VESPA西安 AND THE CITY OF ROME: THE CENTRALITY OF THE CAPITOLIUM*

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ABSTRACT

The Capitoline was important to Vespasian as the first Flavian emperor. On accession, Vespasian was positioning himself in relation to the Roman past and differentiating his regime from the Julio-Claudians, with the main emphasis on establishing his concern for the populace, in contrast to the perceived selfishness of Nero. The temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, the first major temple built in the early city, and the destination of Roman triumphs, had been a casualty in the Civil War of AD 68-69, and was rebuilt to highlight his interest in tradition, and to place the Capitolium at the centre of his political programme. The spoils from the Jewish War made possible a great deal of public building elsewhere in the city, including the Forum of Peace and the Colosseum; these buildings reinforced the message about the military success of the Flavians and the benefits they were bringing to the populace.

Introduction

The Capitoline hill was closely associated in the Roman mind with the history of the city as the chief location representing continuity from the reign of the Tarquins into the early Republic, and through to the Imperial period. When the Flavians came to establish their presence, naturally they made sure that the Capitol was to have a central place in their overall planning for the city of Rome. Under the Julio-Claudians, the Capitol had slipped in prominence as life on the Palatine began to dominate. On the assassination of Caligula in AD 41, the Senate had met at the Capitoline temple when there

* My thanks to Tom Stevenson, the organiser, and other participants in Vespasian 2000 at University of Queensland on 27 November 2009, and to two anonymous readers for Acta Classica, whose suggestions I have largely adopted. A note on terminology: I use the term Capitoline to refer to the elevated region between the forum and the Campus Martius; the Capitolium is the southern summit occupied by the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus; and finally the Capitol is shorthand for the temple itself.
was some consideration of a return to the Republic. According to Suetonius, they shunned the Senate house (*Curia Iulia*) because of its association with Julio-Claudian dynasty (Suet. *Cal.* 60), but also because the Capitoline offered greater defensive possibilities.¹ Nevertheless, emphasis on the Capitol was topical and symbolic as the Flavian dynasty came to power, especially as a result of the very recent incineration of the temple during events of AD 69.

**Capitoline background: the early history and role of the Capitol in the life of the city**

Saturn was reputed to have established the first community on the Capitoline, and the earliest finds in the vicinity date from the Bronze age.² In the time of Romulus, legend held that the Sabines captured the Capitoline through betrayal by a Roman girl, Tarpeia. She perished ignominiously, but when Romulus founded his city he established a place of refuge (*asylum*) in the depression between the *Capitolium* and the *Arx* for deserters from nearby communities.³

When Tarquinius Priscus decided to build the temple to the Capitoline triad on the southern height, a human head of remarkable size and in a perfect state of preservation was discovered and taken as an omen that this would be the head of the world (Livy 1.55.5-6; Varro, *Ling.* 5.41).⁴ Similar omens relating to Roman power were associated with the terracotta *quadriga*, created by craftsmen from Veii, employed by Vulca (Plin. *HN* 35.157; Plut. *Popl.* 13-14). The face of the cult statue of Jupiter was painted red on festival days (Ov. *Fast.* 1.201-02; Plin. *HN* 33.111-12). The clothing of the statue of Jupiter took on importance because of its assimilation to the garb and appearance of the *triumphator*.⁵ Triumphal processions concluded in front of

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³ Coarelli (note 2) 29 identifies the *Arx* as separate from the Capitol, the peak currently occupied by S. Maria in Aracoeli. T.P. Wiseman, ‘Flavians on the Capitol’, *AJAH* 3 (1978) 168, notes that the asylum should be between the two hills; and on the basis of Tac. *Hist.* 5.71.3 suggests it should be on the side of the Capitolium. See E.M Steinby (ed.), *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* (Rome 1993-2000), s.v. Asylum (abbreviated below as *LTUR*).
the temple of Jupiter, and the victorious general offered a sacrifice at the *ara Iovis* (Suet. *Aug.* 94.9; Festus 285 L).

