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Titus and the Queen: Julia Berenice and the Opposition to Titus' Succession

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ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

TITUS AND THE QUEEN:
JULIA BERENICE AND THE OPPOSITON
TO TITUS' SUCCESSION

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BLOOMINGTON, IL

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List of Abbreviations

<i>AJPhil.</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>CHJ</i>	<i>Cambridge History Journal</i>
<i>CPhil.</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CR</i>	<i>Classical Review</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>
<i>CW</i>	<i>Classical Weekly</i>
Dio	Cassius Dio's <i>Roman History</i>
Exc. Val.	Fragments in <i>Excerpta Valesiana</i>
Xiph.	Epitomator Xiphilinus
Zon.	Epitomator Zonaras
Epict.	Epictetus' <i>Discourses</i> as recorded by Arrian
<i>G&R</i>	<i>Greece & Rome</i>
Jos.	Josephus
<i>AJ</i>	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>BJ</i>	<i>The Jewish War</i>
<i>Vit.</i>	<i>The Life</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
Juv.	Juvenal's <i>Satires</i>
<i>PBSR</i>	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i>
Philo.	Philostratus
<i>Vit. Apoll.</i>	<i>Life of Apollonius of Tyana</i>
Pliny	Pliny the Elder
<i>NH</i>	<i>Natural History</i>
Pliny Sec.	Pliny the Younger
<i>Pan.</i>	<i>Panegyricus</i>
<i>OCD</i>	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i>
Quint.	Quintilian's <i>Institutio Oratoria</i>
Suet.	Suetonius
<i>Aug.</i>	<i>Divine Augustus</i>
<i>Gaius</i>	<i>Gaius Caligula</i>
<i>Galba</i>	<i>Galba</i>
<i>Jul.</i>	<i>Divine Julius</i>
<i>Otho</i>	<i>Otho</i>
<i>Titus</i>	<i>Divine Titus</i>
<i>Vesp.</i>	<i>Divine Vespasian</i>
Tac.	Tacitus
<i>Agr.</i>	<i>Agricola</i>
<i>Ann.</i>	<i>Annals</i>
<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogue on Oratory</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Histories</i>

Key Dates

- 9 Birth of Vespasian (Nov. 17)
- 28 Birth of Berenice
- 39 Birth of Titus (Dec. 30)
- 41 Herod Agrippa I appointed king of Judaea
- 44 Herod Agrippa I dies; Judaea reduced to provincial status
- 46 Tiberius Alexander procurator of Judaea
- 49 Death of Herod of Chalcis, Berenice's second husband; Herod Agrippa II appointed king of Chalcis
- 66 Tiberius Alexander prefect of Egypt; Outbreak of Jewish War (May); Suicide of Thrasea Paetus (ca. Oct.); Vespasian appointed commander of Roman forces (Dec.?)
- 67 Titus and Berenice begin their affair (summer); Titus welcomes Licinius Mucianus (Sept./Oct.)
- 68 Nero commits suicide (June 9); Galba declared emperor; Titus leaves to visit Galba in Rome (late)
- 69 Year of Four Emperors: Titus returns from the West (Feb.); Vespasian proclaimed Emperor by Tiberius Alexander (July 1), by Judaeans (July 3); Flavians defeat Vitellians at Cremona (Oct. 24-25); Flavians take Rome (Dec. 20); *Lex de Imperio Vespasiani* issued, granting Vespasian the imperial powers (Dec. 21)
- 70 Conflict between Helvidius Priscus and Eprius Marcellus (Jan.-Mar.?): Titus captures Jerusalem and razes the Temple (Aug.-Sept), begins victory tour of East with Berenice and Agrippa II; Vespasian arrives in Rome (Fall)
- 71 Titus visits Antioch, Jerusalem, Memphis, Alexandria (Apr. 25); Helvidius arrested in Senate House (early summer?); Titus returns to Rome, triumph of Vespasian and Titus (June); Titus awarded *tribunicia potestas* (July 1)
- 72 Titus appointed Praetorian Prefect (Mar.?)
- 73 Vespasian and Titus censors (Apr. 73-Oct. 74)
- 74 Eprius Marcellus suffect consul; Execution of Helvidius Priscus (late 74-early 75)
- 75 Dedication of the Temple of Peace; Berenice arrives in Rome; dramatic date of *Dialogue on Oratory*

- 79** Eprius Marcellus and Alienus Caecina executed; Berenice dismissed from Rome; Death of Vespasian (June 24); accession of Titus; Berenice returns, but is immediately, and permanently dismissed (late 79-80?)
- 81** Death of Titus (Sept. 13)

I – Introduction¹

The Roman biographer Suetonius writes that “hardly ever had one ascended to the principate with such a negative reputation and more against the will of all,” as the Emperor Titus.² Indeed, “people both thought and openly declared he would be another Nero.”³ The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that one of the primary reasons for this apprehension towards Titus’ succession was his “conspicuous love of the queen Berenice, to whom, they say, he even promised marriage.”⁴ The affair of Titus and Berenice has not been given proper attention by modern scholars. Most ignore the affair or gloss over it as a novelty, yet this is an error. Those who do connect the relationship of Titus and Berenice to the political context of Flavian Rome, such as John Crook, mistakenly associate the delay in Berenice’s arrival to the influence of Licinius Mucianus. However, this paper will demonstrate that the relationship of Titus and Berenice is integral to understanding the opposition to the Flavian regime, and Titus’ succession in particular. It will examine how the history of Julia Berenice before and after the start of her affair with Titus served as ammunition for the opposition against her and argue that their relationship became a focal point for the opposition to Titus’ succession led by Helvidius Priscus.

