

Christopher A. Frilingos

MORE THAN MEETS THE
EYE: INCONGRUITY AND
OBSERVATION IN
JOSEPHUS'S ACCOUNT
OF THE TRIUMPH OF
VESPASIAN AND TITUS

Is it the ruins alone or Rome's jumble of classical forms and modern life that dazzles the tourist?¹ For some visitors the first close view of the Colosseum comes after emerging from the underground metro stop and across a busy street. The structure looms ahead as a vast, cylindrical testament to the Roman past, encircled by the traffic of cars, buses, and trains.

The structure was already a symbol of the past when it was completed in 80 CE. To ancient Romans it was a war memorial. The Colosseum, or the Flavian Amphitheater, was named after the dynasty founded by the first Flavian emperor, Vespasian. It was built with funds from the spoils of the conflict in the province of Judaea, the so-called First Jewish War.² The war made

I presented an early version of this article at the 2009 International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Rome. I want to thank Kimberly Stratton for her persistence and leadership and the editors of *History of Religions* for supporting the project. Most of the research and writing for this article was completed by 2011. I have revised the text for clarity but have not updated the references. I hope that readers will find that some elements of my proposal remain useful. I dedicate this article to the memory of Thomas Sizgorich.

¹ The "jumble" is what caught the eye of Sigmund Freud, who compares the human psyche to the modern city of Rome, "in which nothing that has come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest one" (*Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey [New York: Norton, 1961], 16–17).

² As a reconstructed inscription shows; see Géza Alföldy, "Eine Bauinschrift aus dem Colosseum," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 109 (1995): 195–226. See discussion and illustrations in Fergus Millar, "Monuments of the Jewish War in Rome," in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, ed. Jonathan Edmondson, Steve Mason, and James Rives (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 101–28.

Vespasian's career.³ As a Roman general, he led the first push against the revolt in 67 CE. Two years later, Vespasian became emperor of Rome. Titus, Vespasian's son, then ascended to command the army and eventually dealt the mortal blow to the insurrection. After a five-month siege, Roman soldiers invaded the city of Jerusalem in August of 70 CE, killing or taking captive the Jewish inhabitants. Amid the chaos of the attack, the great temple of Jerusalem was consumed by fire. Sacred vessels from the temple were brought by Titus to Rome, where the reconquest of the province was celebrated in a public spectacle.⁴

Romans had a distinctive ritual for commemorating military success: the triumph. Evidence of the triumph of Vespasian and Titus, held in the summer of 71 CE, can be seen today on the Arch of Titus in Rome. Like the nearby Colosseum, it is a monument to the First Jewish War. Chiseled into a panel in the archway is an image of Roman soldiers bearing a large menorah, one of the objects taken from the Jewish temple of Jerusalem.⁵ This menorah and other spoils from Jerusalem were paraded through the streets. Romans welcomed home the infantry and joined in thanking the gods for victory. So too the triumph gave Romans a view of the defeated foe, as captives from Judaea were driven before the chariots of Vespasian and Titus. Perhaps the most astonishing element of the triumph was the series of giant, moving stages of battle scenes in tableaux. Like an old-fashioned newsreel, the set pieces of combat broadcast an official record of the war to the Roman audience "on the home front."⁶ The ritual of the Roman triumph created a memory of the First Jewish War—one preserved in the Arch of Titus, which was erected in Rome a decade later. The arch is thus a sculptured memory of a ritualized memory of war.

In this article I focus on a literary account of the triumph, which, like the carvings in the Arch of Titus, is an artful representation of the event.⁷ Jose-

³ It is called the First Jewish War (66–73 CE) to distinguish it from the later Second Jewish War (132–35 CE).

⁴ The triumph of Vespasian and Titus was "an anomaly, in being the only triumph ever held to celebrate victory over a provincial population" (Millar, "Monuments," 102).

⁵ On Jewish traditions about the fate of these vessels, see Ra'anan Boustan, "The Spoils of the Jerusalem Temple at Rome and Constantinople: Jewish Counter-Geography in a Christianizing Empire," in *Antiquity in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Pasts in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Gregg Gardner and Kevin Osterloh (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 327–72.

⁶ On art in Roman triumphs, see Peter J. Holliday, "Roman Triumphal Painting: Its Function, Development, and Reception," *Art Bulletin* 79, no. 1 (1997): 130–47.

⁷ Recent studies of the Arch of Titus, Josephus, and competing interpretations of the events of the Jewish War include Jodi Magness, "The Arch of Titus at Rome and the Fate of the God of Israel," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 59, no. 2 (2008): 201–17; Barbara Eberhardt, "Wer dient wem? Die Darstellung des flavischen Triumphzuges auf dem Titusbogen und bei Josephus," in *Josephus and Jewish History in Flavian Rome*, ed. Joseph Sievers and Gaia Lembi (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 257–77.

phus, the Jewish historian, gives a description of the parade in book 7 of the *Jewish War*. This lengthy and important record of the Roman ritual likely dates to within a decade of the triumph itself.⁸ The author seems to have been an eyewitness.⁹

The account of Josephus appears routinely in technical studies on the route and mechanics of the Roman triumph.¹⁰ This article will use it instead to explore the intersection of war, rituals of war, and the interpretation of these rituals in narrative.¹¹ Book 7 of the *Jewish War* provides an intriguing case study because so many historians have criticized it and its author for being contemptuous of the Jewish captives. In an important book, *The Roman Triumph*, Mary Beard labels Josephus a “Jewish turncoat.”¹² Elsewhere Beard describes Josephus as a “lackey” of the imperial regime, a “Flavian apparatchik,” whose sycophancy oozes from the page in book 7.¹³ Even sympathetic interpreters of Josephus admit defeat in the face of Josephus’s account of the triumph. Tessa Rajak, for example, concedes, “Josephus can for the first time be said to glorify his patrons at the expense of his people” in the passages about the triumph of Vespasian and Titus.¹⁴

But there is more than meets the eye in this account, or so I will argue. In describing the triumph, Josephus notes that the gruesome wounds of Jewish prisoners are hidden underneath fine clothing. While these injuries remain veiled to Roman spectators, Josephus exposes to view the suffering of the captives. Exposure, as Arnold Weinstein suggests in his study of Western literature, can be terrifying or emancipating: “Exposure is . . . potentially violating and subjugating; but it is also liberating in its conversion of darkness into light, private into public. This can be true medically; this can be true

⁸ Circa 79–81 CE. On dating, see Seth Schwartz, “The Composition and Publication of Josephus’s *Bellum Iudaicum* Book 7,” *Harvard Theological Review* 79 (1986): 373–86.