The work was completed by Tarquinius Superbus out of the spoils of war (a link exploited by Vespasian), but the temple was not inaugurated until the beginning of the Republic, on 13 September 509 BC. According to the problematic tradition, this dedication fell by lot to Horatius Pulvillus, one of the two consuls, much to the dismay of Poplicola’s relatives, who attempted unsuccessfully to subvert the occasion and force Horatius to yield priority to Poplicola through interrupting the ceremony with the false announcement of the death of Pulvillus’ son (Livy 2.8; Plut. *Popl.* 14). Is that confrontation to be construed as a sign of the power of the recharged state to keep in check over mighty subjects? Pulvillus’ legendary success is the sort of legacy that would be congenial to Vespasian early in his reign.

As Roman power increased, the lavishness of the decoration of the temple was upgraded. In 296 BC, the terracotta accoutrements were replaced with a bronze *quadriga* by the brothers Ogulnii (Livy 10.23.12), and there were considerable renovations in 179 BC. Thereafter dedicatory offerings from Roman triumphators, especially in the great age of Republican expansion after 200 BC, proliferated to such a degree that some items had to be removed (Livy 40.51.3).

The hill had older shrines, including the temple of Jupiter Feretrius, traditionally ascribed to Romulus;6 this temple had a close connection with triumphs, like the later Capitol. It was very small and its location is unknown, but supposed to be within the *area Capitolina*. There were also the shrines to Terminus and Iuventas which occupied the space later taken by the Capitoline temple and were incorporated within it.

The Capitoline hill was fortified at an early stage, and had an important role during the sack of the city by the Gauls in 390 BC. The defending troops are claimed to have held out against every assault (Livy 5.39.9-40.6; 43.1-5; 47.1-5). The hill thus had iconic status as the one place in Rome which could theoretically hold out against a foe. Strategically, it had relatively few approaches. The *Clivus Capitolinus* was the segment of the Via Sacra which led triumphal processions from the *Forum Romanum*, via the temple of Saturn, then climbed along the slope to the southwest and entered the *area Capitolina*; a portion can still be seen today beyond the portico of the *Dei Consentes*. Other antique approaches are the *Scalae Gemoniae* and the *Centum Gradus*.

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6 *LTUR* (note 3), s.v. *Iuppiter Feretrius Aedes* [Coarelli].
former usually interpreted as ascending the Arx, the other the Capitol. The *Centum Gradus* appear in Tacitus (*Hist.* 3.71) and are closely associated with the Tarpeian rock, but the location of the rock itself is hotly debated. The *Scalae* are thought to correspond to the modern set of stairs between the carcer and the temple of Concord, while the *Centum Gradus*, if they are something different, perform a like function on the Capitoline side (see sketch map).8

7 LTUR (note 3), s.v Scalae Gemoniae [Coarelli]; Centum Gradus [Rodriguez Almeida], who identifies steps up to the Capitol on a fragment of the Severan marble plan (FUR 31a) as the *Centum Gradus*.
8 For some of the problems associated with these locations, see Wiseman (note 3) 163-78.
The Capitol was the repository for the Sibylline books, first delivered to the city by Tarquinius Superbus (Dion. Hal. 4.62; 6.17). The taking of auspices in the early city took place on the *Arx* at the *Auguraculum,* but the temple itself also became closely associated in Roman thinking with the taking of solemn auspices and the careful mediation between political action and the will of the gods.

During the civil war with Sulla, the Capitoline was devastated by fire on 6 July 83 BC. Tacitus implies that this fire was deliberately lit and therefore qualitatively different from the destruction in AD 69 (Tac. Hist. 3.72). The treasure from the temple was rescued by the younger C. Marius and transferred to Praeneste (Plin. *HN* 33.16). The Sibylline books, which had been stored underground in the temple in a stone chest, were consumed along with the temple. The Senate was forced to commission a composite collection as a replacement (Dion. Hal. 4.62, following Varro). Under Augustus, in a sign of the times, the books were stored in the temple of Apollo on the Palatine, after some unspecified editing (Suet. *Aug.* 31.1; Dio 54.17.2). Q. Lutatius Catulus, a Sullan partisan, undertook the reconstruction of the first temple which continued until at least 69 BC. One of the architects was a Lucius Cornelius, a man of citizen status. This was the version burnt in AD 69.

