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The Propaganda of Vespasian

Jennifer Wright
Western Oregon University

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The reign of Emperor Vespasian began after his military victory in the civil war of 68-69 A.D., he claimed the imperial throne without the majority of the senatorial elite's support, and needed to legitimize his right to rule in order to secure his position. Political propaganda promoted his military victories, advocated his humble origins, popularized that he had brought peace to Rome, and earned him favorable accounts in the writings of the historians he funded. Sculptural propaganda promoted Vespasian's military victories, expressed his noble virtues, depicted how he began the Flavian legacy, how he distanced himself from Emperor Nero, demonstrated the efforts the Flavians had made for their people, and endorsed the peace he had brought to Rome. Through these efforts, Vespasian legitimized his sovereignty through a political and sculptural propaganda campaign to win the approval of the Roman Senate and people.

To understand the depth of Vespasian's political and sculptural propaganda campaign, it is necessary give an analysis of accounts regarding Vespasian written by historians during his reign, those who lived in his era but wrote about it in following decades, and in later centuries. The Flavians were the patrons of many people during his time who would later write histories which gave the Flavians their legacy. Later writers vary in their presentation of Vespasian depending upon information available to them, the era or country they grew up in, the popular politics of their country, and their personal feelings about Vespasian.

Pliny the Elder (born 23 B.C. and 25 August, 79) was a Roman military and naval commander, a naturalist, author, a natural philosopher, and a close friend of Emperor Vespasian. Through this friendship Pliny the Elder had personal insight into the inner workings of Vespasian's reign. Pliny the Elder's *The Natural History* is dedicated to Vespasian and his son, Titus, and devotes its preface letter to giving them the highest praise as his benevolent patrons.

He accounts the efforts that both Vespasian and Titus have made for their people. Pliny is useful in that his brief rendering about Vespasian and Titus' lives sums up the feelings of Vespasian's supporters and the prosperity that Vespasian's other historian friends spoke about in their accounts of him. Finally, Pliny provides a list of consulships and battles, explaining how they helped Vespasian successful secure his throne¹.

Suetonius (c.69/75 -after 130) was a Roman equestrian and a historian. He was born just as Vespasian was starting his reign or halfway through it, however he came from equestrian origins just as Vespasian had and was probably influenced by the noble emperor propaganda that was circulating during his formative years. Suetonius ' *The Twelve Caesars* provides an epic narrative of Vespasian's life. He went to great lengths to promote Vespasian's life, his works, and his accomplishments. Suetonius praises Vespasian for his rise from the lower levels of the elite, relates Vespasian's battles and campaigns in rapture, describes his greatness as a ruler, and accounts how it was impossible to corrupted Vespasian with flattery. From him we learn about Vespasian's celebrated successes².

Cornelius Tacitus (56-117 A.D) was a Roman senator and also a historian. He was 13 was Vespasian ascended the imperial throne in 79 A.D. and spend his youth growing up in the 10 years of Vespasian's reign, this could account for some of the deeply negative remarks that he made about Vespasian. Tacitus wrote' *The Annals of Imperial Rome* gives high praises to Vespasian's reign and accounts how Vespasian was one of Rome's greatest emperors. He accounts that Vespasian was a patron of his and Tacitus owed his elevated status to Vespasian. However, Tacitus later says Vespasian's rule was disgraceful, the politics that Vespasian

¹ Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History* (c. 77-79 A.D.). Trans. & Intro. John F. Healey. St Ives, England: Clays Ltd, Penguin House, 1991: iii-vi

² Gaius Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars* (121 A.D.). Trans. Robert Graves. St Ives, England: Clays Ltd, Penguin House, 2007278-279, 282-283, 286

employed were nefarious, and that Vespasian was a loathsome absolute ruler³. Tacitus declared that as a farmer, Vespasian had been in control of his own land and as emperor he held this absolute power too, so he could control the people but so he could hold back the influence of the senate and help his people efficiently⁴.

Barbara Levick (1931-) she is one of the United Kingdom's leading ancient historians and has written an abundant amount of works and is best known for her Roman emperor biographies. Levick's *Vespasian* is a biography on Vespasian's life. She portrays Vespasian as The Noble Emperor, a title which the Roman people had given to him. The Roman people gave him this title because, although Vespasian had promoted his noble emperor persona in his political and sculptural propaganda, through his efforts on behalf of the Roman people Vespasian proved he really was a noble emperor. Her focus is on how Vespasian gained power through political and military efforts after his civil war victory in 69 A.D., established and secured the Flavian dynasty, as well as how he wanted the emperor to have absolute power but not to fully wield it. In this way, Vespasian promoted himself and his right to authority, preserved the Senate, and supported the republican values of Augustus, whose memory he attempted to align himself with⁵.

James C. Anderson, Jr. is a Classical history professor from the University of Georgia, an author for the Thomas Ashby collection and has written countless articles about Roman architecture and archaeology fieldwork on Roman sites. His book *The Historical Topography of the Imperial Fora* presents an account of the changes made in the Roman Forum throughout its

³ Cornelius Tacitus, *The Histories* (69-70 A.D.), I-IV. Ed. & Intro Rhiannon Ash, Trans. Kenneth Wellesley. St Ives, England: Clays Ltd, Penguin House, 2009: (I,1), (IV,ii,97)

⁴ Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome* (c. 117 A.D.). Trans. Michael Grant. Bristol, Great Britain: The Penguin Classics: Western Printing Services Ltd, 1961: 403, 409, 417, 419

⁵ Levick, Barbara, *Vespasian*. New York, New York: Routledge, 1999

history. His focus is on the belief that he has found new evidence that Vespasian ordered the destruction of a large part of the Macellum in order to build the Temple of Peace. Anderson said that the Temple was built in 71 A.D. on the former site of the Corneta, which burned in the 64 A.D. fire. By destroying the Corneta Anderson feels that Vespasian was selfishly thinking of what was best for Vespasian and not what was best for the Roman people. Through this act Anderson believes that Anderson betrayed the Roman people, and because Anderson has become attached to the name of Vespasian, he feels that Vespasian has betrayed him too. Later in the book Anderson does provide useful information on the temple layout and purpose⁶.

Through the works of these authors the importance of political and sculptural propaganda can be better understood. Pliny published his work during Emperor Vespasian's reign. Although Pliny only mentions Vespasian in the dedication in his introduction this shows that Vespasian was funding the historians of his era. As a follow up to this Tacitus provides a later account of what historians from the end of the 1st century and the beginning of the 2nd thought about Vespasian. Tacitus represents the younger generation that had recently joined the levels of Roman politics and saw Vespasian's political propaganda first hand.

Suetonius wrote Vespasian's adventures, politics he employed, monuments he built, as well as how these benefited Vespasian's promotion of himself. Suetonius' efforts provide descriptions of the political and sculptural propaganda methods Vespasian implemented. Levick's biography of Vespasian covers all key aspects of Vespasian's public life and provides a detailed analysis of Vespasian's sculptural propaganda efforts. Her work demonstrates a well informed late 20th century understanding of Vespasian's life and imperial career.

⁶ James C. Anderson, Jr. *The Historical Topography of the Imperial Fora* Brussels: Belgium: Latomus Collection vol. 182, Latomus, 1984: 1-115, and Anderson, James C. Jr., "Domitian, the Argiletum, and the Temple of Peace." *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 86 No. 1 (Jan. 1982): 101-107

Furthermore, Anderson reviews the ever changing layout of Roman Forum, including a detailed description of the layout, function, and purpose of the Temple of Peace. This Temple personified in sculptural propaganda the peace that Vespasian, in political propaganda, claimed he had brought to Rome after his Jewish Wars victories. These authors represent the monumental efforts that Roman and later historians have gone through to preserve the history of one of Italy's most celebrated emperors. Vespasian rose above the social standing of his family, seized control of the largest European empire, and saved it from economic collapse while using propaganda to maintain his authority.