⁹ Eberhardt expresses some doubt about the eyewitness (“Aussagen”) claim but then concedes that Josephus was well informed: “Josephus bestens über die Ereignisse um den Triumphzug informiert war” (“Wer dient wem,” 260).

¹⁰ See, e.g., Ernst Künzl, *Der römische Triumph: Siegesseiren im antiken Rom* (Munich: Beck, 1988); H. S. Versnel, *Triumphus: An Inquiry into the Origin, Development and Meaning of the Roman Triumph* (Leiden: Brill, 1970). See too the important review of Versnel’s *Triumphus* by Larissa Bonfante Warrant in *Gnomon* 46 (1974): 574–83.

¹¹ I use the Greek text in Josephus, *The Jewish War, Books 1–7* in 2 vols., trans. H. St. J. Thackeray et al., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927–28). The English translation, which I have sometimes modified, is from Josephus, *The Jewish War*, trans. G. A. Williamson, ed. E. Mary Smallwood, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1981). References are to paragraph numbers in the Greek text.

¹² Mary Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2007), 152.

¹³ Mary Beard, “The Triumph of Flavius Josephus,” in *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, and Text*, ed. Anthony James Boyle and William J. Dominik (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 543–58, at 558, 556.

¹⁴ Tessa Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society*, 2nd ed. (London: Duckworth, 2002), 219. See too Paul Spilsbury, “Josephus on the Burning of the Temple, the Flavian Triumph, and the Providence of God,” *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 41 (2002): 306–27, esp. 322.

morally. Those of us who see through the glass darkly do desire finally to be seen and to be known.”¹⁵ Both possibilities are realized in book 7 of the *Jewish War*. Why does Josephus remark on the mangled bodies of Jewish prisoners? Why does he reveal what Roman stagecraft conceals? What does his observation of this incongruity imply about Josephus’s self-presentation?

The article begins with a brief discussion of Josephus’s experience in the First Jewish War before turning to a close reading of Josephus’s narrative. Then, following insights from Jonathan Z. Smith and his interpreters, we take up the question of the meaning of ritual and how such meaning has been elucidated in treatments of Josephus. A “locative” view of the Roman triumph, I contend, controls the critical treatment of book 7 of the *Jewish War*, and this model leads inevitably to a negative evaluation of Josephus. Finally, the article will propose its own theory about how Josephus, through his account of the Roman triumph, presents himself as the consummate observer of Roman rituals of war.

THE TROUBLE WITH JOSEPHUS

The captives in the triumph of Vespasian and Titus were not only fellow Jews but also comrades-in-arms of Josephus. The author of the *Jewish War* took a leadership role in the early stages of the uprising against Rome. Most of what we know about his biography comes from two sources: the *Jewish War* and the *Life*.¹⁶ Historians have generally accepted the broad outlines of these sources while harboring doubts about the details.¹⁷ That Josephus changed from combatant in a war against Rome to client of the imperial Roman household remains beyond dispute.

Josephus was born Yosef ben Mattityahu, into a priestly family in Jerusalem. As a young man, Josephus was given a first-rate education and the leisure to examine the world.¹⁸ He was also a leader in his community. In 64 CE, only two years before the outbreak of war, Josephus was sent to Rome to negotiate the successful release of Jewish priests. Returning home, Josephus was caught up in the unrest that led to the surprising Jewish victory over soldiers of the Roman governor, Cestius Gallus.¹⁹ Jewish leaders in Jeru-

¹⁵ Arnold Weinstein, *A Scream Goes through the House: What Literature Teaches Us about Life* (New York: Random House, 2003), 203.

¹⁶ The *Life* is a defense of the author’s actions during the war. Text and translation in Josephus, *Life*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray et al., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926).

¹⁷ See, e.g., Menahem Stern, “Josephus and the Roman Empire as Reflected in the *Jewish War*,” in *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity*, ed. Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 71–80.

¹⁸ Josephus, *Life*, 12.

¹⁹ *Jewish War*, trans. Thackeray et al., 2.513–22.

salem began to prepare for the imminent Roman response. Commanders were appointed, and Josephus was placed in charge of Galilee.²⁰ After six months, Josephus was in trouble; yet, according to his own account of the events, he proved resourceful. Trapped in a cave with other fighters, Josephus survived a mass suicide.²¹ Then, when he was taken captive by the Romans, Josephus petitioned for an audience with Vespasian. He predicted that General Vespasian would soon be hailed as emperor: “You are master not only of me, Caesar, but of land and sea and all the human race.”²² The prophecy was fulfilled, and as a result, the personal circumstances of Josephus were improved.²³ Meanwhile, the position of the Jews of Judaea collapsed. Josephus, now interpreter and advisor to Titus, was present to watch it happen. He witnessed the terrible siege of Jerusalem. Afterward, he traveled to Rome, where he saw firsthand the triumph and lived under the patronage of successive Flavian emperors, writing his many volumes.

Like other spectators in Rome, the Jewish historian marveled at the triumph of Vespasian and Titus. Unlike others, Josephus had fought against Rome in the war. Even so, many scholars have suggested that Josephus’s direct experience of war exerted less influence over his writing than the desire to please his Flavian patrons.²⁴ This problem has long divided historians into two camps. The overall situation is neatly summarized in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*:

On this subject there are opposing views. By some he is regarded as a traitor who, deserting his people in their hour of need, defected to the enemy, and acting as the apologist of the Romans, distorted the facts. A more charitable view contends that he was essentially a Pharisee who acted in conformity with this outlook, had faith in the future of the Jewish people whose survival depended on submission to Rome, and sordid though the manner was in which he saved his life, he did so in order to devote himself to the highest interests of his people.²⁵

Both sides agree that Josephus was compromised in some way by his position. The debate is over intention: Was Josephus corrupted by his service to

²⁰ See Rajak, *Josephus*, 144–73.