In order to provide a framework for the arguments to follow, it is desirable to summarize the main events in the relationship of Titus and Julia Berenice as told by the ancient sources. Julia Berenice was a remarkable woman who served as a true queen in the Roman Near East alongside her brother, Herod Agrippa II. When the Jewish War began in AD 66, Berenice closely involved herself with Vespasian and his son, Titus, the Roman generals sent by the Emperor

¹ All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

² Suet. *Titus* 6.2: non temere quis tam adverso rumore magisque invitis omnibus transierit ad principatum.

³ Suet. *Titus* 7.1: propalam alium Neronem et opinabantur et praedicabant.

⁴ Suet. *Titus* 7.1: insignem reginae Berenices amorem, cui etiam nuptias pollicitus ferebatur

Nero to quash the revolt. Soon after the first campaigning season, in the summer of 67, when father and son joined Berenice and Agrippa at their capital, Titus and Berenice began their long love affair. This relationship took on a political dynamic when civil war erupted in Rome, and Vespasian made his bid for the throne. Berenice was one of the main supporters of the Flavian cause and offered substantial aid to the war effort.

After the Flavian victory, Titus returned to Judaea to finish the Jewish War, subduing the province and destroying the Temple itself. With Berenice at his side, Titus toured the East in an extravagant victory parade that, according to Suetonius, prompted many to whisper that Titus intended on declaring war on his father and establishing himself as Emperor of the East. Vespasian, ever conscious of the need to preserve the legitimacy of his principate, was distressed at this display by his eldest son. Titus immediately ended his tour and quickly returned to Rome, surprising even his father.

Berenice did not join her lover, Titus, when he returned to Rome, for she became a tremendous liability to his succession, and their relationship a significant part of the opposition to Titus. It has been suggested that this opposition was led by Licinius Mucianus.⁵ However, the ancient sources show nothing but a positive relationship between Mucianus and Titus. The senator and philosopher, Helvidius Priscus, ought to be seen as the true leader of this opposition towards Titus and thus towards Berenice. Motivated by a personal vendetta against Vespasian, Helvidius openly challenged Vespasian by decrying Titus' hereditary succession. According to Dio's epitomator Xiphilinus, Helvidius was so vicious in a speech before the Senate that he was arrested by the tribunes of the plebs.

This assault upon Titus' succession was too much for Vespasian to endure, and Helvidius was exiled. In 74, Helvidius Priscus was put to death. The circumstances around his execution

⁵ J. A. Crook, "Titus and Berenice," *AJPhil.* 72, no. 2 (1951): 162-75.

were suspicious, but it is probable that Helvidius may have finally fallen victim to the very man whom he attacked in the Senate House: Titus. Despite his execution, others followed Helvidius Priscus' path of protest against this relationship, some with direct denunciations of Titus and Berenice and others through more nuanced methods. However, there was no revolution at the execution of a dissident, and Titus would have felt that the regime was finally secure and asked for his father's permission to bring Berenice to Rome. Therefore, despite being separated from her lover, Berenice "was at the very height of her power"⁶ when she arrived in 75, where she lived in the Palace with Titus as if she were his wife and ruled over his court.

The relationship between Titus and Berenice did not continue long, however. Four years after her arrival in 79, Berenice was dismissed from Rome as a concession by Flavians to the Senate after Titus had overstepped his bounds as the imperial enforcer with the summary execution of two consular senators. When Vespasian died soon afterwards, Titus ascended to the throne, seemingly a changed man. Once he became emperor, Titus was "the love and darling of the human race"⁷ and suddenly transformed each of the vices of his youth into a virtue. Berenice had falsely believed that Vespasian was the only obstacle to her marrying Titus and returned to Rome upon Titus' accession. Titus had made his choice, however, between duty and love: "he immediately dismissed Berenice from the city, he reluctant, she against her will."⁸ Queen Berenice then vanishes from the historical record, and her lover, Titus, died two years later in 81, his legacy idealized and his reputation glorified.

⁶ Dio-Xiph. 65.15.4: ἰσχυρῶς τε ἤνθει Trans. Cary, LCL, vol. 8, p. 291.

⁷ Suet. *Titus* 1.1: amor ac deliciae generis humani

⁸ Suet. *Titus* 7.2: Berenicen statim ab urbe dimisit invitum invitam.

II - Berenice Before the Flavians

To understand how Julia Berenice's affair with Titus could have been such a liability towards his succession and how she posed a threat to the conservative senatorial elite, it is important to examine the background of Julia Berenice and her status in the Roman Near East.

From the fate of her father, Herod Agrippa I, she saw that it was possible to rise from poverty and debt to kingship, as long as one courted the friendship of Rome. As she matured, she built political connections that would serve her through the rest of her life, especially as she became directly involved in the politics of the Year of Four Emperors. Berenice also gained political experience, acting with equal prestige as queen to her brother, the king, Agrippa II. This was a mixed blessing, however, as her unusual relationship with her brother led to slanderous rumors, but these rumors only confirm the threat such a strong woman posed. Indeed, Berenice believed in her authority enough that she thought it would be possible to stay the hand of a violent Roman procurator. When the Flavians arrived in Judaea, Berenice was confident in herself, capable of acting independently from her brother, and knew the importance of befriending powerful Romans.

II.1 – Queen Berenice

Since the time of Antony, the dynasty of Herod the Great had enjoyed the patronage of Rome. In this patron-client relationship, the Herodians as client-kings were granted a certain amount of autonomy and political power in exchange for loyalty to Rome. The relationship continued under Augustus, and Herod the Great's children continued to enjoy its benefits.

Herod Agrippa I, Herod the Great's grandson and father of Julia Berenice and Herod Agrippa II, maintained a close relationship with the Julio-Claudians. Through the patronage of

the imperial family, Agrippa I was appointed king of the tetrarchy of Philip and of the tetrarchy of Lysanias by the Emperor Gaius⁹ and later appointed king of Judaea and Samaria by the Emperor Claudius.¹⁰ After Agrippa's death, the territories were split up. Instead of appointing Agrippa's seventeen year old son, Agrippa II, to Judaea to take up his father's throne, Claudius reduced Judaea from an independent client kingdom to a province controlled by a Roman procurator.