**The legacy of Nero and the aftermath of the fire of AD 64**

The new Flavian dynasty reacted to the legacy of the Julio-Claudians, as well as responding to some of the events of the troubled period of AD 68-69. The building campaign undertaken by Vespasian and his two sons laid its programmatic stamp on the city and carefully differentiated the Flavian style. This comes across most boldly in the form of the Colosseum, which dedicated to populism a vast tract of land previously occupied by significant adjuncts of the *Domus Aurea.* As Robin Darwall-Smith points out, on the accession of Vespasian, since the reputation of Vitellius was already in tatters, most attention turned to an adequate Flavian response to the more substantial Julio-Claudian legacy, specifically the Neronian building programme. The *Domus Aurea* was construed as a selfish dynastic monument,

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10 His inscription and probable Ostian origin is discussed by Coarelli (note 2) 36-37.
11 For a reconstruction of the area in the time of Nero, see E. Segala & I. Sciortino, *Domus Aurea* (Rome 1999) 12.
reflecting the personal style and approach of Nero. Even though the palace was, in a sense, a public space, Vespasian was able to identify this *rus in urbe* as an extension of a highly indulgent life.\(^\text{13}\) The Colosseum occupied the valley previously embellished with an impressive lake associated with the imperial residence (the *Stagnum Neronis*). The construction must have begun early in the reign of Vespasian for it to be in use in AD 80.\(^\text{14}\) Significantly, it had been created out of war spoils from the Jewish War.\(^\text{15}\) This enabled the new Flavian dynasty to demonstrate that impressive public buildings would result from its outstanding military ventures. The Jewish War had brought with it enormous wealth and military prestige. Furthermore, the Colossus of Nero, after which the Flavian building was named, was an essential target of the war of words.\(^\text{16}\) Nero had commissioned the statue for a position in the atrium of the *Domus Aurea* (Suet. N. 31.1), but Vespasian deliberately chose to retain it and set it up in AD 75 as a symbol of Nero’s style.\(^\text{17}\) The statue was, however, remodelled and dedicated to Sol. Sol was traditionally linked with Apollo, who had been utilised by Augustus and closely integrated into early imperial life. The temple of Apollo Palatinus formed part of the house of Augustus, a tribute to the role of Apollo in the victory at Actium, and Augustus was otherwise seen as a good precedent for Flavian activities. Sol was also a suitable divinity for most elements in the Empire, apart from the Jews. The artist who realised the alterations was suitably rewarded (Suet. *Vesp.* 18).

The rebuilding of the temple of Claudius on the Caelian also had symbolic value (Suet. *Vesp.* 9), as Barbara Levick has pointed out.\(^\text{18}\) Nero laid claim to

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\(^\text{15}\) The text was revealed by the reconstruction of an inscription on the Colosseum from the nail holes securing bronze lettering. See G. Alföldy, ‘Ein Bauinschrift aus dem Kolosseum’, *ZPE* 109 (1995) 195-226; discussed by Millar (note 14) 118-19.


\(^\text{17}\) Howell (note 16) 293.

its site for the *Domus Aurea*;¹⁹ this was a motive for Flavian intervention and explicit differentiation of the dynasty’s urban planning and policy. More generally, Vespasian hoped to gain credit for rebuilding the city after the fire of AD 64 (Suet. *Vesp.* 8.5; 9; Plin. *HN* 36.102). Claudius could be celebrated at the expense of Nero: he suited Vespasian’s purposes since he had a connection with him via Narcissus as a result of the British expedition in AD 43; he thus represented an acceptable Julio-Claudian. Although Vespasian had a more troubled relationship with Agrippina because of his support of Narcissus, the importance of the connection with Claudius was emphasised, and a close relationship was claimed between Britannicus and Titus (Suet. *Tit.* 2).²⁰

