnership.

The evidence has been minutely and acutely scrutinized by D. Fishwick in articles and in his synoptic work of 1987–92, dealing with Baetica, Narbonensis, Africa, and the Danube. The interpretation of evidence from other provinces depends very largely on the analogy of what can be learned from Narbonensis, where a bronze text from Narbooncne establishes the cult and refers to itself as a law (lex). The date of the cult at Narbo is vital and has to be signed in detail. Notoriously the name of the Emperor involved is missing. Augustus, Tiberius, and Vespasian have all been canvassed, but Fishwick has shown that Vespasian is the only individual emperor who can be mentioned. The career of the man referred to as the 'first' high priest at Narbo, Q. Trebellius Rufus of Tolomea seems decisive for the beginning of the reign of Vespasian.

In Baetica the main evidence for the beginning of the cult is its resemblance to Narbonesian institutions. Priests who have completed their term of office are allowed honours in the form of statues, perhaps erected within the precinct at Corduba, for the inscriptions that mention them originate from there. That privilege is precisely the same as the practice at Narbo. So it becomes reasonable to assume that Vespasian installed the cult in Baetica too. There too the honoured priests all have their statues paid for from private funds, a fact in keeping with Vespasian's parsimonious administration.


56. ILS 6964.


58. Archon episcopus episcopus ter et archon at Athens between 115/6 and 116/7; for Fishwick successfully rebutted claims that Trebellius' 'primacy' was a question of status rather than time by invoking a letter from the Narbonencian council to the Boeotian council, referring to him as 'our first high priest': IG 22, 4193; AE 1947, 69. R. Chevallier, ANRW 2, 3 (1976) 766, argues for Domitian.

59. ILS 6964, with Fishwick (note 54) 1987, 240 n. 1 for ILS 6964.

60. Fishwick (note 54) 1987, 221 (noting E. Kornemann, Klio 1 1901 125 on payment).
The beginning of the imperial cult in Africa Proconsularis likewise is placed by Fishwick in 70-2, where the evidence is a series of inscriptions that fix the year of a high priest by reference to an era. Not all scholars have accepted the assumption that the era is that of a cult; they think rather of a political starting point, such as Caligula's restructuring of the province, but there is no evidence that the province as such had an era, and Fishwick is surely justified in considering it to be that of the priesthood itself.

All in all, then, it looks as if there were links between the establishment of the imperial cult in the three provinces of Narbonensis, Baetica, and Africa in the first two years of Vespasian's rule. All three were public provinces and none had been partisans of Vespasian during the Civil Wars, although they went over to him alertly enough. In fact Vespasian was notoriously unpopular as proconsul of Africa, and the episode at Hadrumetum noticed at the beginning of this paper only contributed to a reputation there that contrasted shabbily with his rival Vitellius' favoured performance. Hence Fishwick suggests that it may have been the senate rather than Vespasian

61. Fishwick (ibid.) 357-58, based on Herenn 92 (1964) 342-43; bibl n. 1, following J. Cagnat, CRAI (1886) 228. A stone honoring a high priest who held office in the year 112 was cut as one of a series of which another belonged to a year in which an emperor, most probably Commodus, was cos, III; that would be 183-5. Of course, the chronological relationship of this and the year in which P. Munnius Saturninus held the provincial priesthood is uncertain. The era of Vespasian is the period when the cult of the Dios appeared, benefiting the ruler who introduced it: Fishwick (note 60) 1987, 297.

65. The titles of the priest seem to change, three first- or first half of second-century, being called 'Flamen Aug. prov. Africae', twelve second-century 'Sacerdos', or (late second-century) 'Sacerdotalis provinciae Africae': R. Duncan-Jones, Epigr. Stud. 5 (1968) 151. The change of title must come after the creation of the colony at Cululc under Nerva or Trajan because the priest is still a 'flamen' at that time (year 40), while in Simitthu there was a 'sacerdos' in year 39: AE 1964, 177a (Cuicul, year 40); CIL 8, 14611, (Simitthu). Duncan-Jones (ibid.) 153 suggests that the Simitthu inscription was delayed until after the change took place. Fishwick is inclined to attribute the variation in the titles not to any change in the cult, such as the use of the word 'sacerdos' might imply (in the case of the living Emperor or on Roma) but to a local whim differentiating provincial from municipal cult.
that took the initiative in 70, for political reasons. In A.T. Fear's work on Baetica, in which he discusses Vespasian's grant of La,tiu,rn. to Spain, we have seen him drawing attention to the futility of offering it as an inducement to loyalty towards Rome. As an inducement to loyalty and gratitude towards Vespasian it was quite another matter. Now let us consider this in relation to Vespasian's setting up of the imperial cult in the three provinces. Although the main weight of the argument is borne by the evidence from Narbonensis, notably the lex de flaminio, the evidence for each of the three, though slender in itself, is used to support the Vespasianic date for the cult in the other two. Legitimate as this is, the fragility of the structure needs to be recognized; as far as Africa goes, Fishwick claims no more than that the balance of the evidence 'weighs overwhelmingly' in favour of a foundation under Vespasian.