During her father's reign, Berenice was married twice: first, to the wealthy merchant, Marcus Julius Alexander, who died shortly thereafter, and then to her uncle Herod, the king of Chalcis.¹¹ This second marriage was more significant as it raised Berenice to the status of queen. When Herod died in 49, Claudius gave his kingdom to Agrippa II, and brother and sister acted as co-rulers. Berenice wielded considerable influence in her brother's court, which can be seen in the titles of respect shown to her by both Jews and foreigners. However, this power came to be feared by the conservative Roman elite, who were unused to powerful women and regarded them with great suspicion.

II.1.1 - *Basilissa and Regina*

A dedicatory inscription of an honorific statue of Berenice erected in Athens, dated to 61,¹² reads:

The council of the Areopagus and the council of X and the people, to Julia Berenice, Great Queen, daughter of King Julius Agrippa, and offspring of the

⁹ The tetrarchy of Philip contained Lebanon and southern Syria, Lysanias' held Abila, a territory near modern-day Damascus. Maurice Sartre, *The Middle East Under Rome*, trans. Catherine Porter and Elizabeth Rawlings (Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 78.

¹⁰ Jos. *AJ* 19.274-5

¹¹ Jos. *AJ* 19.276-77

¹² G.H. Macurdy, "Julia Berenice," *AJPhil.* 56, no. 3 (1935): 246, n. 2.

Great Kings, benefactors of the city, through the foresight of the one who has charge of the city, Tiberius Claudius Theogenous Paianieos. ¹³

Here, Berenice is referred to as *basilissa*, the title proper to a Hellenistic queen.¹⁴ Many intriguing issues are raised by the inscription. First, it is against Jewish law to create such statues, but Agrippa I had statues made of his daughters. This inscription provides concrete evidence that Berenice followed in the footsteps of her father and her brother, both of whom supported Hellenic culture within their realms.¹⁵

Second, Berenice is referred to as Great Queen. It is likely that the “Great” title was an inheritance from her father, Agrippa, who was known as “The Great,”¹⁶ as well as her great-grandfather, Herod the Great. The title *basilissa*, however, implies that Berenice was a Hellenistic queen, similar to the Ptolemaic Cleopatras. Macurdy observes that Josephus only gives this title to those queens who ruled on their own, such as Alexandra Salome, and that no woman of the Herodian dynasty was given this title by Josephus except Berenice.¹⁷ He calls her *basilis* in his autobiography¹⁸ and refers repeatedly to her and Agrippa as *hoi basileis*, “Their Majesties,” in the *Vita*, and once in the *Jewish War*.¹⁹ Perhaps even more importantly, Josephus states that an administrator of the kingdom was “appointed by Their Majesties [*katastêsantôn*

¹³ I.G. III, 556 (C.I.G., 361) as quoted in Macurdy, “Julia Berenice,” 246: ἡ βουλή ἡ ἐξ Ἀρείου πάγου και / ἡ βουλή τῶν Χ και ὁ δῆμος Ἰου- / λίαν Βερενεϊκην βασιλισσαν / μεγάλην Ἰουλίου Ἀγρίππα βασι- / λέως θυγατέρα και μεγάλων / βασιλέων εὐεργετῶν τῆς πό- / λεως ἔκγονον, διὰ τῆς προνοί- / ας τοῦ ἐπιμελητοῦ τῆς πόλε- / ως Τιβ. Κλαυδίου Θεογένους / Παιανιέως.

¹⁴ Macurdy, “Julia Berenice,” 246.

¹⁵ Jos. *AJ* 19.335-7: Agrippa I built in Beirut baths, a theater, and an amphitheater in which he held gladiatorial games. Indeed, he came down with the illness that killed him while celebrating games. Jos. *AJ* 20.211-13: Agrippa II renamed Caesarea Philippi Neronias, in honor of Nero, and, like his father, built new entertainment structures in Beirut. He also instituted a grain and oil dole in the city, and erected copies of the ancient Greek masterpieces.

¹⁶ Macurdy, “Julia Berenice,” 246.

¹⁷ Macurdy, 247.

¹⁸ Jos. *Vit.* 119

¹⁹ Jos. *BJ* 2.598

auton tôn basileôn],”²⁰ and in the *War*, a certain Ptolemy is called the “overseer of Agrippa and Ber[e]nice.”²¹ Without ambiguity, Berenice and Agrippa are portrayed by Josephus as co-rulers, and Berenice even shares a part in appointing administrators.

In a Latin inscription from Beirut, Berenice is called *regina*, queen, and even appears to precede the name of Agrippa.²² Again, Macurdy notes that no other Herodian princess was called *regina*.²³ Tacitus uses the title when first introducing Titus’ love for her²⁴ and also when she is listed separately from Agrippa as a client-ruler who supported Vespasian’s bid for emperor.²⁵ Again, the language is clear: the ancient authors agree that Berenice wielded significant political power, and she was not a mere figurehead.

II.1.2 - Member of the *Consilium*

While the language used to describe Berenice leaves little ambiguity as to whether or not she was a true queen, it is necessary to explore what evidence is available as to her actual political powers. In the *Acts of the Apostles*, Berenice is described as a member of a Roman *consilium* summoned by Festus, the procurator of Judaea. The *consilium* was a “deliberative body made up of *consilarii* that functioned as a board of assessors or jury.”²⁶ It was common for a Roman official to call upon the *consilium* to seek advice on important matters and to add outsiders to the council if the situation required it. In 59, Festus summoned a *consilium* to

²⁰ Jos. *Vit.* 49

²¹ Jos. *BJ* 2.595: τὸν Ἀγρίππα καὶ Βερνίκης ἐπίτροπον Trans. Thackeray, LCL, vol. 2, p. 551.

²² Macurdy, 247.

²³ Macurdy, 248.

