THE TEMPLUM PACIS: CONSTRUCTION OF MEMORY UNDER VESPASIAN

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ABSTRACT

The issue of memory was problematic for Vespasian as founder of the second dynasty of Rome. The Templum Pacis, among the first entirely new structures completed under Vespasian, provided the emperor with a public space within which he could expediently establish public memories of events connected with the beginnings of his rule. Within the tempulum, the contexts of social memory – place, objects, ritual and textual narrative – were carefully architected and manipulated. This paper will argue that Vespasian used the Templum Pacis to construct a shared memory of the Jewish War and its consequences for Rome and the empire, thereby validating his claim to power.

Introduction

The Templum Pacis, constructed between AD 71 and 75, was the first entirely new building ‘of any consequence’ to be finished under Vespasian, who had succeeded in establishing a new imperial dynasty following the tumult of 69. The strong ideological resonance of the Templum is unmistakable. The precinct has been read by scholars within the context of Flavian ideology, and is interpreted as promoting connections with Augustus, the Ara Pacis and the Forum Augustum whilst distancing the new emperor from Nero, who had sequestered the very works put on public

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1 Dio Cass. 65.15.1.
3 As there does not appear to have been an aedes as such located at the site, the Latin tempulum or ‘inaugurated precinct’ seems the more appropriate term by which to refer to the monument.
display by Vespasian within the Templum. More recently, Noreña has explored the centrality of the Pax advertised by the Templum within Vespasianic ideology. Such interpretations contextualise the messages broadcast by the Templum within a broader public image promoted elsewhere by the Flavians. Yet more remains to be said of the Templum as a place of commemoration, redolent of particular memories which served the interests of the new dynasty. The issue of memory was especially problematic for the founder of the second dynasty of Rome. It is the ways in which Vespasian constructed memory within the Templum which are examined in this article. The Templum Pacis is approached not as simply a vehicle for the transmission of messages significant for Vespasian’s public image, but as an important node of memory, within which the contexts of social memory – place, objects, ritual and textual narrative – were carefully architected and manipulated. It will be argued that Vespasian used the Templum Pacis to construct a shared memory of the Jewish War and its consequences for Rome and the empire, thereby validating his claim to power. Because the issue of shared memory and its construction is of central importance to this argument, it is necessary to begin with the concept of memory.

Constructing memory

The issue of memory was of crucial importance for political power under the Principate, but especially so for one seeking to create the first new dynasty after that of Augustus. The problem of social memory is particularly acute for those who seek to validate their power after the fall of a long-standing regime. Judgement must be passed on the practices of those who have lost power in order to create distance from them and justify the transition of authority. The community must agree to remember that things have been

7 On the problem of social memory faced by new regimes, see P. Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge 1990) 6-40.
bad before in order to accept that they will be better under the present power. This aspect of memory under Vespasian has been explored in terms of his reaction to the public memory of Nero.8 Indeed, Nero remained popular in public memory in Rome.9 Three ‘false Neros’ appeared under the Flavians, in Egypt and the East, each presenting an alternative version of past events, proving how important it was for Vespasian to establish a new, shared account of what had occurred. What is more, Nero left an indelible mark on the urban topography of Rome. At the beginning of Vespasian’s reign, many reminders of Nero remained visible in the city. Not surprisingly, it is the ways chosen by Vespasian to negotiate the memory of Nero which have most interested scholars dealing with the Flavian building programme.

But new beginnings require not only the negotiation and manipulation of old memories, but also the construction of new ones, a process which equally played a role in Vespasian’s shaping of the city. Social memory is one component of political control and power, and can prove an effective and potent tool for sustaining and legitimating a dominant order.10 For this reason, the ways that Vespasian utilised social memory to justify his ascent to power are of interest. The challenge of establishing the basis of his legitimacy and power which faced Vespasian at the beginning of his reign was not one which had confronted any of the successors of Augustus in quite the same way. Imperial authority had come to be associated with the Julio-Claudian domus, but Vespasian, standing at the beginning of a new dynasty, could not derive the position of emperor from his lineage.11 What is more, as a novus homo descended not from senators but from tax-collectors and financiers, Vespasian did not inherit a genealogy of the pedigree of the Julio-Claudians.12 Vespasian could not build claims to auctoritas and maiestas upon descent from distinguished republican generals or heroic ancestors or venerated deities.13 These qualities needed to be demonstrated and reinforced through Vespasian’s own deeds in the recent past rather than those of