After the chaotic events following Emperor Nero's assassination, the power vacuum that began its swept across Italy and then the Empire, the rise of four contenders that devastated the Italian countryside in their efforts to seize the Imperial throne and the ensuing Year of the Four Emperors, Vespasian assumed the throne and declared that he had brought peace to the Roman Empire.

Through his actions Vespasian showed that he implemented Augustus' republican values, and through his actions personified Augustus' nobility. Vespasian wanted to distance himself from Emperor Nero's desire for wealth and cruel nature, by over taxing the Roman people to build the Golden House for Nero's private parties, whose entertainment was the torture of any man they could drag in off the street⁷. Also Vespasian was not like Emperors Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, the three previous emperors, who held the Imperial throne during the Year of the Four Emperors and were driven by their ambition and lavish lifestyle⁸. Emperor Nero's successes and lack of feeling for his people had earned Nero the assassination by his praetorian guards. The Emperors Galba, Otho, and Vitellius were so obsessed with their own power at the expense of the Roman

⁷ Bernard W. Henderson, *Five Roman Emperors: Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva, Trajan, AD 69-117*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1927: 2-3

⁸ Henderson 2-3

people, that the people would neither support them or fight for them, so it was in Vespasian's best interest to be nothing like these men.

After the excesses of Emperor Nero, the turmoil of the civil war, and the Year of Four Emperors in 69 A.D., when Vespasian claimed the Empire there was no money left in the Imperial Exchequer (Roman treasury) and the Roman Empire was on the verge of bankruptcy. This debt amounted to forty thousand million sesterces (approximately 320 million English pounds, or 960 million US) deficit. As Vespasian's first act in political propaganda, he needed to counter the pending economic collapse, stabilize the Roman economy, and rejuvenate the Roman Empire through exports. As a skilled accountant, Vespasian was so successful at managing the Roman economy that there was a lavish surplus⁹. Vespasian revitalized the Roman economy by exporting the raw materials of the Italian Peninsula out through the Bay of Naples port cities. Through these efforts Vespasian had saved the Empire from bankruptcy and he promoted it in political propaganda.

Vespasian used a small part of the economic surplus that he had made to fund his sculptural propaganda. After saving Rome from collapse, no one begrudged Vespasian this money because the Imperial funds were primarily under the emperor's authority and all Roman Emperors used the imperial resources to fund their sculptural propaganda. Since Vespasian had recently added so much wealth to the Roman government's treasury, that he wanted to use a little of these funds to continue the promotion of the imperial cult (deified emperor) and himself was perfectly acceptable¹⁰. After Vespasian's efforts to save Rome, the Roman people could easily identify him with the image of Augustus because both emperors genuinely cared about the Roman people and the successful continuation of the Roman Empire.

⁹ Henderson 3-5

¹⁰ Henderson 4-5

Vespasian politically promoted cutting back on lavish parties in order to conserve imperial funds in an effort to keep the fragile Roman economy together. He did not think that the excessive partying was in the best interest of Rome after just recovering from near disaster. Although the young men were disappointed by this Vespasian knew that men much older and wiser would support his political stand point. As a result, Vespasian did not go along with financing extravagant parties just because the young politicians were bored. Since he was from equestrian background, Vespasian was used to not having such luxuries and felt that it was in the best interest of the Roman state that the patricians got used to this as well.

Vespasian promoted his Sabian origins as an Equestrian. His grandfather was T. Flavius Petro of Reate who was a centurion, who fought at Pharsalus in 48 B.C. for the Republicans and might have served in Pompey's Eastern campaigns. Flavius Petro married Tertulla from Etruria and their son, Flavian's father was T. Flavius Sabinus who may have reached the status of centurion, but due to health reasons he became a moneylender. He received 2.5% tax on merchandise that came or went to the Asia province. The people of Asia province were so grateful for his fairness they put up statues to him¹¹.

An outstanding feature of Vespasian's political propaganda was that he let people see his true personality. Vespasian was well known for being blunt, direct, and having a simple sense of humor. If someone tried to curry favor with him by saying that Vespasian was a descendent of a patrician family, who in turn were descendants of Hercules, Vespasian would just laugh and grin at the absurdity. He lived a simple life, and literally was an Italian farmer who had risen to the position of emperor¹². Since Vespasian was of equestrian background, he had no patrician ancestry and like a former equestrian should, Vespasian knew that his ancestors were of country

¹¹ Levick 4-5

¹² Suetonius 286

origin, there were no deities in his background. However, the patrician families of central southern Italy, maintained that they were descendents of at least one of the key gods from the Roman Pantheon. In contrast Vespasian promoted that he was noble by virtue of his good character and not because he was related to a deity. This view became part of Vespasian's political propaganda in his promotion of himself as a noble emperor which will be discussed later.

As part of his political propaganda Vespasian supported the Senate, often visited the Senatorial building, promoted his humble origins as the son of a tax collector, moved out of the Arentia (the imperial palace) to a small villa outside Rome, had his villa open to any senators who wanted to visit him, and did not have these visitors searched. When Vespasian's villa was still under construction, he came on an inspection tour of the villa's site and when Vespasian saw that the workers digging a trench for the new foundation needed more help, he shed his tunic, jumped in the muddy hole, and joined them¹³. Through acts such as this one Vespasian tried to establish a relationship with all his people, that while he was an emperor he was also a person. Since the plebian workers were out in the rain, building his villa for him, Vespasian felt that in gratefulness and as a former equestrian he should help them.

Vespasian political propaganda stated that Vespasian was proud of his ancestry and would not give into the flattery that he was distantly descended from a patrician family, who in turn were descended from one of the key gods, yet shortly into his reign Vespasian deified his entire family. Then he elevated them above the status of others, had a temple build to the Flavian family, and established a priesthood so they would be worshiped. It was not just the men who were granted this right but the women and children of the household too¹⁴. It is curious that

¹³ Dio, *The Roman History: The Age of Augustus* (9-29 A.D): 215

¹⁴ Henderson 29

Vespasian would elevate his family to status of gods after promoting that they were simple Italian farmers.

His wife, Flavia Domitilla, died before Vespasian assumed the throne so she had to be exempt from this, but their daughter, by the same name, was deified. Officially, they all were deified when they died but the family enjoyed the rights of gods before their death as well¹⁵. The reasons behind why Vespasian deified his family are unknown. Perhaps he tried to mimic the patrician view that all Roman emperors were deities, and through this Vespasian, the Senate, and the Roman elite would be able to get past his origins and let him govern the Roman people. However, after Vespasian had gone against the wishes of the Roman elite, with his ascension to the throne, this seems unlikely.

He was a kind man, who was not easily offended, and was not quick to anger, which resulted in the line between the real Vespasian and his propaganda self blurred together on this issue. Vespasian treated kindly the patricians who doubted him, tolerated the opinions of the philosophers and historians who offensively critiqued him, and was not mean to an imperial usher who had been rude to Vespasian years before while he was navigating the levels of Nero's court. The traits that Vespasian's political propaganda could not cover up were the attributes that he never tried to suppress, such as that he liked to speak Latin in the plain style of a peasant, he spoke candidly, loved uncouth jests, and slang words; which all came from he Sabine farmer background¹⁶.

It was a considerable feat for Vespasian to rule from the position of Emperor, but he refused to give up his rural background. However, his background had made Vespasian the type of person he was and without that would not be a benevolent emperor. While Vespasian's

¹⁵ Henderson 29

¹⁶ Henderson 5

background made him not socially qualified to be emperor, and the patricians felt that his rustic behavior was not fit for the imperial elite, Vespasian's origins also gave him his talents of holding power without abusing it, dealing fairly with his people, and not thinking that the imperialism made him perfection. Vespasian also commented that his astuteness with money came from his childhood wish to be a money-lender. Rumors that people were plotting to assassinate Vespasian did not disturb him. As a solid old soldier, from a plain background, and with a weathered countenance, he merely faced it all as a sincere Italian¹⁷.