Darwall-Smith has treated major developments in Flavian Rome, although the picture is still being supplemented by contemporary archaeology, particularly the exploration of the Temple of Peace as part of the expansion of excavation along the Via dei Fori Imperiali. This building was linked to the military credentials of the Flavian family. The Temple of Peace was also built from the spoils from the triumph over the Jews in AD 71 (Joseph. *BJ* 7.159-62) and was inaugurated in AD 75 (Dio 65.15.1).²¹ It possessed rich art treasures, like other triumphal monuments from earlier phases of Roman history, but Vespasian could boast of supremely rich trophies from Jerusalem.²² Public acknowledgement of military prestige provides a link between the Temple of Peace and the rebuilding of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, ever the focus of the triumphal procession. The products of Flavian military might were thus accessible in an untraditional venue, close to the forum.²³ Indeed the *Templum* of Peace occupied a sizeable slab of terrain between the Forum Romanum and the Forum Augustum (Fig. 1). This building formed part of a new populist ideology that aimed to cater for Vespasian’s supporters. This was desperately needed in view of his rise to the

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¹⁹ Nero appears to have demolished the Claudian temple after the fire of AD 64. Claudius did not immediately lose his status as Divus Claudius. See Darwall-Smith (note 12) 48-49.
²⁰ See Darwall-Smith (note 12) 52-55.
²² Some of these are mentioned by Pliny (*HN* 12.94; 34.84; 35.102-03; 35.109; 36.27; 36.58). Note further sources and examples listed by Darwall-Smith (note 12) 58-65; *LTUR* (note 3), s.v *Pax, Templum* (1999) [Coarelli].
purple against certain senatorial interests, and as a result of military conquest in a civil war.

The Temple of Peace seems to have been open to the general public; this was contrasted with the Neronian past by Pliny, writing under the Flavians, and dedicating his *Natural History* to Titus only two years after the inauguration (Plin. *HN* 34.84).\(^{24}\) The complex provided desirable connection with the emperor Augustus through the theme of Pax,\(^{25}\) also underlined by the closing of Janus after the conquest of Judaea (Oros. 7.3.8; 7.9.9; 7.19.4). Emphasis on the establishment of peace by Vespasian was a natural response to the process of self validation in the aftermath of civil war.

The restoration of the temple of Honos and Virtus at the Porta Capena fits into the same atmosphere (Plin. *HN* 35.120).\(^{26}\) The temple had originally been dedicated to Honos by Q. Fabius Maximus Verrucosus in 234 BC, but the joint temple had been vowed by M. Claudius Marcellus, the conqueror of Syracuse, after his victorious battle at Clastidium against the Insubri in 222 BC, and was eventually dedicated in 205 BC by his son (Cic. *ND* 2.61; Livy

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24 See Millar (note 14) 110-11.
26 See Platner & Ashby (note 5) 258-59.
This temple boasted a magnificent display of the spoils from Syracuse, and was situated outside the Porta Capena, at the head of the Via Appia, where returning generals assembled and prepared for civilian life. For Vespasian the important association was the triumphal career of Claudius Marcellus, who had deposited fabulous tokens of his campaigns and set an example to be emulated. The artists employed on the temple of Honos and Virtus are mentioned by Pliny, Cornelius Pinus and Attius Priscus, the first of whom is said to have been second in esteem to Famulus/Fabullus, the painter connected with the Domus Aurea, and the latter a painter recalling older fashions (HN 35.120). It seems Vespasian wanted the decoration of the restored temple to be within traditional paradigms. His triumph was to be the culmination of Rome’s military achievements and proof of his own outstanding credentials for the imperial role.