8 E.g. Darwall-Smith (note 2) 35-41.
9 Suet. Ner. 57.1.
12 Galba was the last emperor to claim lineage from an illustrious republican line, but his successors had Julio-Claudian claims through their very close association with the former ruling dynasty; see Mellor (note 11) 73.
13 On lack of auctoritas and maiestas, see Suet. Vesp. 7.2. See also K. Scott, The Imperial Cult under the Flavians. (Stuttgart 1936).
his ancestors in the remote past. Indeed, Vespasian appears to have been reluctant to fabricate a lineage to obscure his origins. Suetonius informs us that Vespasian laughed off attempts to trace his ancestors to the founders of Reate, or to a companion of Hercules whose tomb was visible on the Salarian Way.¹⁴

*Maiestas*, if not inherited, could be conferred through divine patronage. A series of portentous events lent sacred authority to Vespasian’s claims to power.¹⁵ Whether originating within the Flavian inner circle or not, tales of these events steeped Vespasian’s ascendance in divinity. It served Vespasian well to have them circulated and remembered. Levick suggests that these divine omens were documented in the memoirs of Vespasian, used by Pliny to provide a complete catalogue in his *Histories*, which was, in turn, used as a source by both Tacitus and Dio. Suetonius refers to eleven such supernatural occurrences.¹⁶ Of these, the miracles and omens which happened in Alexandria loomed large in the legend of Vespasian’s ascent to power. It is interesting to note that even at the time when Suetonius and Tacitus came to report these events, some variation remained in how they were remembered. The sequence of miracles, visions and recognition of Vespasian’s power at Rome is presented differently by each author.¹⁷ This suggests that Vespasian’s time in Alexandria had been reduced to a few essential points more conveniently passed into shared memory. It was not essential for Vespasian to establish an ‘official’ sequence for these memories; that he was remembered as legitimate ruler of Egypt and, by extension, the empire, and acknowledged by the gods was what mattered. When Suetonius and Tacitus came to include these moments in their narrative, they could be woven together as suited the disposition of each author. Still, Vespasian must have taken care that these events entered and were retained in public memory, serving as they did to legitimate his reign.

In order to establish the *auctoritas* necessary to legitimate claims to imperial power, Vespasian promoted his military successes, in particular the suppression of the revolt in Judaea. However, the process of converting military victory into political power, authority and stability was not straightforward, as Hölscher in particular has emphasised.¹⁸ Victory was transitory, restricted

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¹⁵ On these events and their ideological significance, see Levick (note 4) 67-69; H. Haynes, *The History of Make-believe: Tacitus on Imperial Rome* (Berkeley 2003) 118-47.
¹⁶ Levick (note 4) 67.
¹⁷ Levick (note 4) 68.
in space as well as time. To legitimise and secure the new regime over time, military success had to be perpetuated through the construction of an enduring memory shared by the entire community. In the case of the Jewish War this presented difficulties. The Jewish War was essentially the suppression of a provincial revolt, conducted in the distant land of Judaea. Though it did require a massive mobilisation of Roman military forces – four legions were involved in the lengthy five-month siege – no new territory was acquired and victory had limited consequences for the people of Rome. The majority of Romans had not participated directly in the Jewish Wars and therefore lacked their own memories and experiences of the war and its outcomes. The experience of the war thus needed to be transmitted to the people of Rome before it could be converted into a form which had meaning and significance and was imbued with the political messages of the new regime.

One of the traditional means available to victorious generals for doing this was the triumph. Triumphal processions brought the spectacle of war before the eyes of the inhabitants of Rome and the triumph which celebrated the success of Vespasian and Titus in Judaea did this to marvellous effect. The rich array of booty presented the wealth now acquired by the Romans and the ‘great number of captives’ gave an impression of the character and number of the defeated foe. Elaborately constructed, multi-storeyed floats (πηγματα) carried representations of the battles and sieges of the campaign, documenting the harsh reality of warfare. Josephus describes these in animated detail, noting the vividness of representations of the slaughter of the enemy with their lands soaked in deluges of blood. The author observed particularly the realism of these representations (Joseph. BJ 7.146): ‘... they portrayed the incidents to those who had not witnessed them, as though they were happening before their eyes.’