There is an ancient Italian view that life is hard and often times the Fates seem to deliberately be set life against you. Despite this, an Italian should always be grateful for the position in life that they were given and while changing their status in society is a lofty goal, an Italian should never turn their back on their family or the self respect that being a part of that family gives them. Vespasian followed this practice of recognizing his origins and was grateful for the efforts his ancestors had made to climb the levels of society.

It was a great accomplishment for Vespasian to be from the equestrian level and successfully convince the armies that joined him, the Roman Senatorial, and the Roman people that he should be emperor¹⁸. Granted Vespasian had swept into Rome and seized the Imperial throne from Emperor Vitellius but he also swiftly set about repairing the damage that had be done to the heartland of the Roman empire.

Vespasian's reign was viewed as similar to the early years of Augustus' rule, except that Augustus was believed to have acted out the role of Italian farmer turned Roman patrician during the beginning of his reign, and Vespasian was always genuine in his personal view of himself

¹⁷ Henderson 5-7

¹⁸ Cassius Dio, *The Roman History: The Age of Augustus* (9-29 A.D). Trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert. St Ives, England: Clays Ltd., Penguin House, 2007: 215

and everything he publicly felt¹⁹. By this Suetonius means that Augustus, like all patricians, personified himself as being a simple Italian farmer, who happened to be serving in Roman politics. However, Vespasian actually was an Italian farmer who, by his skills as a military tactician, an accountant, and with some experience as a politician, was able to not only raise himself to patrician status but to also rule as emperor.

Vespasian made great efforts to personify a 'noble emperor' and promote this view in political propaganda. However were does personifying a noble emperor end and being a noble emperor began? After all of the acts that Vespasian did on behalf of his people, it was completely unnecessary to promote himself as noble because the Roman people already saw Vespasian as noble. In fact they liked him so much that they gave him the title 'The Noble Emperor'²⁰. The many Roman Emperors tried to promote themselves as noble. Vespasian followed up his political propaganda with acts of helping his people. After the civil war he repaired the damages sustained during the civil war, removed Emperor Nero's Golden House and built monuments to comfort, inspire, and entertain the Roman people. These monuments are the Temple of Peace, the Arch of Titus, and the Colosseum, all of which will be discussed later in sculptural propaganda. Through promoting himself as a noble emperor, Vespasian's quickly won over the hearts of his people. It did not matter that he was not a skilled orator or had a striking countenance. Vespasian was their noble emperor and the Roman people loved him for it.

One unusual act of Vespasian's political propaganda was that when he first came to office he issued a law that granted him absolute authority over the Roman State but have the wisdom to never fully wield it²¹. This was an unprecedented decision for a Roman emperor because although their authority was nearly absolute, they did not publicly announce it and they always

¹⁹ Suetonius 286

²⁰ Henderson 5

²¹ Tacitus 403

presented the imagery that they were an Italian farmer who was leading the country in the best interest of his people. However, Vespasian was able to politically use this because he was able to show that a noble emperor who exercised restraint would not abuse this power, and promoted this view in his political propaganda.

Due to his lack of background in the higher levels of politics, Vespasian could merely have wanted to establish a firm hold on power before he lost it. Also, there is the fact that as a farmer he had been use to 'ruling all that he surveyed' in his fields, so he could have been perfectly simplistic in his need for control or he could have actually craved power as some ancient historians have expressed. Being seen as all power, did not help the peace propaganda that Vespasian began to implement but it used political propaganda to demonstrate that while Vespasian respected the Roman Senate and believed in Augustus' Republic, he did think that there needed to be one head of State.

Another aspect of Vespasian's political propaganda was that during Vespasian's imperial reign he insured that a man of the Flavian dynasty always held the consulship. Vespasian held the consulship each year from 70-72 A.D. and again from 74-76 A.D., with Mecellus Cocilus Nerva serving as co-consul in 71 A.D. Since the consul office was held twice a year, with the first term being the longest, Vespasian always held this first term to insure that his political agenda was in place for the longest part of the year. From 77-79 A.D. Vespasian had his eldest son, Titus, hold the consulship in Vespasian's place, to give Titus a taste of the authority that he would one day have and to insure that Titus would patiently wait for his own chance to reign as emperor. Vespasian's second son, Domitian, held the consulship in 73 A.D. as co-consul with

Cocilius Calpurnius Pison, during military campaigns that did not allow Vespasian or Titus to be in Rome long enough to hold the office of consul²².

Vespasian did not allow ambitious senators to out maneuver for control of the Empire. From these acts it could appear that Vespasian was power hungry but he knew from the politics of his youth that letting absolute power be spread out among politically maneuvering men could only lead to a corruption of the state. Therefore, Rome needed to be governed as a republic but with a sole ruler at its head, who held power but wielded it with restraint.

Also, Vespasian elevated the father of Claudius Etruscus to the level of equestrian for his remarkable career in the service of ten emperors, which goes along with Vespasian's political propaganda of rewarding those who did their duty in the service of Rome²³. As an act of kindness, Vespasian honored a man who had served his country faithfully, had seen much more than his share of turmoil, deserved thanks for faithfulness to a continually shifting throne.

It is believed, that the dynasty Vespasian established marked the beginning of a new era, which helped the following dynasty of senatorial appointed emperors smoothly gain succession and brought about the Roman Empire's Golden Age. Historians have trouble taking this romanticized version at face value. They questioned how one man's efforts could have had such a lasting change on Imperial policy, how much of Vespasian's work restored Imperial views, how much change it brought, and of all the stories about Vespasian, which ones are telling the truth²⁴. Not all of the records about Vespasian should be taken as completely true but they are rooted in fact and careful review of the sources can rule out which facts were true or false. Unfortunately, although Vespasian popularized his reign as a New Golden Age, his reign actually began the

²² Tacitus 409

²³ John H D'Arms., *Romans on the Bay of Naples: A Social and Cultural Study of the Villas and Their Owners From 150 B.C. to A.D. 400*. Cambridge Massachusetts, 1970: 155

²⁴ Levick 2-3

Silver Age because the Flavian dynasty was not the Julio-Claudian dynasty founded by Augustus. More on this issue is below in the sculptural propaganda.

To endear himself to the Roman people Vespasian needed them to forget the image of him being a conquering ruler after the devastating 68-69 A.D. civil war, in order to do this he needed a foreign victory. Having just re-secured Germany and Gaul, as well as some uprisings in Antonia, Vespasian needed a relatively uncomplicated victory. The easiest way to accomplish this was to defeat the Jewish people, who had given the Empire trouble in past and recent years. He used the Jewish people as his scapegoats, while Vespasian did take part in the ensuing Jewish Wars, he sent his eldest son, Titus, to fight most of the War in his place²⁵.

The Jewish Wars included maneuvering of the Italian fleets and armies making their way to the region, the systematic fall of Judean cities, Jewish armies being outnumbered and killed to the last man, the Jewish Temple destroyed, thousands of dead littering Jerusalem's street and the farm land decimated. The Jewish War was full of epic battles and bloody warfare that earned the Flavians the victory they wanted²⁶. Through these efforts, Vespasian was able to say that he had defeated all of Rome's enemies and had brought peace to the empire.

Among Vespasian's political propaganda, he and his son, Titus, were praised by Pliny the Elder as being benevolent patrons and that they had made great efforts on behalf of the Roman people. Pliny asserted that Vespasian's supporters believed Vespasian and Titus had brought peace and prosperity to Rome. Titus was admired as the current 'august ruler' and being Emperor Titus, while the still living Emperor Vespasian was now deemed the 'most distinguished' ruler²⁷. Pliny is referring to the last three years of Vespasian's reign, where he retired from most public office work and left running the Empire to Titus.