Far more important than the question of timing is that of initiative. The verbs that Fishwick uses in his article on Baetica are 'installed' and 'inaugurated', and he speaks of Vespasian as the 'founder' and of a 'Flavian Institution'; by the end of the paper he has found considerations that tend to pin 'responsibility' on Vespasian not only in Baetica but also in Lycia and Armenia too: he 'was himself responsible for installing a provincial cult'.

So in Narbonensis Vespasian was 'responsible for organizing and installing an official provincial cult', and the provincial worship was founded by the emperor at the same time as in Baetica. In Africa in 70-2 he 'introduced new regulations relating to a provincial cult'; he had to secure

63. Tac. Hist. 2. 37; Suet. Vesp. 4, 3, with Fishwick (note 64) 1987, 267.
64. However delicate, the structure may in turn be used to support another hypothesis, that of the creation of an imperial cult in Mauretania under the same emperor, against received opinion of a foundation under Claudius. Fishwick (ibid.) 282-94. That there is still a problem as to date. In the paper on Mauretania, the action of the Mauretanians in prosecuting an oppressive governor in 60 is noted as a reason for the view that the cult had begun under Claudius (Tac. Ann. 14, 28.3: "accountabili Motu"). It is by appealing to the argument as a show, that the most famous cities, of Volubilis, of Valeria Severa, of the religion under Galo and Claudius, was not SC inconvenient to the province CRAtl (1916) 394.
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66. However delicate, the structure may in turn be used to support another hypothesis, that of the creation of an imperial cult in Mauretania under the same emperor, against received opinion of a foundation under Claudius. Fishwick (ibid.) 282-94. But there is still a problem as to date. In the paper on Mauretania, the action of the Mauretanians in prosecuting an oppressive governor in 60 is noted as a reason for the view that the cult had begun under Claudius (Tac. Ann. 14, 28.3: "accountabili Motu"). It is by appealing to the argument as a show, that the most famous cities, of Volubilis, of Valeria Severa, of the religion under Galo and Claudius, was not SC inconvenient to the province CRAtl (1916) 394.
65. No, as far as Africa goes, Fishwick claims no more than that the balance of the evidence 'weighs overwhelmingly' in favour of a foundation under Vespasian.
66. So in Narbonensis Vespasian was 'responsible for organizing and installing an official provincial cult', and the provincial worship was founded by the emperor at the same time as in Baetica. In Africa in 70-2 he 'introduced new regulations relating to a provincial cult'; he had to secure
the collective loyalty of Proconsularis. It was at a time when he was busy reorganizing the internal arrangement of the province. "Since one of the main purposes of a provincial cult was to impose some sort of collective unity upon a given territory this would have been a reasonable time at which to regulate the official worship of the emperor..." Political reasons dictated a common policy in all three provinces, 68 entailing not only new cults but modification of those already existing in Tarraconensis. 69

If we consider in general how cults were established in the Roman Empire we have two diverse models: Lugdunum, where in 12 B.C. the cult was set up by Rome and imposed on the province, and Asia-Bithynia in 29 B.C., where Dio Cassius' account clearly shows Octavian deprecating proposals made by the provincials and accepting only a version revised by him. 70 The Lugdunum model of imposition was followed in the west at Cologne and Camulodunum, the easiest model of local initiative in Asia under Tiberius. 71

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It is natural to see the Lugdunum model as serving for the blueprint for cults created by Vespasian in the three other western provinces; but it is worth recalling the circumstances of each original foundation. Lugdunum, as the Epitome of Livy makes clear, was clearly a means of counteracting trouble, in the form of resistance to census and taxation, unrest, possible aid to German invaders. Could the imposition of cult aid loyalty? At Camulodunum the cost of maintaining the cult of Claudius helped to cause the revolt of Boudicca; by 60 the priests were "pouring out their wealth" on the massive temple. 72 The size of the structure in relation to the resources available is one factor: in Gaul there were 60 tribes to contribute, in Britain 14. Second, chieftains in Gaul were in personal contact with members of the imperial family, from Augustus to Drusus Senior and on to Germanicus. 68 Fishwick (ibid.) 261f.; 268; 273.