This mimetic quality was amplified in the final stages of the triumph. The enemies, here acting out the moment of their defeat, were destined to be slaughtered in public in the forum, a bloodletting which reproduced, in a controlled context, the carnage of the battlefield. This execution of captives


22 Joseph. BJ 7.144.
had been presaged by Titus, on his journey home, at Caesarea where he celebrated Domitian’s birthday by putting to death in games more than 2,500 Jewish captives, and at Berytus where he celebrated Vespasian’s birthday with the slaughter of even more captives in a similar manner, and in all the cities of Syria through which he passed on his way to Rome, ‘making his Jewish captives serve to display their own destruction.’ This combination of graphic battle images and re-enactment of martial violence successfully simulated the experience of war and broadcast victory in the East to Romans who had not witnessed the campaigns.

Yet the spectacle was ephemeral. What is more, the new emperor needed not only to disseminate news of a successful campaign, but to establish the significance of these events so that all shared the same understanding of their consequences, especially in terms of the basis of Vespasian’s power. For the Flavians, victory in Judaea had to be used to represent a threat to the security of the empire as a whole, so that victory was the restitution of peace to the entire Roman world. Certainly Josephus connects the victory with the restoration ‘of the empire of the Romans to its strongest state.’ In reality, the destabilising force was that unleashed by civil war, but following the events of 69 a message of peace and stability was most welcome, as Suetonius observes. It was inconvenient, however, to highlight the unsettling internal events which led to Vespasian’s rise, and so the Jewish War provided a good alternative.

A lasting memory of the victory and its significance needed to be established if this military glory was to be converted into political power and stability. How was this to be achieved? Recent work on the dynamics of shared memory has identified four crucial contexts within which social memory is constructed: places, objects, ritual behaviour and textual narratives. The Templum Pacis provided Vespasian with an opportunity to construct a social memory that would sustain his rule within each of these mnemonic contexts. The investment made by Vespasian in transforming knowledge of the Jewish victory into enduring political power through the construction of a collective memory was enormous. The Templum Pacis stood at the heart of a network of memory surrounding the Jewish Wars and their importance.

23 Joseph. BJ 7.96.
24 Joseph. BJ 7.158.
25 Suet. Vesp. 1.1.
26 Price (note 10) 3.
27 Millar (note 19) 101-28 reviews how the Flavian building programme commemorated victory in the Jewish War.
The Templum Pacis

The Templum Pacis was an approximately square precinct, 110 by 135 metres, situated to the south-east of the Forum Augustum. A high wall surrounded the enclosure, which was essentially arranged as a porticus adjoined by a series of five rooms opening onto the south-eastern colonnade. The central of these is usually identified as the Aedes Pacis. The Bibliotheca Pacis, known to be part of this complex in later periods, was surely accommodated within at least one of the four flanking rooms. As for the large open courtyard of the porticus, the Severan map shows an altar placed along the central axis. Here also appear six rows, each made up of four linked rectangular units, extending almost the full length of the courtyard, interpreted as either garden beds, within which a monumental botanical garden was planted or water canals connected to fountains. Either way, the feature must have contributed to the serenity of the precinct, creating a dramatic and pleasant contrast with the pace and bustle of the exterior.

The monument is referred to by Josephus at the end of his account of the triumph of Vespasian and Titus (BJ 7.158-62):

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The triumphal ceremonies being concluded and the empire of the Romans established on the firmest foundation, Vespasian decided to erect a *temenos* of Peace. This was very speedily completed and in a style surpassing all human conception. For, besides having prodigious resources of wealth on which to draw, he also embellished it with ancient masterpieces of painting and sculpture; indeed, into that shrine were accumulated and stored all objects for the sight of which men had once wandered over the whole world, eager to see them severally while they lay in various countries. Here, too, he laid up the vessels of gold from the temple of the Jews, on which he prided himself; but their Law and the purple hangings of the sanctuary he ordered to be deposited and kept in the palace.

Josephus’ words indicate a close connection between the Templum and the military glory celebrated in the triumph, suggesting that the precinct was intended to perpetuate a lasting memory of victory in the East. The Templum memorialised this success by conspicuously displaying spoils which evoked memory of the Jewish War.