²⁵ Levick 107-108

²⁶ Levick 110-123

²⁷ Pliny the Elder iii-vi

Vespasian knew that the Roman people loved his son, Titus, so he gave Titus extensive political authority, which satisfied the Roman people that Titus was given the opportunities to excel so that when his own turn came, Titus would be a skilled emperor. Vespasian was able to use this to popularize himself through political propaganda as emperor as revered emperor because he let Titus rule in a lesser sense while Vespasian was still emperor. To this end, Titus held the position of censor and consulship six times during his father's reign, according to Pliny the Elder. As the Emperor's son, Titus, was given tribune power and made the commander of Vespasian's Praetorian Guard. In Pliny the Elder's promotion of the Flavians he gives high praise to Titus who will soon become the next emperor, praises Vespasian for the greatness he has achieved, but only mentions that Domitian wrote poetry²⁸.

The favoritism that Pliny shows for Vespasian and Titus, with little reference to Domitian, is consistent with the propaganda that the Flavians employed. Vespasian was mentioned first and foremost while Titus was seen as a second greatness and things to come. Domitian held the empire together for Vespasian and Titus when they were away from Rome but was only truly recognized for his political abilities during his own reign. An example of Domitian being given negligible authority in the Flavian government is the division of the consulship position during Vespasian's reign. Vespasian held office for 6 years, Titus held it for 3, and Domitian only held it once, when Vespasian and Titus were not in Rome long enough to hold office. Vespasian and Titus had not treated Domitian in this way to be unfair, but to keep the Roman peoples focused on the current emperor and his already in office successor.

The success of the Flavian princes (Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian) was do to the fact that they worked together to promote each emperor in succession. With the three of them working to promote Vespasian first, then Titus, and Domitian by himself, after the other two were gone,

²⁸ Pliny the Elder iii-vi

their dynasty had a clear pattern of succession and made certain the Roman people knew who they were supposed to be supporting. Through these efforts they were able to secure the Flavian dynasty by all three contributing to the promotion of Vespasian and then Titus, with Domitian having to look after himself as the last Flavian emperor²⁹.

Vespasian also funded his friend Quintilian's school, give him a position in the law courts, and a one year appoint with Vespasian as co-consul. Quintilian book on education has pieces of Vespasian propaganda scattered through out its text. Among these references to Vespasian's political propaganda, are Vespasian's attempt to bring back the toga, Republic values, and his dislike for contemporary philosophy, which promoted new views and true focus away from adhering to the past.³⁰ Vespasian promoted the toga because although it was a thick, heavy, woolen garment, it had been worn during the Roman Republic and kept falling out of favor because men would over heat in them. However, Vespasian strongly believed in Republic views and the toga had been a part of all that had been good about the Republic. Vespasian also promoted Republic values, particularly Augustus' interpretation of the Republic. Finally Vespasian had an extreme to contemporary philosophers who kept trying to introduce new ideas, which went against the Republican views adhering to the past.

Vespasian's sculptural propaganda began when he rebuilt the Capitol, Claudian aqueduct, and the Tabularium to restore Rome and promote himself as a noble emperor through political and sculptural propaganda³¹. Vespasian finished Claudius' Temple and having portraits of Claudius made, helped to establish Vespasian as a noble emperor, through political and sculptural

²⁹ Henderson 2

³⁰ Fabius Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* (c. 95 A.D.), Vol. I-III. Loeb Classical Library Foundation. London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1958: (III, vii,5); (III, viii,49, 70); (IV,iii,1); (III,i,22)

³¹ Henderson 5, Brilliant 93-95, Hannestad 122, Levick 72

propaganda, because he finished the works of a previous emperors who were well-liked³². In this way Vespasian promoted himself as a noble emperor and, through these first steps, linked himself to the Judio-Claudian dynasty. By restoring what Rome had lost, Vespasian personified a noble emperor.

Having no legal ties to the Julio-Claudian dynasty, Vespasian tried to link himself to Augustus, who had gone through a similar situation and created the Imperial system, which legitimized their right to rule. To promote this political and sculpture legitimacy propaganda Vespasian had a series of coinage made commemorating Augustus' victories at Actium, in Egypt, and his reconstruction of the Roman State. Vespasian employed political and sculptural propaganda to link himself to Augustus' republican values and the peace that Augustus had brought to Rome. This peace correlated with Vespasian's own Peace propaganda and was depicted in a series of coins and his Temple of Peace³³. In this way Vespasian tried a variety of sculptural propaganda to promote his right to rule.

Vespasian had statues made that depicted him in the popular style of his era. This style of statues gave an aged patrician the muscular body of a young man and a version of Vespasian's own head placed above it, which was common for the classical statues and promoted upholding the old ways. In the old practices, it was believed that the gods made the world perfect and Romans needed to stop distancing themselves from it and return to the ways things were 'always' done, instead of advancing beyond their past³⁴. As a result Vespasian sixty year old head was shown attached to a young perfect body. While the style did give Vespasian's body the appearance of youthfulness, it also made the creases on his own face that much more pronounced.

³² Kleiner, Diana E. E., *Roman Sculpture*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1992: 131

³³ Hannestad 121

³⁴ Dio, *The Roman History: The Age of Augustus* (9-29 A.D): 215

These statues had to adhere to the elites' custom that every aspect of a imperial statue could be used to emphasize an aspect of that person's views, a statue's attire, stance, gesture, and the things it held were used to promote the emperor's affiliation with certain deities, represented triumphs as a military tactician, and were not always an accurate interpretation of the emperor's true appearance. As before mentioned, old Roman statues depicted the face of middle aged or old emperors, while the body was that of a much younger man. The emperor's own face was used to demonstrate some aspect about that emperor, such as the power and mindset of the person it personified³⁵.

This trend of using the person's real face also gave the viewer a glimpse into the true character of the person that the statue portrayed. However, the merging of too extremely different age brackets did not always work. Sometimes along its surface structure, where one part was meant to flow into the other, there were too many differences. Without similarities in the stature of the two men, to merged the head of the emperor with the body of a young man with a completely different bone structure looked bizarre and was not flattering to the man that the statues were intended to depicted.

Vespasian's busts depicted him in a military style and through both political and sculptural propaganda they promoted Vespasian as a competent military tactician, which ties in to the promotion of Titus and his military triumphs and that they had brought peace to the Roman Empire³⁶. These triumphs were their military victories in the Jewish Wars, through which Vespasian claimed that he had brought peace to Rome.

There was also an overproduction of coins depicting Vespasian's military successes and the Augustan like peace he had restored to Rome. Through this he attempted to assure the Roman

³⁵ Henderson 5-6

³⁶ Kleiner 173-174, 186-189

people that he would not be making vast changes to the State and promoted that his reign would be similar to that of Augustus. This statement that Vespasian would not be making major changes to the Roman government was supported through the issue coins that were very similar to those of previous emperors, such as Augustus' Eternal City coin which viewed that the Romans would last forever, Tiberius' Eternity coin referring to the eternity of the state, Everlasting Life coin referring to the Romans Prosperity coin and Emperor Prosperity coin which Tiberius similarly had used³⁷.

During the beginning of Vespasian's reign, he had coinage issued depicting Galba made and used this as political and sculpture propaganda to appease the rebelliousness of subjects who had not accepted him as their emperor. Vespasian's political and sculpture propaganda certified that he favored Galba, over Vitellius or Otho, as a matter of his survival in the early days of his Empire. However, within Rome, Vespasian did not need to use this method of propaganda so he refused to construct the building projects that Galba's senatorial supporters wanted³⁸. Accounts like this demonstrate the extent that Vespasian was willing to go in order to secure the loyalty of his former rivals and where he drew the line of imperial cult practices for worshipping past emperors.