Vespasian was responsible for grading Rome and the living emperor on to the existing cult of the分娩; it is only from his time that the statue-bases of priests appear at Tarraco, suggesting the same hand at work, although the Tarraconensian bases do not conform exactly to the Narbonensis rules, which prescribe entering the year of the priesthood, and instead offer the foundation's owner: Fishwick (ibid.) 276f. The gold bust dedicated by the province to Titus in 77 (ILS 261) suggests that the development of cult in Lusitania was similar. The cult of Narbonensis, in which there were municipal cults of Augustus, would have included the Deified Emperors, but now it would be strange to concentrate entirely on the Julio-Claudian emperors; the living Emperor Vespasian would have been included, as he was in Britain; and in established cults of Tarraconensis and Lusitania the scope was evidently to include him too. Fishwick (ibid.) 242 notes the Servian of CIL 12, 2316, a priestess responsible for the female members, cf. AE 1966, 193, of Baetica. For widening in Lusitania, see D. Fishwick, "A gold bust of Titus at Emerita", AJAH 6 (1981) 69-96.

68. Fishwick (ibid.) 261f.; 268; 273.
69. Vespasian was responsible for grading Rome and the living emperor on to the existing cult of the分娩; it is only from his time that the statue-bases of priests appear at Tarraco, suggesting the same hand at work, although the Tarraconensian bases do not conform exactly to the Narbonensis rules, which prescribe entering the year of the priesthood, and instead offer the foundation's owner: Fishwick (ibid.) 276f. The gold bust dedicated by the province to Titus in 77 (ILS 261) suggests that the development of cult in Lusitania was similar. The cult of Narbonensis, in which there were municipal cults of Augustus, would have included the Deified Emperors, but now it would be strange to concentrate entirely on the Julio-Claudian emperors; the living Emperor Vespasian would have been included, as he was in Britain; and in established cults of Tarraconensis and Lusitania the scope was evidently to include him too. Fishwick (ibid.) 242 notes the Servian of CIL 12, 2316, a priestess responsible for the female members, cf. AE 1966, 193, of Baetica. For widening in Lusitania, see D. Fishwick, "A gold bust of Titus at Emerita", AJAH 6 (1981) 69-96.
70. Epit. Livy 139; Dio Cass. 51.20.6f.
Caesar; there was prestige to be had at home from taking part in the ceremonies held at the altar and in the deliberations of the concilium Galliarurn. In Britain Claudius had come and gone in 16 days, and no other emperor came until the peripatetic Hadrian. We hear nothing of the activities of any concilium. British chieftains may not have won much prestige at home by hobnobbing with legati Augusti pro praetore.

By contrast, in the East in 29 B.C., the two provinces simultaneously offered Octavian a package at a time when Antony's conqueror was in their neighbourhood. Many cities had been on the wrong side in the campaign of Actium and needed to placate the victor, even to put him under an obligation. Octavian accepted enough to show that he felt goodwill and realised that he now owed them something, not enough to let them overrate what they had given. This model fits the development of the imperial cult in Narthonesis far better than the western model. Imposition of cult was an anomaly in established provinces. Already in 25, when Asia had succeeded in getting its second temple, 'Bactia' was tempted to try the same—and failed, for Tiberius refused it.73 In other words, nearly half a century before Vespasian seems to have instituted cult, Bactia itself had taken an initiative.74

We have seen that in 70, if A.B. Bowrorth's date is right, the whole of Spain was granted Latin, and that the most attractive reason suggested for this grant was Vespasian's own concern for the loyalty of the Spanish provincials towards himself.75 After the grant the people of Bactia had a strong motive for renewing an old request, and Vespasian every reason to accept, as the assured successor of Augustus had not.