²⁴ Tac. *Hist.* 2.2

²⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 2.81

²⁶ M. R. Young-Widmaier, “Quintilian’s Legal Representation of Julia Berenice,” *Historia* 51 (2002): 126.

Caesarea Philippi to discuss the fate of Paul of Tarsus. The body consisted of Berenice, Agrippa II, the high-ranking officers, and the leading men of the city.²⁷

As Festus explains, this was not a debate over Roman law, but rather a theological matter.²⁸ As important political figures with an expertise on matters of Judaism, the council was summoned. After Paul's testimony, Festus, Agrippa, Berenice and the other members of the body are described as consulting together about what to do with Paul²⁹ but Young-Widmaier notes that Festus was not legally obliged to listen to the advice of his *consilium* as "they were simply being officially consulted as authorities on Jewish religious practices."³⁰

The position of Berenice on this *consilium* is important. That she was mentioned specifically by the author of *Acts* with Agrippa and Festus and was not simply included as an "eminent person" also demonstrates that the author would not have considered her as a mere figurehead but believed that her influence was significant enough to warrant her participation in the council.

II.1.3 – Marriage and Scandal

It is important to look briefly at the marriages of Julia Berenice: first, because of the political connections that the Herodians made as a result; and secondly because of the scandal that arose surrounding her marriage to and divorce of Polemo of Cilicia. As the daughter of an aristocrat, Julia Berenice could expect to be married to potential political allies in order to solidify the status of her family. What she could not have expected, however, was the instability of her marriages. By the age of twenty-one, she was twice a widow, and perhaps she had simply

²⁷ *Acts* 25.23

²⁸ *Acts* 25.18-22

²⁹ *Acts* 26.30-2

³⁰ Young-Widmaier, 127.

given up on the possibility of stable married life. She remained unmarried for about five years before taking a third husband, who she quickly divorced.

Through Berenice's short first marriage to Marcus Julius Alexander, she was connected to Tiberius Julius Alexander. Tiberius Alexander, though of a pious family, abandoned his Judaism in order to serve in the Roman military.³¹ He served as a stern but fair procurator of Judaea³² and, after a successful military career under Domitius Corbulo in Armenia,³³ was appointed prefect of Egypt in May, 66. This was a powerful connection for Berenice and Agrippa II, and would serve them well as they came into contact with the Flavians, who could use the Herodians to gain the support of Alexander.

Her second marriage, to her uncle Herod raised her to the status of queen, and when her brother took over Herod's kingdom following his death, she became co-ruler of the realm. Josephus suggests that Berenice only married her third husband, Polemo of Cilicia, in order to silence a rumor that Berenice and Agrippa had an incestuous relationship.³⁴ Macurdy has already demonstrated that this could not have been true,³⁵ but it raises the question as to why the rumor originated. Because Berenice lived so long as a widow and exercised unusual power for a woman, it was likely assumed by the patriarchic society of the time that she must have some type of hold over Agrippa, for if she did not, certainly Agrippa would not allow her such independence and political power.

³¹ Jos. *AJ* 20.100-1

³² Jos. *AJ* 20.100-3.

³³ Tac. *Ann.* 15.28

³⁴ Jos. *AJ* 20.145-7

³⁵ Macurdy, 253.

II.1.4 – Tension in the East

Two episodes help illustrate Berenice's position as a Jewish queen in the Roman Near East. Both involve violent conflict between the Jewish population and the pagan Greeks and Romans. In each, Berenice is a central figure, caught between the two groups.

After the feast of Passover in 44, Agrippa I became seriously ill with a stomach ailment while celebrating games in honor of Claudius at Caesarea Maritima. He died shortly after, at only fifty-four years of age.³⁶ The Greek populations of Caesarea and Samaria began to riot, overjoyed that the Jewish king was dead. The rioters stole the statues of the three princesses, Berenice, Mariamme, and Drusilla and brought them to a brothel in Caesarea, "where they set them upon on the roofs and offered them every possible sort of insult, doing things too indecent to be reported."³⁷

According to Josephus, when Claudius heard of Agrippa's death and the subsequent rioting, he planned to send Agrippa II to Judaea to take his father's throne.³⁸ This followed a pact that Claudius and close friend, Agrippa I, made after the emperor's accession. However, his freedmen and councilors noted the risks of putting such a young man in charge of so important a kingdom, especially one that seemed on the cusp of violent civil strife. Claudius was persuaded and sent a procurator to take control of Judaea. However, Claudius did issue orders for the punishment of the people of Caesarea and Samaria for their offenses to Agrippa's memory and the insult to his still living daughters.³⁹ The soldiers who had participated in the rioting would be

³⁶ Jos. *AJ* 19.350-2

³⁷ Jos. *AJ* 19.357-8: στήσαντες ἐπὶ τῶν τεγῶν ὡς δυνατόν ἦν ἀφύβριζον ἀσχημονέστερα διηγήσεως δρῶντες
Trans. Feldman, LCL, vol. 9, p. 385.

³⁸ Jos. *AJ* 19.360-2

³⁹ R. Jordan, *Berenice* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1974), 89-90, suggests that there was more than mere statue defacing going on, and that the princesses themselves were sexually assaulted by the rioters. However, if there was such a serious crime as sexually assaulting the princesses of a client king sanctioned by Rome that took place, the punishment would certainly have been more severe than a relocation of the participating soldiers. For an offense to Roman honor, as Agrippa was a client of the emperor himself, as great as that, there would have been executions.

transferred out of their homes in Caesarea and Samaria and sent to Pontus. But no punishment actually took place. The men sent a delegation to Claudius, and the emperor agreed not to transfer them to Pontus.⁴⁰ There would be no vengeance for the insults to the honor of Agrippa and his family.