This coinage demonstrated Emperor Vespasian's courage, being victorious, bringing peace, his virtues, his honor, and the Fortuna (Goddess of Fortune) and Janus showing favor towards him, all of which relates to how Augustus promoted himself. Coinage during this time refers to Vespasian and Titus' defeating the Jewish people in the Jewish Wars³⁹. As a result of this policy Vespasian was able to attract more people to his own cult following.

³⁷ Levick 65-70

³⁸ Brilliant, Richard, *Gesture and Rank in Roman Art*. New Haven, Connecticut: Connecticut Academy Press, 1963: 87

³⁹ Levick 71, 74

A series of Roman coins minted in 71 A.D., refer to Vespasian's adventures and through imagery, link Vespasian to various gods. The depictions on these coins series are of Fortuna Redux by herself, Virtus and Honos together, and Janus Quirinus on the last. All of these images were depicted in Augustian style, are vary similar to the return imagery on the Altar of Peace and the Alter of Fortuna⁴⁰. The creation of these coins link Vespasian to Pax, who he made his patron goddess, as well as several other gods, and thus his was able to add other people to he imperial cult following because Vespasian made their patron deity, his patron deity too.

Through his illustration of himself on coinage and using Augustus's relief style, Vespasian was used sculptural propaganda to popularize himself to the Roman people and tried to link their perceptions of Vespasian with their memory of Augustus, which implemented Vespasian political propaganda that, like Augustus, Vespasian had brought a second golden age to Rome⁴¹. Through the connection Vespasian formed between Augustus and himself, Vespasian tried to link himself to Augustus' Golden Age.

Other coins Vespasian had made to promote his military victory over Nero in the civil war 68-69 A.D. promoted through political and sculptural propaganda an age of peace for Rome. Other kinds of coins depict Vespasian as a man, originally Equestrian, and how he rose to the height of the Roman throne. Vespasian used a style similar to a Republican and deliberately, unlike Nero, modestly depicted himself. In political and sculptural propaganda Vespasian promoted his dynasty by adding the images of his sons Titus and Domitian on the backs of his additional coins. After the Roman Senate had asserted Vespasian's claim as Emperor as legitimate, a new series of coins were made depicting an aged old senator setting a laurel on

⁴⁰ Torelli 38

⁴¹ Torelli 38

Vespasian's head⁴². By making coinage that promoted Republican values, Vespasian differentiated himself from Nero. Through Vespasian's depiction of an old Roman senator giving him a laurel, Vespasian showed that he had won the acceptance of the Senate as Emperor.

A more military style of coin illustrates Vespasian holding a Victory and dressed in military attire which depicts his triumphs as a military tactician. Coins demonstrating the 71 A.D. Jewish War victories of Vespasian as well as Titus became the foundation of asserting, through political and sculptural propaganda, their divine right to the throne and helped to establish the Flavian dynasty⁴³. Promoting their Jewish War victories, Vespasian and Titus proved to the Roman people that they had safe guarded Rome, by defeating all her enemies.

Later, Vespasian had coinage made linking himself to Augustus in political and structural propaganda which showed Vespasian was like Augustus. After Agricola victoriously completed Vespasian's British campaigns, Vespasian had a series of coins made in 77-78 A.D. depicting himself being crowned by Goddess of Victory, which furthered his structural propaganda that he was favored by the gods. Vespasian also promoted his and Titus's right to rule through a series of coins depicting their 71 A.D. success in the Jewish Wars⁴⁴.

From the 72-73 A.D. version Vespasian and Titus use a motif of Vespasian in full imperial armor, holding both Victory and a lance, while one Jew kneels at his feet requesting mercy and another Jew is coming to do the same. The Flavians used sculpture imagery like this to assert through political and sculptural propaganda that their dynasty was destined to rule and tried to erase the memory of how they gained power in the 68-69 A.D. civil war⁴⁵. The coinage that

⁴² Hannestad, Niels, *Roman Art and Imperial Policy*. Arhus, Denmark: Jutland Archaeological Society, Aarhus University Press 1986: 117-121

⁴³ Hannestad 119-121

⁴⁴ Brilliant 90

⁴⁵ Brilliant 91

depicted the Jewish Wars victories placed Vespasian and the Flavian dynasty in a positive light, erasing the 68-69 A.D. civil war victory from active public memory.

Vespasian also minted coins showing that he, like Augustus, had brought peace to Rome continuing his political and sculptural propaganda that he had brought about a second Golden Age. In 70 A.D. coins show Vespasian raising up the Warrioress Rome and other coins where Vespasian liberates Rome from the trials of the civil war, both these depict Vespasian restoring Rome to her former glory. At the eastern end of the Empire, Vespasian had sculptures build commemorating his victories, while in Rome he built monuments to continue his political and sculptural propaganda⁴⁶. Although Vespasian had actually started the Silver Age of the Roman Empire but by linking himself to the Warrior Goddess Rome after saving the city of Rome, Vespasian could add her as one of his patron goddesses. It is curious that in the Eastern portion of the Empire Vespasian built monuments recognizing his Jewish Wars victories in the region.

Vespasian made other coins depicting his restoration of Rome to its former glory and uses this structural propaganda to personify himself as a noble emperor. Additional coins depicted the personification of Peace, demonstrating the peace that Vespasian had brought. Later other Augustus-like coins were made to show that Vespasian continued Augustus' stance that the Roman Empire should have peace and that this peace should be maintained. Emperor Vespasian promoted his success as a military tactician through coinage depicting himself as both a emperor and a warrior. Other coins promoted that he had brought peace and liberty to Rome, as well as Vespasian and Titus enjoying triumphant success in their Jewish Wars victories. Through coinage Vespasian sought to link himself to Augustus and show through structural propaganda that Vespasian was very much like Augustus. Both men placed themselves on the Imperial

⁴⁶ Brilliant 90-91

throne and that they had each began a Golden Age for the Empire⁴⁷. The only difference was that Vespasian actually created the Roman Silver Age because although he was victorious in the Jewish Wars and secured the trust of the Roman people for the Flavians, he was not a member of the Julio-Claudian dynasty and although he was similar to Augustus he did not share the same values that the Julio-Claudians tried to follow, with mixed results. Roman history had moved on from the Golden Age of Rome to a Silver Age and there was no going back, no matter how much later emperors tried to go back to Augustian values.

In 75 A.D. Vespasian consecrated the Temple of Peace as a monument to himself and Titus' triumphant victories, using the Temple as political and sculptural propaganda that they had brought a Roman age of peace. The political and sculptural propaganda of Vespasian was not enough to equal him to Augustus' propaganda, and that Rome had slipped from its Golden Age to its Silver Age. Vespasian continued to commemorate his and Titus' success in a variety of political and sculptural ways⁴⁸. By establishing the Temple of Peace Vespasian declared that he had brought peace to Rome by defeating all her enemies. However, since the Jewish people had been a minor threat, this war propaganda only served as long as the people believed Vespasian, that he had saved them. Also, causing a war is not a way to bring about peace.

The Temple of Peace served as both political and sculptural propaganda, which celebrated the peace that Vespasian brought to the Roman Empire, his victories, and the military triumphs of Titus and himself. Vespasian's sculptural propaganda includes a quartz Nile River statue that Vespasian had placed in his Temple of Peace to represent his peaceful control over the fertile Nile flood plain⁴⁹. Among the many treasures that Vespasian put in the Temple of Peace were

⁴⁷ Henderson 31

⁴⁸ Hannestad 121-122

⁴⁹ Levick 71-72

his treasures from his Jewish and Egyptian campaigns, and artifacts from Nero's Golden House which showed that he had replaced Nero as emperor.