But in order for this event to provide political stability for the new *princeps*, it also had to be imbued with significance for Rome and its empire. As the words of Josephus indicate, this victory was placed firmly within a broader context within the Templum, both through its name and its other holdings. This was a space devoted to *Pax*, which could stand metonymically on coins issued in 75 to commemorate the inauguration of the Templum Pacis, and which was the concept remembered in connection with the space by both contemporary and later writers, who all include *pax* or εἰρήνη in its title, even if the monument type was not consistently designated.\(^{31}\) The Templum advertised the fact that the empire of the

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\(^{31}\) Noreña (note 5) 40. For the unparalleled variety of forms of *Pax* celebrated on Vespasian’s coinage, see T.R. Stevenson ‘Personifications on the coinage of Vespasian (AD 69-79)’ in this volume.
Romans had been restored to a position of peace, stability and prosperity, conditions which had allowed Vespasian to gather together wonders from all over the empire and place them within the precinct. It was a ‘public celebration of empire.’ This was an important dimension to the memory constructed here. The events of 69 had shown not only that a princeps could be made outside Rome, but in any part of the empire. They had also shown that an emperor proclaimed in one province could be challenged by a rival claimant from another. For the successful victor to emerge from these wars, it was important to assert that all parts of the empire were under his control and that his reign brought peace and prosperity to all. This, then, was what Vespasian wished visitors to the Templum Pacis to remember: that he had been triumphant in Judaea and that his victory and reign brought pax and stability throughout the empire. As Noreña has convincingly demonstrated, this message is consonant with broader Flavian ideology advertised through numismatic and epigraphic media. What should also be emphasised, however, is that the ideological significance of the general concept of pax was here tethered to a particular memory, and one which Vespasian was careful to preserve in the public mind. The means by which this was done remain to be examined. How was this memory constructed here? We may consider the answer to this question by contemplating the contexts of memory accommodated by the Templum.

**Place**

Firstly, we can consider the Templum as a mnemonic place. Among the difficulties facing Vespasian, as he turned to construct memory of the events which legitimated his ascent to power, was the fact that the key moments which Flavian ideology chose to emphasise had occurred, from the perspective of the Roman civic body, off-stage, outside the city. It was in the distant land of Judaea that Vespasian had demonstrated his military skill and achieved victory in the Jewish War, away from the eyes of Rome. The triumph celebrated by Vespasian and his son Titus may well have broadcast this success and its connection to the establishment of a new dynasty, but memory of this event needed to be perpetuated on a more permanent basis. The creation of a commemorative locus within the city transported the memories associated with victory in Judaea from a foreign place to the imperial capital, where their resonance would be more effective. Against anxieties that an emperor could be made elsewhere than at Rome, it was

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32 Noreña (note 5) 38.
33 Noreña (note 5).
important to acknowledge that authority remained at the centre and it was in Rome that memories of Vespasian’s accession needed to be orchestrated. The Templum added to the urban topography of Rome a site which evoked memories of its founder, his rise to power and the circumstances of its construction.

The city was, of course, dotted with many such places of memory. Manubial monuments constructed by victorious republican generals each recalled the historical events which led to their erection. Caesar and Augustus, wishing not to compete with the memories of republican Rome connected with the Forum Romanum, created imperial fora, settings which they could invest with imperial memories, and specifically dynastic memories, placing the dedicator in the progression of Roman history. Likewise, the site chosen for the Templum was one not rich in competing associative memories, a place where Vespasian could construct and manipulate memories of events which had occurred far away. It was not built on virgin soil, but on the site of the part of the republican Macellum known as the Forum Cuppedinis, possibly destroyed by the fire of 64 and located, Varro tells us, ‘ad Corneta.’ The macellum may have influenced the form of the Templum Pacis, which, Anderson observes, resembles that of several Italian monumental marketplaces, though the Templum successfully supplanted any lingering mercantile genius loci. If a corrupted gloss of Placidus has been correctly emended, the location of the corneta was remembered primarily as locus ... nunc ex parte magna Templum Pacis.

The Templum Pacis was also located, as Suetonius indicates, foro proximum. Though located within 100 metres to the south-east of the Forum Augustum, the Templum Pacis does not appear to have been aligned with the imperial fora or their associative memories in its original design. Though joined to the imperial fora by Domitian via the Forum Transitorium, the Templum was originally a distinct enclosure, separated from the Forum Augustum by the Argiletum. Indeed, the design of the Templum Pacis was closest not to the imperial fora, but to the porticus of Rome. The differences in arrangement are instructive. Within the Templum, Vespasian created a setting conducive to the transmission and retention of carefully chosen memories. The design established the very conditions which Pliny the Elder,

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35 Varro, Ling. 5.146.
36 Anderson (note 28) 103 n. 4.
37 Glossaria Latina 4 (Paris 1930) 56; Anderson (note 28) 103 n. 3; Richardson (note 28) 101.
38 Suet. Dom. 9.4.
39 Darwall-Smith (note 2) 65; Anderson (note 28) 105-06.
writing under the Flavians, identifies as necessary for appreciating — and, significantly, remembering — works of art: leisure and quietude. He observed that under normal circumstances in Rome:

\[\text{Romae quidem multitudo operum et iam obliteratio ac magis officiorum negotiorum ... a contemplatione tamen abducent, quoniam otiosorum et in magno loci silentio tali admiratio est.}\]

... the great quantity of works of art and their resulting obliteration from our memory, and, particularly, the multitude of official functions and business activities must ... deter any one from serious study, since the appreciation involved requires leisure and an atmosphere of profound silence.