The second incident, on the eve of the outbreak of the Jewish War, reveals the tensions between the local Roman government and the Jewish inhabitants, as well as Berenice's unique status in the realm as a queen. Due to a series of poor procurators and a growing Jewish national movement, tensions between the Jews and Rome heightened. In 66, while Agrippa was at Alexandria to congratulate Tiberius Alexander on his promotion to prefect of Egypt,⁴¹ they turned to violence after Gessius Florus, procurator 64-66, seized the incredible sum of seventeen talents from the Temple treasury, claiming the money was owed to Rome.⁴² He rode to Jerusalem to quell the unrest that began as a result. Attempts were made by high ranking Jews to make peace with Florus, but the procurator did not relent. He turned his troops upon the city, with orders to kill anyone they came across. Thousands were butchered, and according to Josephus, "Florus ventured that day to do what none had ever done before, namely, to scourge before his tribunal and nail to the cross men of equestrian rank, men who, if Jews by birth, were at least invested with that Roman dignity."⁴³

Though Agrippa was in Egypt, Berenice was in the city to discharge a vow to God. She was barefoot, with a shaved head, and abstaining from wine for thirty days in preparation for the customary sacrifice for one who was suffering from illness or another affliction. As Florus' men

⁴⁰ Jos. *AJ* 19.364-6

⁴¹ Jos. *BJ* 2.309

⁴² Jos. *BJ* 2.293

⁴³ Jos. *BJ* 2.308: ὁ γὰρ μηδεὶς πρότερον τότε Φλώρος ἐτόλμησεν, ἄνδρας ἵππικοῦ τάγματος μαστιγῶσαι τε πρὸ τοῦ βήματος καὶ σταυρῶ προσηλῶσαι, ὧν εἰ καὶ τὸ γένος Ἰουδαῖον ἀλλὰ γοῦν τὸ ἀξίωμα Ῥωμαϊκὸν ἦν. Trans. Thackeray, LCL, vol. 2, p. 443.

pillaged the city, Berenice sent her cavalry-commanders and bodyguards to the procurator to plead for clemency. Finally, Berenice herself went as a suppliant to Florus and his tribunal, barefoot and pleading. Florus was unmoved and, according to Josephus, even had captives tortured and put to death while she watched. The soldiers would have killed her, the Jewish historian continues, if she had not sought refuge in the palace and barricaded herself with her bodyguards.⁴⁴

Upon his return to Jerusalem, Agrippa, with Berenice at his side, made an impassioned and tearful plea to calm the people of Judaea.⁴⁵ He succeeded temporarily, until, when they demanded justice for Florus' actions, Agrippa told them to wait until the end of Florus' term and Nero had sent a replacement.⁴⁶ The crowd turned on him, and after the people began to throw stones at Agrippa and Berenice, the king and queen fled Jerusalem. When the revolutionaries took the city, one of their first actions was to burn Berenice and Agrippa's palace, to symbolically strike against these two Jews who supported a foreign power instead of their own people.⁴⁷

This incident reveals much about Berenice on the eve of the Jewish War. Even without her brother at her side, Berenice acted with the power of a client ruler. Moreover, the fact that Berenice even attempted to confront Florus demonstrates her belief in her own authority and influence. She had to have felt it was possible to stop Florus; otherwise, she would not have placed herself in danger by approaching him. Certainly, flashbacks to the riots following the death of father would have filled her head, and it is easy to imagine the fear she felt when the soldiers turned upon her. Yet, she went to the procurator. Agrippa's speech with Berenice at his

⁴⁴ Jos. *BJ* 2.309-14

⁴⁵ Jos. *BJ* 2.344-404

⁴⁶ Jos. *BJ* 2.406

⁴⁷ Jos. *BJ* 2.426-7

side reveals the inherent problem facing a client ruler: on the one hand, the client king wished to act for the benefit of their own people, but at the same time, loyalty to Rome had to be preserved, so as to protect their throne. Agrippa and Berenice chose Rome, and they suffered for it. However, this loyalty would endear them to the Roman generals sent to quell the Jewish revolt, Vespasian and Titus, and help forge a long lasting personal and political relationship with the Flavians.

II.2 - Conclusion

In 66, at the beginning of the Jewish War, Julia Berenice was a confident, independent queen. From her father, she saw the unlimited potential for one who courted the favor of Rome. From a series of fortunate and unfortunate events, she was an extremely wealthy queen, ruling alongside her brother. She was no mere figurehead, but based upon the titles she was given, and the councils she participated in, it is clear that she wielded considerable influence in the region and abroad. For a Roman general who quickly needed to establish order during a revolt, Berenice would be a powerful and attractive ally.

III – The Flavians in the Jewish War

As the trouble in Jerusalem transformed from revolt into war, it became apparent that in order to retake the province of Judaea, large scale military action would be required. Nero appointed the general Vespasian, a veteran of Claudius' campaigns in Britain, to take command of the war. When Vespasian and his charismatic son and fellow general, Titus, arrived, Vespasian formed a political alliance with Agrippa II, and shortly after the first campaigning season, Titus began his affair with Berenice. The charisma and diplomatic skills of Titus also won over Licinius Mucianus, the governor of Syria. The bonds formed in this crucial period at the beginning of the Jewish War became permanent, and this group became the main supporters of the Flavian cause in the bid for empire and major players in the Flavian regime.

III.1 – Young Titus

Titus Flavius Vespasianus was born December 30, AD 39,⁴⁸ near “Septizonium in a sordid house, indeed in a very small and dark bedroom.”⁴⁹ The Flavians were Sabines, neither ancient nor famous, but within one generation, they had become closely involved with the Julio-Claudian family and reached prominence in the Roman government and military. Despite the fact that he began his career late, Titus' father, Vespasian, thanks to his capable skills and the patronage of Claudius' freedman Narcissus, took command of a legion in Germany. He was soon transferred to Britain, where he was a significant part of Claudius' conquest of the island, and he received triumphal ornamentation, an honor beyond what a man of his rank might expect.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Dio 66.18.4, Suet. *Titus* 1.1

⁴⁹ Suet. *Titus* 1.1: Septizonium sordidis aedibus, cubiculo vero perparvo et obscuro, nam manet adhuc et ostenditur.