The Temple of Peace was built in recognition of Vespasian and Titus' Jewish Wars victory, it symbolizes their military triumph, and displaces Vespasian's political and sculptural propaganda that they had brought peace to the Roman Empire. Vespasian intended the Temple layout to embody peace. He describes the Temple complex as a synchronized rectangle that faced northeast, outer walls created a porticus colonnade and that the courtyard was a walkway leading to the Temple itself, with gardens and fountain pools on either side, which created a vast peaceful setting where people could embrace the peace that Vespasian had established⁵⁰. Through its sculptural beauty the Temple of Peace personified the peace that Vespasian claimed to have brought to Rome.

Along the front and back were columns aligned with the six columns before the Temple itself, which was on ground level, and consisted of a open corridor leading to a circular room. This is unlike any other Roman temple, it resembles a porticus, and in Vespasian's political and sculptural propaganda he clearly meant this openness for Pax by personifying peace, while it also gives the Roman people a public place that is peaceful and allows them to escape the pressures of everyday life⁵¹. By giving the public a quiet place in the heart of the capital city where they could go to be away from the hustle and bustle of city life, Vespasian had truly made a place of peace. Unfortunately, it was only the size of the Temple itself. Elsewhere in Roman life, especially in Senate debates, it was not so quiet.

A view about the Temple of Peace site, is that Vespasian issued the destruction of most of the Roman Forum's Macellum (commercial market) so that the Temple of Peace could be built. In

⁵⁰ Anderson James C. Jr., "Domitian, the Argiletum, and the Temple of Peace." *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 86 No. 1 (Jan. 1982): 105-106

⁵¹ Anderson, "Domitian" 107

earlier works, Anderson stated that the Temple used the former site of the Corneta, which burned down in the 64 A. D. fire, but he has found new evidence that he feels nullifies the previous view. Some historians become greatly attached to Vespasian and feel that it is a personal betrayal for Vespasian to have destroyed a vital component to the lives of the Roman people so he could build the Temple of Peace, in support of his political and sculptural peace propaganda. That Vespasian waned the Temple to be used as a new public place, only adds insult to injury⁵². Vespasian simply was building his Temple of Peace in a place at the Roman Forum which did not already have an Imperial monument on that site. Thinking that he deliberately destroyed the Macellum, is taking the matter way to personally. All Vespasian wanted was for his Temple to be on the Roman Forum.

In 71 A.D. Vespasian certified the Temple parts and in 75 A.D. dedicated the Temple of Peace and attributed to Pax, Goddess of Peace, in political and sculptural propaganda which recognized the victories by Titus and Vespasian in the Jewish Wars. By attributing the Temple to Pax, it highlighted the peaceful empire Vespasian felt he had created and demonstrated that Rome was enjoying a time of peace after the 68-69 A.D civil war. Vespasian placed a statue of his older brother in the courtyard of Augustus' Forum⁵³.

The debate whether the market was destroyed by Vespasian in 71 A.D. and not in the 64 A. D. fire, rages on in political and sculptural debate. In the past it was believed information that the fire destroyed Macellum and even if this new evidence is true, it is still under debate. There are adamant declarations that the Corneta did not burned to the ground but was torn down by Vespasian to make room for his Temple of Peace and his less than truthful demonstration of

⁵² Anderson, *The Historical* 37-38

⁵³ Anderson, *The Historical* 38-39

bringing peace⁵⁴. To be continually upset by the actions of Emperor Vespasian, centuries after his reign ended, is not the objective attitude a modern historian should have, and only distracts from further investigation for the truth. There is no need to feel betrayed almost two millennia later, regardless of how much historians may get attached to Vespasian.

As part of Vespasian's political and sculptural propaganda to distance himself from Emperor Nero he had Emperor Nero's Golden House torn down, replaced this pleasure villa and its park land with a public meeting house for the people, the Arch of Titus to promote the Jewish Wars victories, and the Colosseum which showed the great lengths that the Flavians would go to on behalf of their people and it also became the Flavian legacy⁵⁵. This is a social propaganda example of Vespasian distancing himself from corrupted past emperors, continuing to do things for the Roman people, and establishing his legacy.

Vespasian is believed to have started the construction of Titus' Arch because political and structural propaganda that promotes Titus also promotes his father Vespasian. The reliefs on Titus' Arch depict triumphant military victories of Vespasian and Titus during the Jewish Wars, which helps to promote their protection of Rome and right to rule the Empire. It was his son Titus who finished the construction so he is the one best remembered for it. Vespasian started Titus' Arch because what politically and sculpturally promoted his heir, also promoted Vespasian, although neither Vespasian or Titus lived to see the Arch completed⁵⁶. Unfortunately, Vespasian and Titus did not get to see the Colosseum's completion, their legacy is now known throughout the world as a key element of human history.

A detailed account of the Arch of Titus' inner walls, the vault, the border frieze, the spandrels, dedication inscription, and the reliefs themselves shows the intricate artistry that

⁵⁴ Anderson *The Historical* 67

⁵⁵ Levick 76-78

⁵⁶ Kleiner 188-189, Levick 125

Vespasian had implemented. On the relief displaying the Spoils, Roman men are seen carrying the treasures of Jerusalem's temple, with a particular emphasis on ritual items and a large candelabrum. These treasures were later housed in Vespasian's Temple of Peace, thus using political and sculptural propaganda to promote Vespasian as well as Titus' Triumph and the peace they brought to Rome. In the relief depicting Titus' triumph he is seen riding in his victory chariot with the branch of a palm in one hand and the scepter of Jupiter in the other hand⁵⁷. These two main reliefs show in political and sculptural propaganda the triumphant victory of Vespasian and Titus. Depictions on the Arch of Titus portray Vespasian and Titus, along with the spoils of Jerusalem's Temple taken during the Jewish Wars⁵⁸. The treasures depicted in these reliefs vary from a huge menorah, gold plates used in temple worship, a golden incense burners, as well as many other artifacts which were taken to Vespasian's Temple of Peace for safe keeping.

There are references to an arch Vespasian had built in promotion of Vespasian's military achievements, although it is not mentioned by name. In 75 A.D., Vespasian and Titus lengthened the Pomerium to promote, through political and sculptural propaganda, the peace they had brought to Rome, the victories they had won, and how they had furthered Roman power. Vespasian used Augustus's plans for the construct of the Colosseum, this also promoted through political and sculptural propaganda that Vespasian was similar to Augustus and Vespasian's achievements as emperor. He also built bridges and temples to further his image as the noble emperor, there is no mention of names for any of these or details about their locations⁵⁹. This shows that Vespasian continued a variety of sculptural propaganda throughout his reign.

⁵⁷ Kleiner 171, 185

⁵⁸ Brilliant 92, Kleiner 171

⁵⁹ Levick 76

Vespasian began construction on the Colosseum, which was originally called the Flavian Amphitheater and later the Vespasian's Palace, as a promotion of his achievement of being a well-loved and noble emperor⁶⁰. Vespasian intended the Colosseum to be the biggest arena ever created and provide the Roman people with battle scenes of epic proportions. The plans for it were originally drawn up by Augustus but none of the Julio-Claudian dynasty ever had the financial resources to fund the Colosseum.

This began with Vespasian starting the construction of the Amphitheatrum Flavium, later known as the Colosseum, which in political and sculptural propaganda links his dynasty with Augustus, who drew up the blueprints for the Colosseum. Vespasian began construction of the Colosseum to demonstrate both Vespasian's greatness as a Roman emperor and the merit of his dynasty⁶¹. Through Vespasian's stabilization of the Roman economy he was able to fund its creation, although the actual work was an initial undertaking which would take years to complete.