In Pliny’s view, the business of the city which preoccupied Rome’s populace and the crowd of statues set up within the imperial capital impeded the viewer from contemplating and recalling artworks. The Templum Pacis was, of course, located in a busy part of Flavian Rome. The Argiletum, where a Roman could purchase a copy of Martial’s book or a pair of shoes, was a major conduit for traffic between the Forum Romanum and Subura, a populous neighbourhood known for its noise, flowing sewers and brothels. The Clivus ad Carinas passed along the south-eastern side of the precinct, a street lined with tabernae belonging to the Horrea Piperataria. But a high wall constructed of rusticated peperino and travertine ashlars, still visible in the southern corner, insulated the enclosure from the external din and distractions of the area. The noise of civic life was thus muted and did not encroach upon the precinct. The gardens and water basins provided a tranquil space which could be experienced at leisure. Here, works could be displayed as a discreet collection, each work given ample space, not lost amidst the throng of Rome’s ‘second population’ of statues. The space of the

40 See Darwall-Smith (note 2) 65 and Noreña (note 5) 27 on the Templum Pacis as a space of otium rather than negotium. While Pliny uses the example of an unattributed Venus dedicated by Vespasian in the Templum Pacis to illustrate the impediments to remembering the details of a work of art, this does not counter the point made here. Pliny’s concern was with attribution, and he laments that the artist, though clearly one of the old masters, could not be identified. Nonetheless, Pliny was able to recall the facts essential to the memory here constructed — that the Venus was of Greek craftsmanship, of high quality and brought to Rome by Vespasian.

41 Plin. HN 36.27.

42 Juv. 11.140-41; 5.105-06; Mart. 12.18.1-2; 11.61.3-4; 78.11.

43 Colini (note 28) 14-15; Coarelli 2007 (note 28) 129.
Templum Pacis allowed the *Pacis opera* – the works of peace as Pliny refers to them\(^4^4\) – to be viewed, appreciated and remembered.

**Objects**

What were these *Pacis opera*? The collection was both extensive and exceptionally rich, and the objects which it included may rightly be considered as vehicles for transmission of memory. Unfortunately, no author provides a catalogue of these works which is as comprehensive as we would like. Josephus records that the Templum was embellished with τοῖς ἐκπαλαι κατωρθωμένοις γραφής τε καὶ πλαστικῆς ἑργοῖς ἀνὸ τὰ ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων χρυσὰ κατασκευάσματα.\(^4^5\)

Two broad categories of items within the Templum collection are here mentioned by Josephus: spoils taken during the siege of Jerusalem and items gathered from throughout the empire. Here, the Templum may again be contrasted with the Forum Augustum. While that imperial *forum* did showcase the *summi viri*, statues of ancestors and heroes of the past, these were in all likelihood commissioned by Augustus.\(^4^6\) Only one work, probably commissioned by Vespasian, is known to have been accommodated within the Templum. Pliny mentions a statue of the Nile with his sixteen children (each representing a cubit of the sixteen of an optimum deluge), wrought from the largest piece of *basinites* known.\(^4^7\) This object may have generally recalled the Egyptian portents and miracles which accompanied Vespasian’s accession and probably more specifically commemorated an episode preserved by Cassius Dio. According to the author, the Nile rose by a palm’s breadth when Vespasian entered Alexandria.\(^4^8\) Similarly, an inscription from Medamud praises Vespasian as he who makes the Nile rise.\(^4^9\) In his first year of reign, an Alexandrian coin issue depicted a Nilometer alluding to a good inundation.\(^5^0\) Though we may rightly question the historicity of the event – the Ptolemies and Augustus, as rulers of Egypt, were also recognised as controlling the Nilotic deluge – the story fits well with those circulating about other divine powers exhibited by Vespasian while in Alexandria. Neither Suetonius nor Tacitus includes Vespasian’s powers over the Nile in

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\(^{44}\) Plin. *HN* 36.27. See Noreña (note 5) 40 on the significance of this designation.


\(^{46}\) Darwall-Smith (note 2) 65.