²¹ *Jewish War*, trans. Thackeray et al., 3.387–91.

²² *Ibid.*, 3.402.

²³ On Josephus’s prophecy, see Rajak, *Josephus*, 187.

²⁴ But see now Steve Mason’s corrective to this view (“Josephus and Judaism,” in *The Encyclopaedia of Judaism*, ed. Jacob Neusner, Alan J. Avery-Peck, and William Scott Green, 3 vols. [Leiden: Brill, 2005], 2:546–63). Josephus was poorly compensated and remained “utterly marginal” in Rome (*ibid.*, 2:547–48).

²⁵ Abraham Schalit, “Josephus Flavius,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., 22 vols. (Detroit: MacMillan Reference, 2007), 11:435–42, at 440–41. Frequently cited representatives include R. Laquer, *Der jüdische Historiker Flavius Josephus* (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1920); H. St. J. Thackeray, *Josephus: The Man and the Historian* (New York: Jewish Institute of Religion, 1929). Laquer, on the one hand, depicts an unctuous Josephus; Thackeray, on the other hand, sees a noble but flawed Josephus.

the Flavian household? Or, alternatively, did Josephus spin his chronicle to provide cover for his people and to hasten the restoration of the Jews in their homeland?²⁶

A third camp has formed, dedicated to the rehabilitation of Josephus. To these interpreters, the writings of Josephus include ironic, even subversive, elements that raise questions about Roman hegemony.²⁷ Steven Weitzman, for example, makes the case for a “purposefully equivocal Josephus,” a complex figure who found ways to contribute to “Jewish cultural survival.”²⁸ Steve Mason likewise contends that the close reading of Josephus’s writings reveals “cracks in the portrait” of the imperial household and Roman society.²⁹ The writings of Josephus reflect both “intelligent control” of his subject matter and acute sensitivity to his imperial Roman surroundings.³⁰ Going further, some have suggested that Josephus’s admiring narrative of the triumph was an oblique argument (to Titus and others) for rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem.³¹ No longer a double-crosser, Josephus is cast as a defiant Jew who secretly looked forward to the inevitable fall of the Roman Empire.³² It will be-

²⁶ T. D. Barnes suggests that the *Jewish War*, which depicts Titus as reluctant to destroy the Jerusalem Temple, largely deviates from the official Flavian line that Titus was unhesitating in burning it to ashes (“The Sack of the Temple in Josephus and Tacitus,” in Edmondson, Mason, and Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 129–44).

²⁷ John M. G. Barclay expresses the working assumption of this “third camp”: “That in a melody apparently composed of complicity and cultural subservience, there can sound soft notes of self-assertion and resistance, at least for some ears” (“The Empire Writes Back: Josephan Rhetoric in Flavian Rome,” in Edmondson, Mason, and Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 315–32, at 332).

²⁸ Steven Weitzman, *Surviving Sacrilege: Cultural Persistence in Jewish Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 145.

²⁹ Steve Mason, “Of Audience and Meaning: Reading Josephus’ *Bellum Judaicum* in the Context of a Flavian Audience,” in Sievers and Lembi, *Josephus and Jewish History*, 71–100, at 100.

³⁰ Steve Mason, “Flavian Josephus in Flavian Rome: Reading on and between the Lines,” in Boyle and Dominik, *Flavian Rome*, 559–89, at 589.

³¹ See Honora Howell Chapman, “Spectacle in Josephus’ *Jewish War*,” in Edmondson, Mason, and Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 289–313, at 292; following Bruce Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus: His Sacrificial Program within a Cultural History of Sacrifice* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 69–87. Chapman proposes that Josephus underscores the greatness of the Temple for his audience through an account of the “grandeur” of the triumph (“Spectacle,” 309–12). She writes: “Josephus and Titus are to serve as the ideal spectators and interpreters of the war for their respective peoples throughout the narrative [of book 7 of the *Jewish War*]” (*ibid.*, 291).

³² Magness contends that Josephus’s “cyclical” view of history leads him to accept the eventual weakening of Rome and the restoration of Temple and cult (“Arch of Titus at Rome,” 216). See too Spilsbury, “Josephus on the Burning,” 317. Eberhardt (“Wer dient wem,” 277) juxtaposes the Arch of Titus, which shows the gods as servants of the Flavians (“die Götter als Diener der Flavier”), and Josephus, for whom the Flavians are servants of the divine power (“sind die Flavier Diener der göttlichen Macht”). See too Katell Berthelot’s parallel proposal about Philo (“Philo’s Perception of the Roman Empire,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 42 [2011]: 166–87).

come evident in what follows that my approach to Josephus is deeply indebted to the work of scholars in the third camp of interpretation.³³

Related to the question of Josephus's intention is the problem of audience. To whom, for whom, did Josephus write: the surviving Jews of Judaea, diaspora Jews, Roman officials, friends or foes?³⁴ I suggest that Josephus wrote first and foremost for himself.³⁵ This is important as a reminder of the experience of war and captivity that the author shared with Jewish prisoners in the triumph. Beyond this, I bear in mind what Steve Mason describes as the likely process of literary production in the Roman court.³⁶ Josephus's account was read aloud in parts long before the finished project was submitted to his patron, Titus, for his approval. The response was positive: "Indeed, so anxious was the Emperor Titus that my volumes should be the sole authority from which the world should learn the facts, that he affixed his own signature to them and gave orders for their publication."³⁷ Such a circle of readers, Mason argues, imposed a set of constraints, pushing Josephus to more slyness than has ordinarily been attributed to the author.³⁸ If Mason's view is accepted, then Josephus may have used irony in his writings to conceal subversive ideas from the august members of his audience, including Titus himself. I suggest that the account of the triumph of Vespasian and Titus contains instructive examples of such Josephan slyness.

³³ Proposals arguing that the triumph of Vespasian and Titus was misdirection away from the civil war of 69 CE, while intriguing, do not exhaust the meanings of Josephus's account of the event. See Barnes, "Sack of the Temple," 129–32; Beard, "Triumph of Flavius Josephus," 557. Another interesting proposal is James Rives, "Flavian Religious Policy and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple," in Edmondson, Mason, and Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 145–66. Flavian policy (especially under Vespasian) was intent on eradicating the cult of Judaism, the Temple. Vespasian, a good pagan, could not see that Judaism involved more than sacrificial cult, just as Josephus could not understand how the Flavians could "destroy the Temple and on the other hand uphold the Jews' right to observe their ancestral law" (*ibid.*, 166).