⁵⁰ Suet. *Vesp.* 4.1-2; Jos. *BJ* 3.4-5

Vespasian's successes and connections benefited his son tremendously, and Titus received an education at Claudius' court alongside the emperor's son, Britannicus.⁵¹ As a young man, Titus had a relatively uneventful military career, serving as a tribune in Britain and Germania.⁵² After his time in the military, Titus turned briefly to a legal practice, but his motives, according to Suetonius, were "more for reputation than for a career."⁵³ At this time, AD 63,⁵⁴ he also married for the first time. His wife Arrecina Tertulla, was the daughter of an equestrian, but the man was also prefect of the Praetorian Guard,⁵⁵ a position that Titus would later hold when his father was emperor. Titus' relationship with his father-in-law, Marcus Arrecinus Clemens,⁵⁶ may have offered valuable experience and political connections that enhanced Titus' abilities and performance as prefect.

Titus and Arrecina Tertulla had a daughter, named Julia,⁵⁷ but the marriage was short lived. Arrecina Tertulla died, and Titus quickly married Marcia Furnilla, the niece of Barea Soranus.⁵⁸ Again, however, the marriage was short. Titus divorced Marcia Furnilla,⁵⁹ as Soranus and his comrade Thrasea Paetus, the father-in-law of Helvidius Priscus, were implicated in the Pisonian conspiracy of 65.⁶⁰

⁵¹ Suet. *Titus* 2.1; It worthy to note that Agrippa II was raised in Claudius' court, and the two may have met each other before the Jewish War. However, Agrippa was ten years older than Titus, and while this connection offers a tempting answer for the relationships that would develop during the Jewish War, it must remain within the realm of pure speculation, however enticing.

⁵² Suet. *Titus* 4.1

⁵³ Suet. *Titus* 4.2: honestam magis quam assiduam

⁵⁴ B.W. Jones, *The Emperor Titus* (London and Sydney: Croon Helm; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 208.

⁵⁵ Suet. *Titus* 4.2

⁵⁶ Jones, *Titus*, 18.

⁵⁷ Suet. *Titus* 4.2 implies that Julia was the daughter of Titus' second wife. However, Philostratus in *Vit. Apoll.* 7.7 suggests that Titus had more than one daughter, and Jones, *Titus*, 19, offers the possibility that Julia was actually Arrecina Tertulla's daughter, not Marcia Furnilla's. Julia is not a name that appears in the Flavian family, so he concludes that it represents the name of Arrecina's mother.

⁵⁸ Jones, *Titus*, 19-20

⁵⁹ Suet. *Titus* 4.2

⁶⁰ See V.2 – The Origins of Helvidius' Opposition for a more detailed look.

Titus was an exceptional young man, according to all our sources. He was handsome and charismatic; a poet and musician fluent in both Latin and Greek; an excellent orator; skillful in “almost all the arts of both war and peace.”⁶¹ He had “a certain majesty.”⁶² In short, the Titus of our sources was popular and talented, with the abilities and inborn nature to succeed at almost anything he tried his hand at. Yet, there was a darker streak to this rising star. He could be cruel and cunning. He lived a life of luxury and extravagance, drinking until dawn with his friends. Titus’ lusts were notorious, and during his father’s reign, troops of eunuchs and profligates followed him. When he inherited the throne, it was believed he would be another Nero.⁶³ Titus, as described by the biographer Suetonius, is like a mythical hero. He did nothing small, and was the best at whatever he did, be it virtue or vice.

By 66, the twenty-seven year old Titus had led a typical career for a young senator. However, as Jones notes, he had almost been prepared for the principate, receiving an education at the imperial court, with Claudius’ son Britannicus as his companion. It can be assumed that Titus learned the diplomatic and political skills that would serve him so well in the future from this education, in close contact with manipulative freedmen of Claudius like Narcissus. Through his marriage, he came into contact with the Praetorian Prefect and learned skills which would benefit him when Titus himself became prefect. He had a short but successful military career, and the positive impression he made upon his troops predicted the relationship he would have with his legions in the Jewish War.⁶⁴ In short, not only did Titus have the inherent talents necessary to be a good and successful leader, but fortune offered him a strong education to hone these talents.

⁶¹ Suet. *Titus* 3.1-2: omnes fere tum belli tum pacis artes.

⁶² Tac. Hist. 2.1: quadam maiestate

⁶³ Suet. *Titus* 7.1

⁶⁴ Jones, *Titus*, 22-3.

III.2 – Building the Flavian Party

In 67, as Nero visited Greece along with his companions, the emperor was informed of the outbreak of the Jewish War. Vespasian was sent to the Near East with a force larger than the army that took Britain in AD 43⁶⁵ and charged with subduing the Jews.⁶⁶ Vespasian was given command of two Syrian legions, the *X Fretensis* and the *V Macedonica*, and he summoned the *XV Apollinaris* from Alexandria. It also appears that Nero allowed Vespasian great influence in the selection of the legionary commanders, for Titus was appointed legate of the *XV Apollinaris*.⁶⁷ Titus' position is unusual as he had not yet held the praetorship, and it was customary, albeit not mandatory, for legates to be appointed from the praetorian ranks.⁶⁸

Soon after arriving in the East, Vespasian quickly formed a political alliance with Agrippa II, which developed into a long lasting personal relationship when Titus and Berenice began their affair in the summer of 67. At the same time, Agrippa and Berenice provided Vespasian a link to Tiberius Alexander, the prefect of Egypt. Shortly afterwards, the charismatic Titus won the support of Licinius Mucianus, the powerful governor of Syria. This group formed a strong alliance in the Jewish War, when Vespasian joined the civil war of 69, and during the Flavian dynasty.