\(^{47}\) Plin. *HN* 36.58.

\(^{48}\) Dio Cass. 66.8.1.

\(^{49}\) E. Drioton, *Fouilles de Medmoud (1926): les inscriptions* 4.2 (Cairo 1927) 56 no. 346.

\(^{50}\) J. Vogt, *Die alexandrinischen Münzen* (Stuttgart 1924) 1.43 and 77; A. Henrichs, ‘Vespasian’s visit to Alexandria’, *ZPE* 3 (1968) 73.
their account of his rise, but of all the stories circulating about Egypt, it was this that Vespasian chose to commemorate in the Templum. It could stand metonymically for the full sequence of events put into play by Vespasian’s entry into Egypt, while also recalling that it was in Egypt that Vespasian’s reign had begun.

Otherwise, the Templum presented works and wonders which had been taken from their original setting and were here recontextualised. A different type of memory was being created here, one which emphasised the actions which had brought these objects to Rome rather than the deeds of heroes and ancestors of the distant past. Vespasian, with only his own military feats to recommend him, ensured that memory of his credentials was perpetuated.

The spoils were firmly associated with the triumph in which they were conspicuously conducted through Rome (as described by Josephus and depicted on the Arch to Titus) and the conquest which it broadcast. However, a process of selection occurred. Josephus informs us that not all objects were displayed in the Templum: the Torah and purple hangings were kept in the palace. The fate of the golden menorah and golden table, items which Josephus describes as prominent among the objects captured in the temple of Jerusalem, is unknown. Only the vessels of gold from the temple were certainly on exhibit. Was this because the Torah and purple hangings evoked too specific a memory for the purposes of Vespasian, connected to the sack of Jerusalem for which he had been absent, rather than the campaign more generally?

It was not enough, however, simply to display these spoils if the Flavians expected them to possess a shared significance for the people of Rome, one which would convert victory into lasting political power. They were displayed alongside other holdings more generally evocative of a vast, prosperous and stable empire under Vespasian. Objects from Greece, and in particular Athens, featured prominently. Among the paintings was a depiction of a hero by Timanthes (35.74), of Ialysus (local hero of Rhodes) by Protogenes (35.101-02) and of Scylla by Nicomachus (35.108-09). These were probably presented within the colonnades of the portico. Famous pieces of sculpture were also housed within the Templum. Pliny, at the end of a long list of acclaimed statues, mentions that all of the most celebrated pieces of sculpture which he lists were dedicated within the Templum Pacis and other Vespasianic buildings. The vagueness of Pliny’s comment makes it

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51 Cf. Gowing (note 6) 146-54 on the Forum of Trajan.
52 BJ 7.162.
53 Plin. HN 34.84.
impossible to determine which belonged in the Templum. Known to be a part of the collection was an unattributed Venus (36.27). There was also a statue of Cheimon, an Olympic victor, which Pausanias considered to be the work of Naucydes. Excavations have uncovered a statue base which supported a statue of Pythocles by Polyclitus and, most recently, fragments of three bases inscribed with the names of famous sculptors identified as Athenian. These items from Greece provided an opportunity to challenge and suppress the memory of Nero. They were made publicly accessible to all citizens of Rome, just as the Flavian building programme converted places associated with Nero – the Domus Aurea, the Neronian lake, his private baths – into public amenities, viz. the Flavian amphitheatre and Baths of Titus. It seems that not long after the inauguration of the Templum Pacis such works were taken as illustrations of the Flavian principle articulated by Martial that ‘Rome is now restored to herself, and with you as our leader, Caesar, the delights which had once been those of a master are now those of the people.’ As Millar observes, Pliny had imbibed the message and already contrasted Flavian public-mindedness with Neronian self-gratification, specifically referring to the Templum Pacis within two years of the dedication of the monument: ‘among the list of works I have referred to, all the most celebrated have now been dedicated by the emperor Vespasian in the Temple of Peace and his other public buildings; they had been looted by Nero, who conveyed them all to Rome and arranged them in the sitting-rooms of his Golden Mansion.’