³⁴ Josephus announces that the *Jewish War* is for "the benefit of the Emperor's subjects" (*Jewish War*, trans. Thackeray et al., 1.3). For more on Josephus's audience and intentions, see the sophisticated study by Nicole Kelley, "The Cosmopolitan Expression of Josephus' Prophetic Perspective in the *Jewish War*," *Harvard Theological Review* 97, no. 3 (2004): 257–74. Kelley notes that her conclusion confirms the views of Mason that Josephus wrote to counter Roman historians and to indicate the loyalty of most Judaeans.

³⁵ Hannah M. Cotton and Werner Eck depict a lonely Josephus ("Josephus' Roman Audience: Josephus and the Roman Elites," in Edmondson, Mason, and Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 37–52).

³⁶ See Mason, "Of Audience and Meaning," 71–100.

³⁷ Josephus, *Life*, 363. See also letters of support from Herod Agrippa at 365–66. Fausto Parente takes such passages as evidence that the "the audience for which the work was intended could only have been the Roman public" ("The Impotence of Titus, or Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum* as an Example of 'Pathetic Historiography,'" in Sievers and Lembi, *Josephus and Jewish History*, 45–70, at 47).

³⁸ See Steve Mason, "Figured Speech and Irony in Josephus," in Edmondson, Mason, and Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 243–88, esp. 266 n. 7.

THE TRIUMPH OF VESPASIAN AND TITUS

Having touched on relevant facets of Josephus's biography and personal context, we can now return to Josephus's account of the triumph of Vespasian and Titus in book 7 of the *Jewish War*. To begin, Josephus notes that the army spends the night before the march at the Temple of Octavia. In the morning Vespasian and Titus receive acclamations from the troops, and they in turn provide breakfast for their men. Then, the *triumphatores* jointly offer a sacrifice to the gods on either side of the *Porta Triumphalis* and begin the march. As the parade advances to the Capitoline Temple, the narrator is nearly undone by the glory of what he sees: "It is impossible to give a satisfactory account of the innumerable spectacles," Josephus reports, "so magnificent in every way one can think of."³⁹ There are "masses of silver and gold and ivory in every shape known to the craftsman's art." So many precious metals and gems are on display that, as Josephus puts it, "we could see how foolish we had been to suppose any of them rare." Even (or especially) the natural world approves of the Roman anchoring of the order of things. "Animals of many kinds were led past," Josephus observes, "all decked with the proper trappings." Furthermore, "images of the Roman gods, wonderful in size and of true artistic merit," pass by, emblems of piety and divine sanction. Wealth, nature, gods: each domain reinforces the others, symbols and warrants of the authority of Rome, stretching from the imperial center to its margins.⁴⁰

Josephus remarks next on the prisoners. This segment of the triumph tells a story of a righteous war by Rome against a self-destructive enemy. The triumph illustrates the plot through a "startling" (*thauma*) series of "traveling stages" (*tōn pheroumenōn pēgmatōn*) that "showed successive stages of the war" in tableaux.⁴¹ "Here," notes Josephus, "was to be seen a smiling countryside laid waste, there whole 'formations' of the enemy (*polemos*) put to the sword; men in flight and men led off to captivity . . . cities whose battlements were lined with defenders utterly overwhelmed, an army streaming inside the ramparts, the whole place reeking of slaughter."⁴² So vivid is the depiction that Josephus declares: "The art and marvelous craftsmanship of these constructions now revealed the incidents to those who had not seen

³⁹ Quotations in this paragraph are from *Jewish War*, trans. Thackeray et al., 7.133–34.

⁴⁰ A similar point is made in Agrippa's speech much earlier in the *Jewish War*: "Apart from God, putting together so great an empire would have been impossible" (*ibid.*, 2.390). Tessa Rajak describes Agrippa's speech as "evoking the ambiguous stance of the native governing class, superficially pro-Roman (in varying degrees), but harbouring doubts and even deep resentments" ("Friends, Romans, Subjects: Agrippa II's Speech in Josephus's *Jewish War*," in *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction* [Leiden: Brill, 2002], 147–59, 158).

⁴¹ *Jewish War*, trans. Thackeray et al., 7.139.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 7.144.

them happen as clearly as if they had been there.”⁴³ The set pieces stage a record of the actual fighting and carnage, eliding the difference between history and reenactment.⁴⁴ The lesson is clear: “Such were the agonies to which the Jews condemned themselves when they embarked on this war.”⁴⁵ Still more signs of self-inflicted misery are noted: on each stage, a captive Jewish commander stands, posing “just as he had been when captured.”⁴⁶ The triumph is a live show of victory and defeat, performed by actual Jewish captives who gesture to their own culpability in the revolt and its failure. The message is that they have only themselves to blame.⁴⁷

Throughout the *Jewish War*, Josephus calls attention to self-destructive tendencies, especially among the leaders in Jerusalem. From this perspective, it is fitting that the display of prisoners culminates in the execution of Simon, son of Gioras. The notorious “commander-in-chief of the enemy” embodies all that was wrong about the revolt. Earlier, Josephus describes Simon as a “young hothead”; he eventually emerges as a leader of a powerful, terrorizing faction in the besieged city of Jerusalem.⁴⁸ Josephus constantly cites the bloody intramural fighting as the main cause of failure. “I mean that her internal divisions destroyed the City,” he notes, “and the Romans destroyed the internal divisions, which were far more reasonably established than her walls; and the misery could be reasonably put down to her own people, the justice of it to the Romans. But everyone must interpret the facts in his own way.”⁴⁹ Once Simon is killed, Rome can finally close the book on insurrection and unrest: “All day long the city of Rome celebrated the triumphant issue of the campaign against her enemies, the end of civil strife, and the beginning of hope for a joyful future.”⁵⁰

The next section will return to the triumphal display of captives in order to discuss the interpretation of ritual. Now I wish to highlight an intriguing moment of ethnography in Josephus’s report. Near the end of the account, Josephus describes the exhibition of the spoils taken from the Temple in Je-

⁴³ Ibid., 7.145.