III.2.1 – The Allegiance of Agrippa II and Berenice

It has been suggested that one of the reasons Nero appointed Vespasian to command the Jewish War was that he had been recommended by the pro-Roman Jews, Agrippa II and Tiberius

⁶⁵ F. Millar, "Last Year in Jerusalem: Monuments of the Jewish War in Rome," in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, ed. Jonathan Edmonson, Steve Mason, and James Rives (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 101.

⁶⁶ Suet. *Vesp.* 4.4

⁶⁷ Jos. *BJ* 3.6-10

⁶⁸ Jones, *Titus*, 35.

Alexander.⁶⁹ However, this seems to make too much out of limited evidence, and it ought to be assumed that Vespasian did not come into contact with these two men until the Jewish War.⁷⁰

During the war, Vespasian and Titus quickly established strong ties with Agrippa II and his sister, both politically and personally, which would remain throughout Vespasian's reign as emperor. Politically, Vespasian and Agrippa were both following standard Roman policy and demonstrating the lessons learned earlier in their lives. Personally, the diplomatic skills and charismatic nature of Titus link the four people together, just as Titus' personality would win over other important allies.

Agrippa was an attractive ally. He had demonstrated his ability to negotiate with Rome; through marriage connections, he had consolidated the allegiance of many of the local client kings in himself, and, above all, he had demonstrated unwavering loyalty. When Florus sacked Jerusalem, Agrippa's speech was not to rally the Jews to rise up against Rome or even to attack Florus himself. Instead, Agrippa "endeavoured to induce the people to submit to the orders of

⁶⁹ B. Levick, *Vespasian* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 28-9; J. Nicols, *Vespasian and the Partes Flaviana* (Wiesbaden: Historia Einzelschriften 28, 1978), 25-6; Jones, *Titus*, 35.

⁷⁰ Jones, Levick, and Nicols have observed that both Agrippa I (Jos. AJ 18.143) and Alexander the alabarch (Jos. AJ 19.276), fathers of Agrippa II and Tiberius Alexander, were members of the court of Antonia, who was the former master of Vespasian's mistress Caenis. The chronology is awkward however, and the evidence is not strong enough to presume the connection existed. It is also noted that Agrippa II was educated in the court of Claudius, from 41 to 49 until Herod, the king of Chalcis, died and Claudius appointed Agrippa to succeed him. He was 17 years old. It has been suggested that Agrippa II is a more likely connection to Vespasian. However, not only was Vespasian in Britain from 42-47, but the age difference between the two men (Vespasian was 32 when Agrippa II joined Claudius' court at age 9) is too great to suggest a friendship this early.

There is also a possible connection between Titus and Agrippa II. Titus was educated in Claudius' court as well. Again though, chronology becomes an issue. It is likely that Titus joined Claudius' court in 47, when Vespasian returned from Britain and received triumphal honors. The end date for Titus' education is approximately 55, when his close friend Britannicus died. This leaves only two years in which Titus and Agrippa could have cultivated a friendship at the court. Again, age differences pose a challenge to this hypothesis. Titus was 8-10 years old in this period, and Agrippa was 15-17. While it is possible, it is too much of a leap to make to assume that these two years left such a good impression on Agrippa that he recommended Titus' father Vespasian for the Judaeian command. It is certainly possible, even likely, that the two men reminisced about their time in Claudius' court, and clearly, there was a strong friendship between Titus and Agrippa during and after the Jewish War. However, the evidence is too light to suggest that the Flavians and Herodians were connected before the war.

Florus until a successor was sent by Caesar to replace him.”⁷¹ During the war, Agrippa continued to demonstrate his support. He contributed troops to the Roman war effort⁷² and attempted to parlay with the Jewish revolutionaries.⁷³ Upon Vespasian’s arrival, Agrippa again provided troops, this time two thousand archers and one thousand cavalry.⁷⁴ Agrippa even sent an independent force of his own to lay siege to Gamala.⁷⁵

In many ways, Agrippa was following normal procedure. The other client kings contributed to the Roman military effort, indeed, some with greater numbers than Agrippa. This behavior was part of the contract between Rome and her client kings.⁷⁶ At first, Vespasian’s response was normal Roman practice as well. According to Nicols, “it would have been peculiar if he, a stranger to the area, did not rely heavily on the advice of provincials with long experience in Syria and Judaea.”⁷⁷ Yet, by the end of summer in 67, the relationship between the Flavians and the Herodians appeared to change.

Agrippa invited Vespasian and Titus to Caesarea Philippi. His intentions were twofold: he desired not only to entertain the generals and their men, but gain their aid in suppressing uprisings within his territory.⁷⁸ As Josephus recounts, for twenty days, Vespasian and Titus rested in Caesarea, and then began preparations to retake Tiberias and Tarichaeae. Vespasian intended to crush the Jewish resistance wherever it appeared, but he also wished to “oblige

⁷¹ Jos. *BJ* 2.406: αὐθις δὲ ἐπειρᾶτο πείθειν τὸ πλῆθος ὑπακούειν Φλώρω, μέχρις ἀντ’ αὐτοῦ πέμψει Καῖσαρ δῖαδοχον Trans. Thackeray, LCL, vol. 2, p. 481.

⁷² Jos. *BJ* 2.500-1

⁷³ Jos. *BJ* 2.523-6

⁷⁴ Jos. *BJ* 3.68

⁷⁵ Jos. *Vit.* 114

⁷⁶ Sartre, 72-3.

⁷⁷ Nicols, 125.