The new populist ideology also emerged in the overall Flavian strategy for further enhancing the city. An often cited passage of Suetonius makes it clear that Vespasian thought that employment of the populace was an important political issue and consequently was most anxious to spread an image of concern for the people and for his workforce:

When an engineer promised that he would convey huge columns to the Capitolium for an insignificant fee, he obtained no small reward for his design, but [Vespasian] dismissed the commission, saying first that he should allow him to feed his poor plebs (Suet. Vesp. 18).27

An idea of the technical advances in hand at this time can be gained from the funerary monument of the Haterii, in which the use of a crane is depicted. This seems to be the tomb of an imperial building contractor, perhaps even the engineer in the Suetonian anecdote.28

The age of Vespasian thus ushered in a new ethos of populism, transforming and adapting Neronian panem et circenses. The attention of Galba, Otho and Vitellius even during their short period in power had turned to the

27 Discussed by Darwall-Smith (note 12) 28-31.
grain supply – also an early concern for Vespasian – as well as donatives.29 Pacifying the plebs urbana was a complex undertaking, already established as an imperial duty well before the advent of the Flavians, but now subject to contemporary spin.

Vespasian’s accession and the devastation of the Capitol in December 69

Vespasian was proclaimed as emperor at Alexandria by the troops stationed in Egypt on 1 July 69 and subsequently treated this as the beginning of his reign (Tac. Hist. 2.79; Suet. Vesp. 6.3; Dio 66.8.2).30 He was proclaimed in person by his troops in Judaea on 11 July. Details are complicated, but he certainly did not reach Egypt until later in the year; according to Tacitus, Vespasian learnt about the defeat of the Vitellian forces at Cremona (25 October 69) after he reached Egypt but before he arrived at Alexandria. This could have been as late as early in 70, if we credit Josephus, who was in Vespasian’s company. In his version, Vespasian was not confirmed in the imperial role by the Senate and the Roman People until after Vitellius had been defeated and killed, news that Josephus claims he received when he entered Alexandria (Joseph. BJ 4.592-654).31

Flavius Sabinus was Prefect of the City at the time of Cremona. Tacitus relates that he was encouraged to take a share in the Flavian victory (Tac. Hist. 3.64) and he builds a picture of Sabinus’ reluctance (Tac. Hist. 3.65). The supporters of Vitellius within the city were a problem, even though Vitellius himself was close to capitulation (3.66-68). Sabinus, meantime, was surrounded by eager supporters who urged open confrontation with his opponents. On meeting opposition, Sabinus took refuge on the Capitoline, where he spent a stormy night (3.69). Negotiations continued on the following day, but matters were beyond the control of Vitellius. In the face of the anger of his unruly supporters, Sabinus barricaded himself and his supporters in the Capitoline precinct, where they were trapped and engulfed in a firestorm which incinerated the temple (3.70-71). Wiseman has suggested that their fortress was on the Arx, since (amongst other arguments) Tacitus states clearly that the temple was undefended and shut up (Tac. Hist. 3.71).32 In the event, Sabinus was hunted down and killed by the Vitellians and cast down the Scalae Gemoniae (Tac. Hist. 3.73-74). The consul

29 Levick (note 18) 124-25.
31 See Henrichs (note 30) 54-55, arguing for arrival in Alexandria in late AD 69.
32 See Wiseman (note 3) 164-66.
Quinctius Atticus, who had fuelled his opponents’ ire through circulating pro-Flavian propaganda, was saved by Vitellius after confessing (apparently falsely) to having set fire to the temple (Tac. *Hist.* 3.75). This was 19 December 69. Only Domitian escaped unscathed. Blame for the fire was subsequently placed on the Vitellianists by pro-Flavian sources (Joseph. *BJ* 4.645-49; Plin. *HN* 34.38).33