⁴⁴ Beard, “Triumph of Flavius Josephus,” 550–51; see too Chapman, “Spectacle” (309–10), which highlights formal rhetoric and “vividness” (*enargeia*) in the account.

⁴⁵ *Jewish War*, trans. Thackeray et al., 7.145.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 7.147. See Beard’s penetrating remarks on the cruel and exhilarating irony of this moment for Josephus, erstwhile Galilean general (“Triumph of Flavius Josephus,” 551).

⁴⁷ As Beard observes, this sentiment undoubtedly coincided with the imperial message of the procession (“Triumph of Flavius Josephus,” 556). Compare Pliny the Younger’s imaginary triumph for the emperor Trajan: “each prisoner following, his hands bound, the scene of his own deeds” (*Panegyricus*, 17.1–3), quoted in Richard Brilliant, “‘Let the Trumpets Roar!’ The Roman Triumph,” in *The Art of Ancient Spectacle*, ed. Bettina Bergmann and Christine Kondoleon (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1999), 221–29, at 227.

⁴⁸ *Jewish War*, trans. Thackeray et al., 4.493.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 5.257.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 7.157.

rusalem, including a seven-branched lamp-stand, as “differently constructed from those [lamp-stands] we normally use.”⁵¹ The menorah taken from the temple in Jerusalem would have been unfamiliar to many of the spectators in Rome, or so it would seem, since Josephus feels that he must explain what it is. He goes on to say that the seven branches signify “the honour paid to the number by the Jews.”⁵² Here Josephus adopts the role of Jewish “insider.”⁵³ It is a striking move in this context because thus far it is fair to say that Josephus the narrator has kept his distance from the unfortunate prisoners.⁵⁴ Indeed, the language of the account opens a divide between Josephus and the captives: the Jewish prisoners are described three times as the “enemy” of Rome and, by implication, enemies of those reading Josephus’s narrative.⁵⁵ But here Josephus interrupts this dynamic to explain (and call attention to) an esoteric “insider” detail: the importance that the Jews attach to the number seven.

The disclosure of insider knowledge about the menorah reminds readers of Josephus’s bond with the people, religion, and recent history of Judaea. This fleeting association with the prisoners and their sacred vessels, while risky, is not without reward for Josephus. The detail confirms his status as a reliable source of information in regard to Jewish matters. He simply knows more than other spectators of the triumph of Vespasian and Titus. As we will see, another detail from elsewhere in the account makes a similar point about Josephus’s knowledge and powers of observation.

“UNPLEASANTNESS” AND INCONGRUITY

It is hard to disagree with historians who find the positive tone of this account confounding or even offensive. The triumph of Vespasian and Titus must have been a “profoundly dispiriting” event for any member of the Roman-era Jewish community.⁵⁶ We might expect Josephus to lament the occasion or, in a show of solidarity, to betray some sympathy for the captives, but he does not.

⁵¹ Ibid., 7.148. For a detailed comparison of the lamp-stand in the Arch of Titus and Josephus, see Leon Yarden, *The Spoils of Jerusalem on the Arch of Titus: A Re-investigation* (Stockholm: Svenska Institutet i Rom, 1991), 38–65. How should one understand the “we” of this passage: Jews, Romans, everyone? Some, like Yarden, affirm that Josephus refers to Jews and non-Jews (44). Walther Eltester, however, concludes that “we” implies Josephus’s fellow Jews (“Der Siebenarmige Leuchter und der Titusbogen,” in *Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche: Festschrift für Joachim Jeremias*, ed. Walther Eltester [Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964], 62–76, at 68).

⁵² *Jewish War*, trans. Thackeray et al., 7.149.

⁵³ See Weitzman on Josephus’s “Optical Elusions” (*Surviving Sacrilege*, 79–95).

⁵⁴ Chapman, “Spectacle,” 310.

⁵⁵ *Jewish War*, trans. Thackeray et al., 7.143, 153, 157.

⁵⁶ Jonathan Edmondson, Steve Mason, and James Rives, “Introduction: Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome,” in Edmondson, Mason, and Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 1–33, at 3.

But I wish to raise two points in defense of Josephus. The first point is that the emphasis on the tone of book 7 of the *Jewish War* is misplaced. While taken in isolation the account may seem to go overboard in his praise of the event, in context it conforms to the genre. Hyperbole can be found in most narrative accounts of triumphs. Plutarch gushes over the ritual celebration of Pompey: “His triumph had such magnitude, that although it was distributed over two days, still the time would not suffice.”⁵⁷ He goes on to say that because of conquests on multiple continents, Pompey “seemed to have included the whole world in his three triumphs.”⁵⁸ Again, in treating the display of spoils in the triumph of Aemilius Paulus, Plutarch remarks, “all the arms being so loosely packed that they gave out a harsh and dreadful sound, and the sight of them, even though they were spoils of a conquered enemy, was not without its terrors.”⁵⁹ Exaggeration was part of the tradition, and the account of Josephus should not be singled out as an egregious case.⁶⁰

My second point concerns a more substantive issue. The heart of the problem as I see it involves a kind of circularity in the method of interpreting Josephus’s own interpretation of the triumph of Vespasian and Titus. For this is what book 7 of the *Jewish War* contains: it is not a dispassionate reading of the news of the day but an interpretation of the event, selective and slanted. Here we focus attention on the interpretive process in order to shed light on the relation between Josephus, the triumph of Vespasian and Titus, and scholarly treatments of book 7 of the *Jewish War*.

To begin, let us separate the actual performance of the triumph of Vespasian and Titus in Rome from Josephus’s decade-later “write up” of the event in the *Jewish War*. For the sake of discussion, let us continue to treat the triumph of Vespasian and Titus as a religious ritual, with the caveat that a sharp division of religious and political domains would likely have been incomprehensible in the Roman context. Borrowing from Jonathan Z. Smith’s treatment of interpretive approaches in the critical study of religion, I suggest that the triumph has most often been construed in “locative” terms. By “locative,” I mean to suggest an approach that lays stress on what Smith describes as “congruity and conformity.”⁶¹ From this perspective, religious activities seek to bring an idealized worldview and actual experience into close, even

⁵⁷ Plutarch, *Pompey*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917), 45.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Plutarch, *Aemilius Paulus*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917), 32.