Africa was another of the areas that had played no active part in promoting Vespasian's cause. L. Claudius Macer, commander of III Augusta, had attempted rebellion on his own account, and the governor L. Piso been assassinated by C. Calpetanus Rantius Festus, who found that no hindrance for further success.76 Unrest between communities followed, and early in

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74. Similar apparently collective activities are reported from other provinces before the reign of Vespasian suggest that there was a provincial koinon already in existence, and if that, why not a cult? Fishwick collects other phrases from Tacitus and Pliny akin to 'accusantibus Mauris' (Tac., Ann. 12.22, 4; 14.65.1; 13.30; 33.3; Pliny, Ep., 3.9.6f.; 3.20.l) and is able to show that they do not invariably imply action by a koinon. When Pliny uses the phrase 'accusantibus Afris' of Marius Priscus it turns out from a later letter that he means one city and a number of individuals: Pliny, Ep. 2.11.2; 3.9.4.
75. There may have been some extension of Latin rights under Claudius, but nothing to earn gratitude as grand as Vespasian's grant demanded: B. Levick, The Emperor Claudius (London and New Haven 1990).
the reign there was considerable reordering of boundaries. The people of that province too had good reasons for making a move for reconciliation much as the provinces of Asia and Bithynia had. What more natural than for Africa to follow Baetica’s example showing that good relations had been established?

But what are we to do with the uniformity of cult practice that Fishwick has stressed? Rather than assuming a uniform model imposed on provinces and an aim of standardizing practice, as an integral part of Vespasian’s ‘overall policy of admitting the Romanized provinces ... as full partners in the government of the empire’ we might think of imitation by one provincial council of another, a policy on their part of ‘keeping up with the Joneses’.

However, there is concrete or rather bronze evidence to favour an imperial origin for the Narbonensian priesthood: the lex that established it. Even though this lex has not been admitted to the canon of Roman statutes published in 1996 by M.H. Crawford and others, it might still be a specimen modelled on a structure drawn up in Rome, like the charters of Spanish municipia. Equally, though, it could be a purely local enactment, drawn up by the colony, a lex civitatis Narbonensis, for the regulation of the provincial cult which was to be held within its boundaries, and which would add to its prestige and prosperity. Its status is that of a self-regulating document, like the lex of a collegium.

We may support this view by considering the language of the document itself. It is strange that an individual of 60 such as Vespasian with an established heir should have specified himself as the recipient; the lex, if emanating from Rome, would need renegotiation on his death. Rather the phrase denoting the Emperor, if specific rather than a conveniently elastic phrase such as ‘imp. Caesaris nostri’, is part of the demonstrative act of loyalty that constituted the foundation of the cult: it combined the solemn form of a lex with specific mention of the honorand—and in particular with conspicuous and flattering disregard for his mortality.

This paper has been negative. The importance attached to Vespasian’s reign remains and must be accommodated. So perhaps one might suggest that what is important is less what Vespasian did than how people saw it and how they responded to it. Vespasian’s power grew, first, out of possession of legions, three in full fighting fettle, by a man with a military...

77. Oca-Lepcis: Tac. Hist. 4.50.
78. Fishwick (note 54) 1987, 299. At Arae Flaviae in the freshly annexed Decumates Agri the aim would have been analogous to those that operated at Lugdunum and among the Ubii.
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reputation and then out of the victory that legions and reputation brought. It was seen as permanent, for he also possessed an ambitious son with almost equal military distinction—Titus and Vespasian shared the triumph of 71. Civil war was over, "expando orbis terrarum." People could set to restoration and profit, following the example and injunctions of Vespasian when he began clearing the rubble from the Capitol and encouraged the reoccupation of urban space in Rome. In the event it was the provinces that benefited most from this exhortation, as they did from the renewed aggression in Britain and Germany and the deployment of legions on the Danube and in the north east of Asia Minor, bringing both security and new markets. These far-flung opportunities were too distant for Italian producers, except those in the far north of the peninsula. Changes in the relationship of Italy and the provinces were taking place, but they were gradual and no part of policy. (We may indeed suspect that Pliny's insistence on Italy's pre-eminence and the viticulture regulations of Domitian both show awareness that all was not well with Italy from the economic point of view.) Such things were beyond the control of Roman Emperors; it remains to be seen if they are within the control of a modern European super-state.

80. Tac. Hist. 4.3.
81. Suet. Vesp. 8.5; Dio Cass. 65.10.2.
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