The rebuilding of the Capitol: form, substance, purpose and symbolism

The restoration of the Capitol arose as a political issue very early in AD 70. This emerges clearly from Suetonius, as David Wardle has pointed out.34 Apart from the general statement that Vespasian undertook the censorship because he saw nothing as more significant than the stabilisation and beautification of the shaky and disturbed state (*Vesp.* 8.1), Vespasian, on return, is reported as quick to turn his attention to the condition of the city itself. After redressing some political issues relating to the army and the provinces, Vespasian turned to the fabric of Rome. Suetonius sees the issues as fires and vacant spaces, and he signals that Vespasian led by example in undertaking the restoration of the Capitol. His account shows Vespasian’s attention to tradition and his populist approach, in strict contrast with the Julio-Claudian predecessors. He needed to bolster his support, since he could not count on the Senate. Thus, he had a ‘hands on’ approach to the inauguration of work, assisting in the clearing of the debris, and also took on the restoration of the 3 000 bronze tablets stretching back into the mists of Roman history. Plebeian resolutions are emphasised amongst these, alongside decrees of the Senate, another sign of the Flavian party’s need to rely on popular support (*Vesp.* 8.5). This related to Vespasian’s relatively modest background and his accession through the support of the military. Dio also identifies the restoration of the temple as a very early priority after Vespasian’s arrival in the capital (Dio 65.10.2), with the same emphasis on direct involvement and exemplary behaviour as in Suetonius.

Tacitus provides more detail as part of his treatment of the accession of Vespasian and the response of the Senate. At the first senatorial meeting after the firing of the Capitol, Helvidius Priscus had the controversial idea that in the absence of the emperor political matters affecting expenditure should be decided at the discretion of the Senate. According to Tacitus, Helvidius Priscus proposed that the Capitoline temple should be restored at

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33 Incident discussed by Darwall-Smith (note 12) 41-43.
34 Wardle (note 1) 208-22.
public expense, but that the process should be assisted by Vespasian (Tac. Hist. 4.9). At that stage, in the emperor’s absence, tribunici intervention by Vulciatus Tertullinus, apparently operating in the emperor’s interest, prevented the deliberately controversial measure from being sanctioned. The story is implicated in Tacitus’ presentation of Helvidius as a man fearlessly, but at his peril, standing up for the freedom of the Senate in a servile atmosphere. However, this confrontation also confirms the strength of opposition to Vespasian and the Flavian regime within the Senate.35

For Tacitus, as for all Romans, the Capitoline temple represented an element of continuity and connection with the origins of the city. Vespasian himself was to exploit this symbolism as an emblem for his new regime. On hearing of the victory at Cremona and the fall of Vitellius, Vespasian headed for Rome with grain supplies from Egypt and immediately set in hand the restoration of the Capitol (Tac. Hist. 4.51-53). The task was delegated to Lucius Vestinus, an equestrian, but everything was managed in accordance with tradition. Tacitus views with distaste the idea of assigning so important a task to an equestrian, but hastens to add that he was a man of distinction. The necessary clearing of the site was sanctioned by haruspices, who insisted on the removal of the detritus to the marshes, but that the renovated structure should adhere to the traditional site and form. Doubtless, this all suited the new emperor who thus placated the gods and created the required conservative image.

Pageantry reinforced the message at a ceremony on 21 June which reconsecrated the site. The ceremony was not simply the laying of a new foundation stone, but as Townend has outlined, the moving of the cult stone of the god Terminus, which had been left in situ when the original temple was built.36 Vespasian was thus seen to be concerned about augural issues and the dignity of the site. The ceremony harnessed soldiers of auspicious name, Vestal Virgins, and children selected on the grounds that both parents were still living. Helvidius Priscus as praetor conducted a purificatory sacrifice of a cow, a sheep and a bull. This was overseen by Ti. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus, a Flavian friend, in his role as pontifex.37 The installation of

37 For his status, see ILS 986. He was rewarded with a second consulship under the Flavians and probably became pontifex about the time of his suffect consulship in AD 45. In AD 70 he may have been the longest serving pontifex. See J. Rüpke (ed.), Fasti Sacerdotum: A Prosopography of Pagan, Jewish and Christian Officials in the City of Rome, 300 BC to AD 499 (Oxford 2008) 198, 842.
the foundation stone by members of the élite was attended with great pomp and circumstance. Uncoined and unsullied bullion was incorporated in the foundations. These careful religious observances also had a political function in the aftermath of civil war. Tacitus finally mentions the enhanced height of the new structure as the one improvement allowed, since the aesthetics had long been regarded with disdain. This will have clarified the message of a new age connected to the past, in many ways a familiar theme from the Augustan age.