⁶⁰ For ancient criticism, see Tacitus’s remark that Germanicus celebrated a triumph while the war was still ongoing (*Annals*, 1.55, discussed in Beard, *Roman Triumph*, 109).

⁶¹ Jonathan Z. Smith, “Map Is Not Territory,” in *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 292–93. Smith credits the phrase, “map is not territory,” to Alfred Korzybski, scholar of semantics (309).

overlapping, relation to each other. Religion, in other words, seeks to form a good fit between territory and map, so that *the way things are* aligns with *the way things ought to be*. In a locative framework, the meaning of the triumph may be found in its message that the Roman victory is divinely sanctioned: the way things are is precisely the way things ought to be.⁶² The display of wealth, animals, and gods constructed a value-laden map of the cosmos, and these elements served simultaneously as symbols and evidence of the providential empire of Rome. As Beard puts it, these elements “naturalized” the Roman order.⁶³

Returning now to Josephus’s account, it seems to me that many treatments of book 7 of the *Jewish War* likewise follow a “locative” paradigm. Historians claim to be able to look *through* the text of Josephus in order to discern the message of the actual triumph, namely, that the victory of Rome over self-destructive foes mirrors the cosmic order of things. At the same time, historians pick out this same message *in* the text of Josephus. In this framing, Josephus himself offers a locative rendering of the event in book 7, one that corresponds closely to the intended meaning of the triumph of Vespasian and Titus. If there is a difference between ritual and text it is that Josephus has amplified a message that was already there, boosting the power of the Roman celebration through rhetoric. His sympathetic rendering of the triumph reflects, in the words of critics, Josephus’s shameless opportunism, of his role as a “lackey” and “Flavian apparatchik,” and of his willingness “to glorify his patrons at the expense of his people.” Or, more positively, Josephus sought to curry favor with authorities that had the power to restore the Jews to their homeland. Whatever the cause, by faithfully rendering what scholars have determined to be the meaning of the triumph of Vespasian and Titus, Josephus condemns himself as a traitor to his people.

One problem with such a view is that it catches Josephus in a hermeneutical trap. I do not dispute the claim that the triumph was designed to proclaim the rightness of the Roman cause and the barbarism of Rome’s enemies, nor do I question the idea that Josephus’s account reflects this message. Historians tend to agree that Josephus takes away from the triumph of Vespasian and Titus the message that spectators were supposed to apprehend. As Beard notes, Josephus’s “account and understanding of the triumph owes a great deal to the interpretation that his Flavian patrons themselves wished to put on the event.”⁶⁴ But to fault Josephus for accurately capturing the message of a Roman ritual

⁶² Beard, *Roman Triumph*; see too Ida Östenberg, *Staging the World: Spoils, Captives, and Representations in the Roman Triumphal Procession* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): “Rather, as events performed out of normal time . . . they staged the ideal pattern of social life” (7).

⁶³ Beard, “Triumph of Flavius Josephus,” 552.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 556.

strikes me as unfair. Careful observation does not necessarily imply an endorsement of the message.

Moreover, Josephus's account contains more than the "party line" of the Roman rulers. As we have already noted, Josephus calls attention to items on display—the sacred vessels of the Temple—that Roman spectators, including Vespasian and Titus, do not comprehend and cannot properly honor. The seven-branched menorah still belongs to the Jews, he seems to say, in spite of the claims of the Roman Empire. Here, then, is another problem with the locative model: it does not account for everything in Josephus's narrative. A specific blind spot involves those moments when Josephus sees better or knows more than other observers.

Such moments call to mind the overarching lesson of Smith's investigations: map is not territory. There is a difference, an "incongruity," between worldview and reality. Rather than attempting to erase differences between map and territory—as a locative approach would suggest—religious activity may register the incongruity between the two for at least some participants and observers.⁶⁵ Enter Josephus, who describes a difference between the masquerade that others see and what he himself knows to be the truth. If we think of the account in book 7 as a series of slides, one slide of astonishing incongruity is nestled between images of wealth and deities on one side and images of warfare and humiliation on the other. Josephus remarks: "[Furthermore] not even the crowd of prisoners was to be seen unadorned, and the intricacy and beauty of their clothing shielded [*ekleipō*] from view the unpleasantness [*aēdia*] of their disfigured [*kakōsis*] bodies."⁶⁶ Digging under the surface, Josephus exposes to view what is hidden: the mutilation of the Jewish prisoners.⁶⁷

The unveiling raises a host of interesting questions: Is this reference to "unpleasantness" a kind of sarcasm, a mocking commentary on the naiveté of Roman civilians? Would a Roman audience, trained in spectacle, have suspected this kind of stagecraft at work? Other examples, by contrast, focus on what can be seen by all. When Plutarch describes the triumph of Aemilius Paulus, he lays stress on what the crowds witness: a procession of the children of the enemy king, Perseus. "There were two boys, and one girl, and they were not very conscious of the magnitude of their evils because of their

⁶⁵ Jonathan Z. Smith, "Good News Is No News: Aretalogy and Gospel," in *Map Is Not Territory*, 190–207, esp. 206–7. Borrowing an example from Mary Douglas, Smith suggests that myth and ritual, like jokes, can sometimes point up the arbitrariness of the ostensible order of things, thus reflecting a yearning "to be free from being placed."

⁶⁶ *Jewish War*, trans. Thackeray et al., 7.138. The translation is mine.

⁶⁷ Östenberg observes that "the adding and improving of some displays cannot have been that uncommon" and goes on to describe examples of captives having been made to look "more barbarian" and how the "helplessness of captives was exposed" (*Staging the World*, 154–57). But Josephus calls attention to the clash of fine dress and disfigured bodies.

tender age. . . . The Romans, moved by compassion, kept their eyes on the children, and many of them shed tears, and for all of them, the pleasure of the spectacle was mingled with pain, until the children passed by.”⁶⁸ Here Roman audiences are stirred by the suffering of the captive youngsters in the triumph. The opposite is described in book 7 of the *Jewish War*. Roman spectators do not see the injuries of the Jewish captives. They do not see the truth.