Vespasian implemented political propaganda when he began the Colosseum's construction where the lake used to be in Nero's Golden House gardens, by replacing the selfish excesses of a mad emperor with public entertainment given by a gracious emperor, Vespasian was promoting his noble virtues. In sculptural propaganda the Colosseum (Flavian amphitheater) was meant to depict Vespasian's greatness as an Imperial Emperor. Henderson feels that the construction of the Colosseum was the pinnacle of Vespasian's accomplishments and demonstrated Vespasian's great success, regardless if Titus finished the Colosseum⁶². Vespasian began construction on the Colosseum to demonstrate his Imperial greatness through political and structural propaganda,

⁶⁰ Levick 125-128, 205

⁶¹ Hannestad 123-125

⁶² Henderson 4

since it was finished after Vespasian's reign. Although, the Colosseum is often attributed to Titus, he also did not live to see its completion.

In a time when Rome had suffered such a devastation to its treasury and its economy, the wealth Vespasian spent to build the Colosseum and reach the peak of his sculptural propaganda by giving himself eternal fame, could be viewed as wasteful extravagance. However, the Colosseum's creation also demonstrates the level of financial skill that Vespasian had to find the money to pay for its creation without hurting the fragile Roman economy, that he was still rebuilding. Even Suetonius reluctantly concedes that while he did not approve of all Vespasian's methods for making money, Vespasian did use most of the huge amount of money he gathered for the Empire's benefit, it was perfectly acceptable for Vespasian to use a small portion of it to promote himself.⁶³ Through his economic success Vespasian was able to surpass previous Roman building projects and earn the respect of countless generations.

Vespasian's Judaic victories, are represented along with Titus', in an example of war deeds that were recorded both by Flavius Josephus and in the Judaic Triumph relief in allegory depictions of Judea's fall to Roman forces and Titus' triumphant victories on behalf of Vespasian and himself. These reliefs furthered Vespasian's political propaganda by portraying Vespasian and Titus in the men of renown style and lavishly displaying Vespasian's military successes. Battle scenes from their Judaic Triumph vary from the devastation of armies, cities being overrun with vanquishing soldiers, temples consumed by fire, and the remains of a devastated land. The set of reliefs are huge, intricately detailed, and depicts scenes of such violence that they frightened the onlooker as well as dazzled them, furthering Vespasian's sculptural

⁶³ Henderson 5

propaganda⁶⁴. By depicting their victories with such magnificent, yet graphic imagery, Vespasian and Titus were able to promote the greatness of their triumph. Later, during Domitian's reign, Domitian authorized the Cancelleria Relief B which depicted Vespasian returning to Rome and Domitian being there to greet him⁶⁵. Domitian used the Cancelleria Relief B to connect himself to Vespasian, promote the memory Vespasian, and through Vespasian promote himself.

Shifting focus away from the Rome to Campania's Bay of Naples, Vespasian used many acts of political and sculptural propaganda to promote his actions in the region. This begin with a vague reference that Vespasian built a Temple in Pompeii, which honored him and helped to promote Vespasian as a member of the imperial cult's deified emperors, which he popularized with political and sculptural propaganda. Vespasian's coinage, sculpture busts, tablets promoting his achievements, that he gave public land back to the Roman people, and the Colosseum all implement political and sculptural propaganda show that Vespasian was a noble emperor⁶⁶. Through this final sequence of Vespasian's main political and sculptural propaganda in Rome and a unique feature in Pompeii, Vespasian continued to promote his right to rule

Along the Bay of Naples there were further works that promoted both political and sculptural propaganda. This included the preservation of key imperial constructions within the cities and towns along the Bay of Naples' coastline, especially on the Island of Capri. Vespasian was charged with the maintenance of Augustus' Imperial villas on Capri. In the port cities Vespasian was contributing to the repairs that were still being made after 62 A.D. earthquake that ended up being a prologue of things to come. Roman elite used the Campanian coastline along the Bay of

⁶⁴ Torelli, Mario, *Typology & Structure of Roman Historical Reliefs*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Jerome Lectures 14, University of Michigan Press, 1992: 123-124

⁶⁵ Levick 76-78, I-XVIII, 125

⁶⁶ Levick 76-78, I-XVIII, 125

Naples and the Amalfia coast, as a prime vacation region as well as a place where banished elite could live comfortable because it was beyond the 100 leagues boundary line from Rome.⁶⁷ As emperor, Vespasian had to be there to oversee repairs to Naples, as well as coastal towns such as Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Surrento caused by the earthquake of 62 A.D. Through his presence, Vespasian show the Roman people that he really did cared about the suffering that the Campanians had endured and that Vespasian was helping to repair the damage.

As part of Vespasian's political and sculptural propaganda policy that the empire needed to cut back on its excesses, Vespasian drastically reduced the amount of resources that were used to maintain the Imperial villas on Capri. In fact, he spent very little time at these villas until the early part of 79 A.D., when the rebuilding of Naples threatened to collapse the delicate Roman economy⁶⁸. Vespasian's actions tied into his political and sculptural propaganda that recognized the beauty of the Roman Empire was important but not at the expense of the Roman people.

From the accounts of an Campanian elite, Pliny the Elder, there are records that the large estates of Campania had unjustly been absorbing the small farms of the region. Pliny the Elder notes that to counter this, Vespasian enacted politics to take this extra land and give it back to the cropland farmers, who were the life blood of Rome. Vespasian used this act in his political propaganda that Vespasian truly did care about what happened to the Roman people and thus he was a noble Emperor. Sculptural propaganda on this issue was inscribed by Vespasian's supporters in Nola, Capua, and Pompeii⁶⁹. This is an example of Vespasian's political propaganda that the lives of all his subjects did matter to him and he did not mind angering the elites while enacting justice.

⁶⁷ D'Arms vii-viii, 99

⁶⁸ D'Arms 100

⁶⁹ D'Arms 100

Further political and sculptural propaganda was that Vespasian and Titus had given out rewards to cities and towns which had sided with Vespasian during the civil war such as Naples, Salernum, Puteoli, and Surrento. In particular, Puteoli was given the new name *Colonia Flavia Augusta*, new lands, a major roadway leading to them, increased trade, major construction on the city, and creation of the third largest amphitheater in Italy⁷⁰. The Flavian gifts were put to good use, helped the people be more happy and contented, while making it easier for them to attract vacationers.

In support of Flavian political propaganda, Titus often spent time in Naples insuring the continued popularity of the dynasty his father had established and promoted that the Flavians cared about what was happening in the city of Naples. An example of this, that Titus attended the Neapolitan games three times, in 74 A.D., in 78 A.D. and one unknown year. Sculptural propaganda of Titus' presence is found in a Greek inscription on a public building at the Neapolitan games⁷¹. In good times and bad, the Flavians stood by their people, helping them in their triumphs and being there to finance repairs when disaster struck.

The Augustales' Sacellum at Misenum and the main imperial villa on Capri were maintained in true Augustan sculptural style. During the Flavian era, the statues of Vespasian, Titus, Domitian were added to Sacellum. Curiously, while all the statues are made out of Luni marble no effort was made to redo the marble surface of the building itself and to keep up with the standards of that time⁷². It seems odd to make statues to put in the Imperial Villas but not add new imagery to the villas themselves. Vespasian had to add his statues and Titus' to those in the

⁷⁰ D'Arms 100

⁷¹ D'Arms 100-103, 113n, 153

⁷² Paola Miniero, Ed. "The Archaeological Museum of the Phegrean Fields In The Castle of Baia", *Guide to the Collection*. Naples, Italy: Soprintendenza Archeologia de Napoli e Caserta, 2009: 58

villas but he must have saved as much wealth as he could and considering the destruction that would follow, the Roman Empire need every coin he could spare.

The Sacellum's importance made it in the best interest of the first two Flavian emperors to place the statues of Vespasian and Titus' in their prominent positions on either side of the apsidal. From this choice of being conservative with marble, it can be assumed that Vespasian wanted to link himself to the greatness of Augustus, which is why the statues were commissioned, but there were greater concerns to be paid for the rebuilding in Naples and at other cities along the Bay of Naples coastline after the earthquake of 62 A.D.⁷³. These statues were the only works commissioned for the villas demonstrate Vespasian's political and sculptural propaganda that is people were more important than personal gain.