**Flavian developments and the appearance of the temple on coinage**

The catastrophic fire in AD 69 had destroyed the temple for the second time, and its rebuilding by Vespasian was not long complete when it was destroyed again by the serious fire under Titus in AD 80 (Plut. Popl. 15.2; Dio 66.24). Its appearance at this stage is only known from problematic numismatic evidence.

The earliest numismatic representation of the temple is on coinage issued in 78 BC after the fire and before Catulus’ restoration of the temple. A denarius of M. Volteius M. f. displays the temple as tetrastyle, perhaps aiming to reveal the doors of the three shrines, with an emphasis on the larger door of the central shrine of Jupiter himself. It is not thought to attempt more than a summary image of the temple. Denarii of Petillius Capitolinus from 43 BC display the temple of the late Republic as hexastyle, still with Tuscan columns rather than Corinthian. The roof is decorated on either side and at the apex with horsemen.

Under Vespasian, various images appeared, at one time thought to reflect the date of completion of restoration, but this is now doubted. Differentiation used to be made between vague and imprecise designations of the temple as hexastyle and Corinthian and apparently later images, still hexastyle and Corinthian, but of greater precision. After the fire under Titus in AD 80, the temple is represented as tetrastyle, as it had been after the Sullan fire. It is still so represented in a Domitianic coin issued in Asia in AD 82.

Domitian took over the reconstruction after he became emperor in AD 81 on the death of Titus (Plut. Popl. 15; Suet. Dom. 5). Plutarch comments on this fourth and last temple:

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38 RRC no. 385, table 49.3.
39 RRC no. 487.1-2, table 58.6-7
40 See Wardle (note 1) 217-19.
41 BMCRE 2.351 no. 251, table 68.3.
The pillars were cut from Pentelic marble, extremely fine in thickness compared to length. For I saw them at Athens. But when they were recut and refinished at Rome they did not have as much smoothness as they lost in proportion and beauty, and they seem skinny (Plut. Popl. 15.4)

It is possible that the alterations described were similar to those that had already been encompassed in the reconstruction by Vespasian. The proportions were clearly a bone of contention. However, the Domitianic version of the temple is viewed far more positively by Ammianus Marcellinus in the 4th century: ‘the shrines of Tarpeian Jupiter stand out as things divine exceed those on earth’ (16.10.14) and ‘the Capitol through which revered Rome elevates herself to eternity, and the world discerns nothing more splendid’ (22.16.12).

This suggests that Plutarch’s attitude to the Domitianic recreation might have had a political as well as an aesthetic dimension. The Capitol retained its fame into the early mediaeval world.42

The continuing importance of the temple in religious and political life

The Capitol was quite crucial in the political life of the city. Here, at the beginning of each year, on 1 January, the consuls offered the first public sacrifice in honour of Jupiter Capitolinus to inaugurate the new political year. Provincial governors took vows before going to their provinces (Cic. Leg. agr. 1.18; Ov. Fast. 1.79; Lydus, Mens. 4.3). Such matters were taken seriously at Rome and represented a new year as part of a continuum extending back at least as far as the establishment of the Republic. It was also an important place for individual vows and dedications by kings, cities and communities.43

The temple was the repository for bronze documents from the imperial archive, many of which, no doubt, had been destroyed in the fire in December 69. A great range of legal documents was stored on the Capitoline, and the symbolic value of this material has recently been stressed.44 It enshrines

43 See A.W. Lintott, ‘The Capitoline dedications to Jupiter and the Roman people’, ZPE 30 (1978) 137-44, at 137. Note also that Pompey dedicated the treasure of Mithridates in the Capitoline temple (Strabo 12.3.31 = 556-57C).