We cannot arrive at a single overarching and satisfying explication of this jarring detail. But, at the very least, this moment of exposure calls into question a locative approach to Josephus’s account. A careful reader, I suggest, can glimpse in the incongruity a sliver of daylight between the message of the Roman triumph and Josephus’s account of the ritual. Furthermore, it may be possible to push back even further to the enactment of the triumph itself: the Jewish captives on display, suffering and humiliated, must have felt the difference between the ways things are and the way things ought to be. Likewise, one might wonder whether the conquering Roman soldiers felt a sense of incongruity as they took part in the ritual. This is the provocative view to which Mary Beard subscribes (when she is not discussing Josephus’s account). She contends that Roman triumphs always held multiple meanings for participants and viewers, including meanings that undermined the aggrandizing message of the pageant.⁶⁹ In the final section, we pursue this insight to explore the multiple meanings of Roman spectacle in order to shed more light on the self-presentation of Josephus.

A KEEN OBSERVER

Josephus brings out into the open the suffering that is hidden under beautiful costumes. An analogy can be found in an essay on ceremonial internment in the US military in the *Handbook of Death and Dying*. The authors, Timothy Wolfe and Clifton Bryant, observe:

Behind the façade of military parade pageantry and the pomp and circumstance of formal reviews and ceremonies; behind the military bands blaring martial music, the shrill clarion call of the bugle, and the staccato beat of the drums; behind the military costumes and the rainbow of colored ribbons and decorations—behind all these lies the existential truth of the military experience. Constituent to this truth are the ennui of garrison duty and the psychological trauma of combat. Gallantry in action

⁶⁸ Plutarch, *Aemilius Paulus*, 33.

⁶⁹ Beard, *Roman Triumph*, 139. “The most militaristic societies,” Beard observes, “can also be—and often are—those that query most energetically the nature and discontents of their own militarism.”

and the unselfish heroic bravery of the battlefield belie the ubiquitous reality of combat death and dismemberment.⁷⁰

Wolfe and Bryant give a contemporary view of the military parade from the soldier's perspective. Like Josephus, they pull back the curtain to reveal the way things are. Both the contemporary essay and book 7 of the *Jewish War* catalog the physical costs of war: "disfigured bodies" in Josephus and the "reality of combat death and dismemberment" in Wolfe and Bryant.

So too the two sources evince a parallel interest in the clash between "pomp and circumstance" and "existential truth." The bite of this incongruity can be felt strongly in Wolfe and Bryant's opening vignette. Still, what at first seems to be an essay about the rejection of empty artifice becomes something else in the balance of its pages. Wolfe and Bryant go on to say that soldiers "will readily sacrifice their lives for their country, their people, or their comrades in arms, as long as they are secure in the knowledge that their remains will be reverently tended and that they will be laid to rest with the proper respect, honor, and sincere ceremonial recognition of their supreme sacrifice."⁷¹ While pointing out the gap between a military ritual and combat duty, Wolfe and Bryant nevertheless acknowledge the importance of such rituals. The promise of a burial with military honors gives personal reassurance to soldiers on the battlefield. Wolfe and Bryant also highlight the social functions that military ceremonies perform, including "memorialization": the ritual of military honors is the mechanism through which "the memory of the fallen soldier is indelibly fixed in the collective consciousness of society."⁷² Rather than reject ceremony, Wolfe and Bryant affirm the meaningful personal and communal aspects of ritual activity.⁷³

"Memorialization" was likewise a key element of the Roman triumph. First, consider the ritual from the standpoint of the rulers. Soon after the capture of Jerusalem, Titus made use of spectacles not simply to declare victory but to show provincial audiences how Roman rulers used specific rituals to create a memory of war. Josephus notes two different occasions: first, prisoners were thrown to wild beasts and into forced combat at Caesarea Philippi; second, "in all the cities of Syria . . . Jewish prisoners were forced to make a show of their own destruction."⁷⁴ As Clifford Ando contends, in these moments, "Titus was teaching the cities of the East that characteristically Roman variation on the arrival that was the triumph, with its pageantry and

⁷⁰ Timothy W. Wolfe and Clifton D. Bryant, "'Full Military Honors': Ceremonial Interment as Sacred Compact," in *Handbook of Death and Dying*, ed. Clifton D. Bryant, 2 vols. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003), 1:159–72, at 159.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1:170.

⁷³ To take the measure of the difference between map and territory does not mean we have to throw out the map. See Smith, "Map Is Not Territory," 309.

⁷⁴ *Jewish War*, trans. Thackeray et al., 7.23–24, 96.

ideologically charged images of conqueror and conquered.”⁷⁵ Ando goes on to suggest that “by the end of the first century, provincials not only had experienced Roman conquest; they had learned the forms and ceremonies through which Romans described, narrated, and celebrated their victories.”⁷⁶ “Forms and ceremonies” included the tableaux of the triumph in Rome, moving sets that, as Josephus describes, “revealed the incidents to those who had not seen them happen as clearly as if they had been there.”⁷⁷ They memorialized the conflict from the perspective of ruling authorities, just as the Arch of Titus would later memorialize the triumph of Vespasian and Titus.

Long before Josephus wrote his own account of the war (and the triumph of Vespasian and Titus), a series of spectacles were produced to “publish” an official history. It should be noted that these provincial spectacles in the wake of the First Jewish War may have helped, perversely, to preserve the welfare of Jews outside of Judaea.⁷⁸ Josephus reports that Jews in Syria were protected in the wake of the war. During the victory celebration in Antioch, Titus rejected a petition “to expel the Jews from the town.”⁷⁹ Titus also refused the request to suppress the “privileges of the Jews,” since their homeland has been destroyed and “no other place would now receive them.”⁸⁰ By making a show of the self-destruction of Jewish combatants, Roman rituals of war “wrote” the bloody end to a chapter in a book that was now closed. Jews in Syria had nothing to fear from Rome because the Roman Empire—now restored to wholeness, as the Roman triumph declared—had nothing to fear from them.

The Roman triumph memorialized war. While we have focused on the perspective of Roman rulers on such memorialization, we might wonder about the perspective of the soldier, who both survived war and afterward joined in the triumph. Is this perspective, the one that is the main concern of Wolfe and Bryant, salient to the study of the Roman triumph? Did the ritual respond in some way to what is described now as the “psychological trauma” of combat?⁸¹ Consider the following observation on playful repetition as a means of assimilating trauma: “A manifestation [of the effects of

⁷⁵ Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 257.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*; see too Beard, “Triumph of Flavius Josephus,” 552–53.