This was not necessarily the primary meaning conferred on the pacis opera. It was as items emblematic of the empire that these works ought to be available to all Romans, and it was as such that they were displayed in the Templum Pacis. This point is borne out if we do not limit our focus to objects of material culture contained in the precinct. An integral element of the Templum was the gardens. It has recently been suggested that the gardens served as a horticultural showpiece, the product of a botanical imperialism reflected in Pliny’s *Natural History*, which so frequently refers to the transplantation of plants from the provinces in Italian soil. If this argument is to be accepted, then the precinct provided a locus for the display

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54 Paus. 2.9.3.
55 La Rocca (note 28) 196-201; Noreña (note 5) 28-29.
56 Mart. *Spect.* 2.11-12.
57 Millar (note 19) 110.
58 Plin. *HN* 34.84: *atque ex omnibus, quae rettuli, clarissima quaeque in urbe iam sunt dicata a Vespasiano princepe in templo Pacis alisique eius operibus, violentia Neronis in urbem convecta et in sellariis domus aureae disposita.*
59 Pollard (note 30) 309-38.
of flora gathered from the reaches of the empire just as that other splendour of architecture, commissioned by Vespasian, the Flavian amphitheatre, paraded fauna acquired from distant provinces – lions and elephants from Africa, bears from Dalmatia and tigers from India. The works which embellished the Templum Pacis thus preserved memory of not only the Jewish War, but also the peaceful and prosperous character of the reign of the emperor who had consequently restored the empire of the Romans ‘on the firmest ground.’

**Ritual**

The Templum Pacis created contexts within which memory could be constructed and transmitted both as a place of remembrance and through objects. A case may perhaps also be made that the precinct provided an opportunity for the preservation of memory through commemorative rituals. Little is known about the cult of Peace or the rites practised within the Templum. The Severan Marble Plan depicts an open-air altar within the courtyard, which must have provided the focus for ritual activities. Recently, Pollard has postulated a strong botanical element to the cult involving the sacrifice on the altar of plants cultivated in ritual garden beds. Pollard suggests that a prayer which appears at the beginning of the twenty-seventh book of Pliny’s *Natural History* echoed a prayer which accompanied these rites. It praises how plants had been collected from Scythia, the Pillars of Hercules, Britannia and Aethiopia and brought to Rome. Certainly these lines connect the acquisition of plants from throughout the known world with the peace established by Roman power. The theme was appropriate within the Templum where items of various kinds from the far reaches of the empire had been gathered in a space dedicated to Pax. It does seem likely that botanical offerings were made in rites enacted in the Templum. It is possible that a crown of cinnamon (a product of the East) intertwined with gold dedicated within the Templum by Vespasian, represented a religious offering associated with the rites enacted here. It is easy to connect the

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61 Pollard (note 30) 327.


availability of such exotic eastern products with the peace established by Vespasian, as Pliny does, and this may well have been the message which the Flavian emperors wished to disseminate with the ceremonies conducted in the Templum. It should be noted, however, that the burning of cinnamon was redolent of other ritual practices also of significance within the enclosure.

Josephus, in Book 6 of the Bellum Judaicum, records that a certain Jewish priest named Phineas handed over to the Romans a number of sacred treasures, including articles for public worship and ‘a mass of cinnamon and cassia and a multitude of other spices, which they mixed and burned daily as incense to the God.’64 A ritual involving the dedication of cinnamon may well have brought to mind the taking of Jerusalem each time it was performed. It is tempting, though entirely speculative, to press this further. Was this ceremony to propitiate the God of the sacked temple of Jerusalem, in an example of the little-attested practices of evocatio, whereby the deities of a besieged city are summoned away and offered a home among the Romans?65 Both Josephus and Tacitus refer to the departure of the gods from the temple and it is not entirely implausible that this was an element of the story of the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem which gained currency as part of a Flavian retelling of the tale. If this was the case, the rite would still have perpetuated memory of Flavian victory in the East as the foundation act of the dynasty which brought with it the peace which, in the Templum, was associated with the stability and prosperity of the empire.

The cult may well have had a strong botanical element involving the sacrifice of plants from the garden on the altar. The theory is entirely speculative, and almost impossible to prove, but it is interesting to contemplate that within the Templum a ritual might have been conducted which reinforced the notion that botanical emblems of the peace and prosperity experienced throughout the empire could be gathered in this very spot. Through such rites, the precinct’s founder and his deeds and their consequences were recalled.