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the permanence and inviolability of the records. Horace even uses bronze documents as a yardstick for permanence (Hor. *Carm.* 3.30.1: *exegi monumentum aere perennius*). The perceived symbolism of this archive had manifest political consequences already in the context of the bitter politics of the late Republic. Cicero took the permanence of bronze tablets sufficiently seriously to march up to the Capitol and destroy the tablets on which the Clodian laws of 58 BC were engraved; his justification and answer to charges laid by Clodius was that Clodius had passed the laws illegally, since he had obtained the office of tribune illegally, because he was in fact patrician (Plut. *Cic.* 34.1; Dio 39.21).45

Suetonius records that Vespasian undertook the replacement of 3,000 bronze tablets from the Capitol, seeking out other copies everywhere (Suet. *Vesp.* 8.5). This stressed the links of the Flavian dynasty with the past. Josephus, writing under Domitian in the 90s, mentions treaties and *senatus consultae* as conspicuous amongst displays on the Capitoline (*AJ* 14.188); he may be talking about the replacements set in place by Vespasian, and those that had accrued under the Flavians. However, an additional problem is the extent of destruction on the Capitoline after the fire in AD 80. Did these records again have to be replaced? Josephus may report on copies created under Titus or Domitian. At least two examples of military diplomas issued under Vespasian in the years AD 71 and 76 have survived, the first for a peregrine and the other for a Roman citizen.46 These give details of the exact physical location of the original document within the Capitol, but David Wardle cautiously advises that these may be copies of pre-AD 69 documents, commissioned by Vespasian in the aftermath of the fire in 69, rather than contemporary documents.47

Notice in this context the *Lex de imperio Vespasiani* (*CIL* 6.930 = *ILS* 244), an unparalleled constitutional document inscribed on bronze, which records powers given to Vespasian, perhaps bestowed on him within a few days of the death of Vitellius on 20 or 21 December.48 The copy we have is unlikely to be an original from the Capitol and may have been a copy on display elsewhere in the city. It was rediscovered in the early 14th century by Cola di Rienzo and displayed in the Church of St John Lateran. Vespasian had already made his proclamation as emperor at Alexandria on 1 July 69. Sometime after the death of Vitellius, the Senate bestowed on Vespasian all the honours customary for *principes* (Tac. *Hist.* 4.3.3). This is thus a crucial

45 Discussed by Williamson (note 44) 177-78.
47 Wardle (note 1) 217.
document as a symbol of the validity of the new Flavian regime. If the original document does date as early as December 69, it begs several questions: who wrote and authorised it, and are we correct already to see Vespasian’s stamp on it in the form of the reported Augustan and Claudian precedents? How long passed between passing the enactment and the engraving? Why is Claudius not recorded as Divus? Whenever the document was written, it was an important promotional document for the Flavians and no doubt prominently placed within the temple.

On the Capitol, at the point of arrival of triumphal processions, there would be a sacrifice at the altar in front of the temple; within the temple was preserved the *toga picta* of the *triumphator*. The Flavians did not wait long to avail themselves of a triumph. The Jewish triumph in AD 71 celebrated the historical importance of this attribute of the site.

Conclusion

In brief, the Capitoline and its temple were implicated in the history of Roman imperialism. Vespasian saw a political opportunity, the rebuilding of an icon destroyed by his political opponents. The association with military prestige throughout Roman military history enabled Vespasian and his new dynasty to entrench their victory in the Jewish War as a truly momentous event in Roman history. Buildings and renovations elsewhere in the city reinforced the message. These included the Forum of Peace, the Colosseum, the temple of Claudius, and the restoration of the temple of Honos and Virtus, works which all tied together and unified the Flavian building programme with a strong populist streak, in reaction to the Julio-Claudian past.

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49 Brunt thought an early date would cover these points. See Brunt (note 48) 105.
Acta Classica is published annually by the Classical Association of South Africa. The journal has been in production since 1958. It is listed on both the ISI and the SAPSE list of approved publications.

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