In keeping with Vespasian's political and sculptural propaganda, Vespasian's statue was constructed as idealized image of himself. It held to the tradition of placing an aged emperor's head on the body of a young man, which promoted the vitality of the emperor. Great care was taken in the sculpting of Vespasian's statue to portray the Emperor in a regal and flattering way that would promote his political and sculptural propaganda of being the noble emperor. The stance of his nude statue, the drape of his imperial cloak from his left shoulder and arm and the position of his right arm being out away from his body were all subtle language meant to convey his imperialism, youthful power, and that he was an emperor during a time of peace⁷⁴. The craftsmanship of Vespasian's statuary clearly indicates that the sculptor was not as good as those who had worked for past emperors. The back had little more than an outline, the right arm was too far away from the body that it had to have support which took away the lifelikeness of the statue.

⁷³ Miniero 64, 66-67, 71, and 72

⁷⁴ Miniero 70-71

Vespasian also maintained Augustus' sculptural works along the Bay of Naples, particularly the Augustian villas on the Island of Capri and the sculptures that Augustus had built in the cities and towns along the Bay of Naples. Though the preservation of these sculptural pieces continued the imperial presence on the Bay of Naples and helped protect Rome's vital resource, because in the 1st century A.D. Campania's commercial success was unparalleled elsewhere in Italy or in the rest of the Western world⁷⁵. Their success was due to the close interaction that the Rome's elite had with Bay of Naples, since many of their summer villas were along its coast and trade routes past through there to reach Rome and elsewhere farther inland.

After the earthquake of 62 A.D. and the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. and Vespasian, with Titus' assistance, rebuilt Naples, Pompeii, Misenum, Puteoli, Cumae, Herculaneum, and the other cities/towns after the earthquake, and repaired the few that were left along the Bay of Naples after Mt. Vesuvius' eruption⁷⁶. The efforts that Vespasian made tied into his political and sculptural propaganda depicted that Vespasian was very much like Augustus, embodied the republican ideals that Augustus had promoted, and was a second Augustus.

Unfortunately, Vespasian's health deteriorated in 79 A.D. and he died 6 days before completing a full 10 years reign, two months short of his 70th birthday. Vespasian's last comment of political propaganda came from his deathbed, where he reportedly joked "I am becoming a god".⁷⁷ However, what Vespasian actually said was "Oh, I shit myself".⁷⁸⁷⁹ This shows that at death Vespasian still had his crude and wirily humor. He insisted that "An emperor should die on his

⁷⁵ Steven E. Ostrow, "Augustales' Along the Bay of Naples: A Case for Their Early Growth", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, vol. 34, No. 1 (1st Qtr., 1985): 64-65, 82

⁷⁶ Ostrow 72-82

⁷⁷ Dio Cassius, *The Roman History: The Reign of Augustus (9-29 A.D.)*, Vol. VIII, Books 61-70. Trans. Earnest Cary and Herb B. Foster. Loeb Classical Library Foundation. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1925: 368

⁷⁸ Dr. Ben Lowe, *HST: 321 Biography & Empire*. Monmouth, Oregon: Western Oregon University, Spring Term, 2008: May 7th-8th 2008

⁷⁹ Christy Lowe, *1st Year Latin, 3rd Term*. Monmouth, Oregon: Western Oregon University, Spring Term 2008, May 7th-8th 2008

feet"⁸⁰, and got his attendance to help him up so that his last moments were looking out his bedroom window at the land and its people he so dearly loved.

After his years of service to his people, it was strongly felt that Vespasian deserved his deification at death because, of all the successors that Augustus had, Vespasian was viewed as the most worthy of this honor, and thus Vespasian's political propaganda of being the 'noble emperor' embodies his legacy as really being the Noble Emperor of Rome⁸¹. In this way, Vespasian died on 23 June 79 A.D., leaving the Flavian propaganda, the Flavian dynasty, and the care of the Roman people to his eldest son Titus.

Problems for the Empire rose two months later on 24 August 79 AD when Mt. Vesuvius erupted, blowing off its top and the upper part of its southwest side. The mountain spewed hot ash and volcanic materials that raced down its slopes, Herculaneum and other towns along its coastal side were covered with molten lava. Meanwhile the ash and lava swept down the southern slope and across the plain, enveloped Pompeii and other cities and towns in 5 meters of volcanic materials, and pushing the coastline a mile farther out into the Bay.

When Titus heard what had happened he immediately sent relief workers and resources to help save the survivors. As emperor it was his responsibility to finance the repair efforts but when Titus' response when he saw the bill it cover the damages, he only response was, "I am done for"⁸². Nevertheless, Titus set to work undoing the damage that Mt. Vesuvius had caused and in his father name rebuilt Naples, Surrento, and the Sebasta⁸³. There was nothing the Romans could do about Pompeii, Herculaneum, and other cities and towns that had been buried in molten materials, they were simply too deep. Rebuilding Naples, the villas of the Naplian elite,

⁸⁰ Dio Cassius *The Roman History: The Reign of Augustus* (9-29 A.D), Vol. VIII, Books 61-70: 368

⁸¹ Henderson 170

⁸² Dio *The Roman History: The Reign of Augustus* (9-29 A.D): 215

⁸³ D'Arms 100-103, 113n, 153

the coastal town of Surrento, and the Sebasta the other cities, and the towns along the peninsulas, which had escaped the worst of the disaster but were so still damaged from the earthquake prolonged in 62 A.D. was a monumental undertaking.

In my conclusions, I found that while there is a great deal of positive accounts on Vespasian there are also some negative. Vespasian's allies using the banishment to the Bay of Naples to trick Vespasian's predecessor, Emperor Vitellius, into thinking that if Vitellius surrendered he would be given a beautiful and secure villa in his homeland. After they had taken him prisoner, Vespasian's army promptly killed Vitellius⁸⁴. Vespasian was the patron of many future historians during his reign and for this he earned favorable accounts in their histories. However, those who tried to record Vespasian's darker acts were dealt with and their writings destroyed⁸⁵. Even decades after Vespasian's reign historians would only make vague reference to a few acts because the imperial cult to the deified emperors dictated that if any well respected past emperor was insulted the current emperor had no choice but to kill the offending person. One historian on his death bed wrote a rather disturbing passage that during the first year of Vespasian's reign he had 120 politicians from key elite families killed for exposing him. Since only one ancient historian mentioned this fact modern historians cannot support it, however other ancient records do correlate with it. The Roman census for that year show that these men were killed and in the order of succession with their families, while that year's health records show that there were no plagues in Rome or the provinces⁸⁶. Ancient historians do comment that at a banquet where Cisenus Vetelius dared to mention the name of Menius Metelus, whom Vespasian had forbidden to ever be spoken of again, and Vespasian had Vetelius killed right there at the table⁸⁷.

⁸⁴ D'Arms 99

⁸⁵ Dio, *The Roman History: The Age of Augustus* (9-29 A.D): 12-13

⁸⁶ Hammond 77-78

⁸⁷ Tacitus 419

Despite all of these negative aspects Vespasian did many positive acts which promoted and popularized him through political and sculptural propaganda.

Emperor Vespasian's reign began after military victory in the civil war 68-69 A.D. To legitimize his right to assumed the imperial throne, Vespasian used political and sculptural propaganda to promoted himself to the Senatorial elite and the Roman people. Vespasian's political propaganda promoted his military victories, supported the belief that Rome in a time of peace, and with his funding of historians he was given appreciative account in their histories. His sculptural propaganda endorse his military successes, expressed his noble virtues, displaced the Flavian achievements and their legacy, distinguished him from Emperor Nero, and demonstrated the peace he had brought to Rome. Vespasian's use of a political and sculptural propaganda legitimized his sovereignty in order to win the approval of the Roman Senate and people.

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