64 Joseph. BJ 6.390.
65 On evocatio, see Pliny, HN 28.18. For the argument that Titus performed an evocatio at the siege of Jerusalem, obliquely referred to in the writings of Josephus, see J.S. Kloppenborg, ‘Evocatio deorum and the date of Mark’, JBL 124 (2005) 442-44. The absence of a temple to Yahweh in Rome does not necessarily argue against this theory. In the developed form of evocatio there was no need to grant the deity a temple in Rome; see J. Le Gall, ‘Evocatio’, in L’Italie préromaine et la Rome républicaine: Mélanges offerts à Jacques Heurgon (Paris 1976) 519-24. My thanks to David Wardle for this reference.
Textual narrative

An important element of the Templum complex was the Bibliotheca Pacis, a public library of major works of Greek and Latin literature. Precisely which works belonged to the collection is unknown. Aulus Gellius refers to the works of two ‘most learned’ men within the library, the epistles of Sinnius Capito and the Commentarium de Proloquiis of L. Aelius, indicating that a range of works were included.\(^66\) It is impossible, however, to determine at what date these works were added to the library. More generally, we may observe that there was a flourish of literary creativity under the Flavian emperors, who gave their patronage to numerous epic poets. The writings of two authors in particular seem to echo the messages broadcast by the Templum, and it is perhaps not entirely fanciful to speculate that copies of their work may have been accommodated within the collection.

Pliny’s Natural History was compiled between 69 and 79 BC, almost contemporaneously with the construction of the Templum, and has often been read as a universal catalogue of animal, vegetable and mineral from throughout the Roman world, the literary analogue to the holdings of the Templum. It has recently been suggested that the work was written as an offering to the completion of the Templum Pacis. The preface to this opus, in which Pliny dedicates his writings, refers to the trustworthiness and value of the Natural History, ending with the comment that ‘many things seem extremely valuable because they have been consecrated to temples.’\(^67\) This, it is argued, ‘suggests that Pliny meant his Natural History itself to be an offering to commemorate the temple’s completion.’\(^68\) Pliny enjoyed a privileged position in the Flavian imperial court and it would not be surprising if this textual narrative, within which the practice of collection is central and is equated with the prerogatives of empire, also transmits the ideology behind the holdings of the Templum.

Josephus’ Bellum Judaicum would also find an appropriate setting within the Bibliotheca Pacis. Josephus, of course, claims to have written his account of the war with imperial approval: ‘the emperor Titus ... personally put his own stamp on my volumes and bade me publish them.’\(^69\) The result, as Beard has recently emphasised, is a text which closely reflects Flavian ideology: ‘With Josephus’ Bellum Judaicum we are probably getting as close as we ever can to the “official version” (or one of the “official versions”) of Flavian

\(^{66}\) Aul. Gell. 5.21.9; 16.8.1, 2.  
\(^{67}\) Plin. HN Preface 19.  
\(^{68}\) Pollard (note 30) 326.  
\(^{69}\) Joseph. Vit. 363.
The swift construction and inauguration of the Templum Pacis is the last event referred to in the *Bellum Judaicum*, and, as noted above, is mentioned immediately at the conclusion of Josephus’ *ekphrastic* narrative of the triumph celebrated by Titus and Vespasian. There is reason to believe that this text served as an explication of the monument, documenting the events from the battlefield through to the completion of the structure. This was, of course, connected to the legitimisation of Vespasian’s reign. Beard considers Josephus’ account as an attempt to: ‘[prompt] us to understand this occasion not simply as the patriotic marker of another successful Roman massacre, but as the inaugural moment of the new dynasty – a combination ... of imperial *adventus*, victory parade and accession ritual.’

Here is a textual narrative which explicitly connects the Flavian victory in the East and its celebration in the form of a triumph with the establishment of a new dynasty which stabilised the empire, all culminating with the foundation of the Templum Pacis. Such a text belonged in the Templum library, to provide visitors with the specifics of the historical events which the enclosure evoked in a more abstract and vague way.

**Conclusion**

Vespasian invested heavily in the construction of memory within the Templum Pacis, drawing upon ‘prodigious resources of wealth’ to facilitate the hasty construction of a structure counted by Pliny as among the three most beautiful in Rome, and in a style which Josephus esteemed as ‘surpassing all human conception.’ This was a monument which was intended to be remembered along with its contents and the version of the past which they preserved. Here, Vespasian carefully orchestrated social memory, focusing particularly on his military successes in Judaea, and alluding also to stories of divine approval conferred upon him while visiting Alexandria on his journey home from the East. These memories were given significance for the entire empire, which Vespasian claimed to have restored to a position of stability and prosperity as advertised within the Templum. Through a careful combination of objects, rituals and textual narrative, Vespasian established the Templum Pacis as a place of commemoration, evocative for all Romans of the Flavian victory which legitimised Vespasian’s

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70 Beard (note 21) 556.
71 Beard (note 21) 548.
political power, and which brought renewal and peace after a period of civil war and strife.

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