⁷⁷ *Jewish War*, trans. Thackeray et al., 7.145.

⁷⁸ Some of the provincial audiences likely included Jews. See Peder Borgen, “‘Yes,’ ‘No,’ ‘How Far?’ The Participation of Jews and Christians in Pagan Cults,” in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 30–59, esp. 41–42.

⁷⁹ *Jewish War*, trans. Thackeray et al., 7.103.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.108–11.

⁸¹ I bear in mind the cautionary and salient remarks of Zsuzsanna Várhelyi: “We know almost nothing of the psychological consequences of constant warfare on the Roman citizen-soldier, and it is difficult to discern if there was any cultural idiom to address any such concerns, as

trauma] involves the reliving of the trauma in waking life, usually in play. Repetition, this time expectant and purposeful, serves to dissipate the energy of the [traumatizing] stimulus. Most frequently the repetition is not accurate but instead includes variations that favor assimilation.”⁸² Such a framework might shift the focus in the study of the Roman triumph away from script/text/message and toward its performance as a ritualized activity. While on one level the Roman triumph declared a message about the glory of Rome, on another it was a stylized reenactment of war—a playful repetition of marching into battle and conquering the enemy. It would not necessarily have narrowed the gap between the way things are and the way things ought to be.⁸³ On the contrary, this incongruity would have been felt most deeply by the soldiers who had seen combat.⁸⁴ Still, for these same soldiers, the triumph may have provided reassurance, serving as a gateway back into society.⁸⁵

we have today in the notion of post-traumatic stress disorder” (“The Specters of Roman Imperialism: The Live Burials of Gauls and Greeks at Rome,” *Classical Antiquity* 26 [2007]: 277–304, at 300). Yet, following the path struck by Várhelyi, I suggest that it is fruitful to consider modern accounts of trauma as an analogy for understanding ancient experience and narrative. I note her theory about the tradition of “live burials” of former enemies at Rome: “For the soldiers, once back in Rome, the killing of captives in a symbolic context, such as an aristocratic burial, may have had significance that left a gap once that private custom disappeared; and the change to epic from whatever oral lore there had been beforehand may have also transformed warfare narratives in Rome (so critical for survivors of traumatic experiences)” (*ibid.*, 301). See too Dominick LaCapra’s remarks on trauma and the study of history in “Interview for Yad Vashem,” *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 141–80.

⁸² Sidney S. Furst, “Trauma,” in *Psychoanalysis: The Major Concepts*, ed. Burness E. Moore and Bernard D. Fine (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 306–16, at 312. B. A. van der Kolk and Ommo van der Hart observe that the flexibility of memory is the key to integrating experience, since trauma “engraves” or hardens a part of the memory process (“The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma,” *American Imago: Studies in Psychoanalysis and Culture* 48 [1991]: 425–54). See too Judith Lewis Herman’s remarks on repetition as an “intrusive” symptom of trauma (*Trauma and Recovery* [New York: Basic, 1992], 33–50, esp. 39).

⁸³ As Smith avers, religious activities, properly understood, “seek, rather, to play between the incongruities and to provide an occasion for thought.” See Smith, “Good News Is No News”: “There is an interplay between text and experiential context and both are mutually challenged by this process” (191). See too Smith, “Map Is Not Territory,” 309.

⁸⁴ It is no longer the case that investigators of trauma, following Freud, insist that “where trauma is, consciousness is not.” See Geoffrey H. Hartman, “Introduction: Darkness Visible,” in *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*, ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994), 1–22. On participation in and spectatorship of Roman rituals, see Keith Hopkins, “From Violence to Blessing: Symbols and Rituals in Ancient Rome,” in *City-States in Classical Antiquity and Medieval Italy*, ed. Antony Molho, Kurt Raaflaub, and Julia Emler (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1991), 479–98, esp. 497–98. See too Kathleen M. Coleman, “‘Informers’ on Parade,” in Bergmann and Kondoleon, *Art of Ancient Spectacle*, 231–45, esp. 239–41.

⁸⁵ See Thomas Habinek, review of *The Roman Triumph*, by Mary Beard, *American Historical Review* 113 (December 2008): 1466–68: “What everyday activity is being made special by the circumstances, context, accoutrements of performance, and what types of agency are thereby generated? For the triumph, the answers seem fairly straightforward: men who have been away a long time are returning, and they are being authorized as members of the political community” (1466–67).

This psychologizing interpretation of the Roman triumph will be a bridge too far for some historians. It is offered here as an attempt to begin to explore the multiple perspectives implicated by the Roman triumph: that of the rulers, of the Roman soldier, of the captive, of the spectator. It seems unlikely that the ritual meant the same thing to all. To this list we should add the perspective of Josephus. It is tempting to extend the notion of “psychological trauma” to Josephus himself, as a complex structure of repetition is apparent in book 7 of the *Jewish War*. As an eyewitness to the war, Josephus repeated the experience when he observed the various spectacles and triumphs in the provinces. He did so again when he viewed the triumph of Vespasian and Titus in Rome. Perhaps his remark on the “disfigured” bodies of the Jewish captives came from his own experience of the effects of trauma. We might infer that Josephus, like others who have been affected by an up-close experience of war, was acutely sensitive to the difference between the actual suffering of combat and the way that such combat is memorialized by the victors.

But I want to suggest a different theory, one that connects Josephus’s remarks about the Jewish captives to the self-presentation that emerges from his account. Josephus depicts himself as an informed and reliable narrator, one who can explain to his audience what the temple menorah is and why it matters to Jews. He also regards himself as a keen observer who is aware of things that others miss. He exposes to view hidden injuries because he is not distracted by fine costumes. In other words, Josephus suggests that he knows more about the triumph than the Romans who gathered to watch it. He knows more about the foreign and sacred objects that have been taken from the temple in Jerusalem, and he knows more about the Jewish captives. Underneath their beautiful clothes are broken bodies, an “unpleasant” truth that Josephus is willing to utter. He knows the difference between map and territory.

Michigan State University