⁷⁸ Jos. *BJ* 3.443

Agrippa and to repay his hospitality by recalling these cities of his to their allegiance.”⁷⁹ After Tiberias was subdued, Vespasian, despite being indignant at their insurrection, quickly accepted the city’s terms for surrender “because he saw that Agrippa was seriously concerned for the town.”⁸⁰ He also forbade any violence or pillaging of the captured city by the Roman soldiers because Agrippa had promised the city’s future fidelity.⁸¹

After this, Agrippa continued to serve Vespasian and Titus above and beyond the other client kings and occupied a special place in the Flavian circle. He was put in charge of negotiations with the rebels at Gamala and, during an attempt at parlay, was wounded by a stone.⁸² In the winter of 68 when Vespasian sent Titus to obtain confirmation of his command from the new emperor, Galba, Agrippa accompanied him.⁸³ After Otho’s usurpation, Titus turned back at Corinth to rejoin his father, but Agrippa continued on. Jones hypothesizes that Agrippa likely acted as Vespasian’s agent in the city,⁸⁴ but as will be discussed below, he was left out of the planning for Vespasian’s acclamation. After the campaign against Jerusalem resumed, Agrippa joined Titus’ side once more and remained with him until the end of the war. Following the capture of Jerusalem, Agrippa would have been with Titus when the Flavian prince held extravagant celebratory games at Caesarea Philippi.⁸⁵

Starting in the summer of 67, a transformation clearly took place. It is possible that Titus first met Berenice at the winter base camp at Ptolemais in early 67. It is certain that they met by the summer of 67, when Vespasian and Titus joined Agrippa at Caesarea Philippi. Their affair

⁷⁹ Jos. *BJ* 3.445-6: δι’ Ἀγρίππαν, ὡς εἰς ξενίας ἀμοιβὴν σωφρονίσων αὐτῷ τὰς πόλεις. Trans. Thackeray, LCL, vol. 2, p. 701.

⁸⁰ Jos. *BJ* 3.456-7: γὰρ ἀγωνιῶντα περὶ αὐτῆς τὸν Ἀγρίππαν ἑώρα. Trans. Thackeray, LCL, vol. 2, p. 705.

⁸¹ Jos. *BJ* 3.461

⁸² Jos. *BJ* 4.14

⁸³ Jos. *BJ* 4.498-9

⁸⁴ Jones, *Titus*, 60.

⁸⁵ Jos. *BJ* 7.23

must have begun by this summer, for by late 68/early 69, it was the topic of popular gossip in Rome.⁸⁶ In addition to any physical attraction, Titus would have been drawn by a lifestyle similar to his youth in Rome. Though the king and queen were Jewish, they were fully Hellenized. Titus had already demonstrated an affinity for the arts and for extravagant parties, and the royal court at Caesarea provided everything he desired. Besides, Berenice and Agrippa had spent a great amount of time entertaining Roman dignitaries and were certainly charismatic, a trait inherited from their father. This was an environment in which Titus could thrive, where he could display his charisma and charm and enjoy court life. Based upon their closeness for the remainder of the war, it can be seen that Titus found a friend and comrade in Agrippa.

In Berenice, he found a strong and independent woman. She wielded considerable influence in the royal court of her brother, Agrippa, and refused to accept a traditional, subservient role, divorcing her third husband Polemo of Cilicia. Polemo was not ready for such an independent and strong woman who would expect to be queen not just in title,⁸⁷ and this was unacceptable to Berenice. It is clear that Berenice left Polemo, as Josephus' Greek is unambiguous: "Berenice... left behind Polemo [*hê Berenikê... kataleipei ton Polemôna*]."⁸⁸ More than just the agent of her own marriages, she was skilled in the art of politics and extraordinarily wealthy due to her previous marriages and, as the inscription to her in Athens suggests, appreciated the Hellenistic way of life. The attraction was strong, and the two were companions for the greater part of the next twelve years.

The relationship between the Flavians and Herodians also connected Vespasian and Titus to the prefect of Egypt, Tiberius Alexander. When Agrippa and Berenice became close to Vespasian and Titus, if Alexander had any reservations about supporting Nero's appointee, it is

⁸⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 2.2

⁸⁷ Jos. *AJ* 20.147: Josephus writes that Polemo "was set free [*ἀτήλλακτο*]" from the marriage.

⁸⁸ Jos. *AJ* 20.146

without a doubt that Agrippa and Berenice would have provided an introduction for the general to the prefect.

Through their relationship with Titus, Agrippa and Berenice rose from mere clients to powerful Flavian allies. Time and again they would prove to be faithful to the political cause of the Flavians, and, perhaps more importantly, there would be a deep personal relationship between Titus and the Herodians.

III.2.2 – Licinius Mucianus

John Crook suggests in “Titus and Berenice” that Mucianus and Titus were “destined... to be involved in a clash of ambitions.”⁸⁹ He speculates that Mucianus sought to be Vespasian’s true comrade and co-ruler and that it was Mucianus and his associates who promoted the rumors that Titus intended on declaring himself emperor of the East.⁹⁰ Furthermore, he believes that Berenice’s arrival in Rome was delayed until 75 because of Mucianus’ influence, and his efforts to deny any support to his rival for Vespasian’s ear, Titus.⁹¹ The ancient sources however offer primarily a positive relationship for Titus and Mucianus. In order to show that Helvidius Priscus’ vocal opposition was the true reason for Berenice’s delayed arrival in Rome, and was the primary antagonist to Titus’ succession, Crook’s thesis must be challenged.

Under Nero, Licinius Mucianus was appointed governor of the province of Lycia, and in 64 he served as suffect consul.⁹² He remained in Nero’s favor, for when Cestius Gallus died, Mucianus was appointed governor of Syria in the summer of 67.⁹³ Immediately, there was

⁸⁹ Crook, 163.

⁹⁰ Crook, 165.

⁹¹ Crook, 166-7.

⁹² Lycia: Pliny, *NH* 12.10; consulship: Nicols, 105.

⁹³ Jos. *BJ* 4.32-3

friction between Vespasian and Mucianus.⁹⁴ They had almost opposite personalities: while Vespasian was a stingy career soldier who lived simply and strictly, Mucianus was a politician, an extremely capable public speaker and administrator who enjoyed an extravagant lifestyle of luxury and pleasure. Indeed, “he would have been an emperor of outstanding moderation, if the vices of each were subtracted, and only their virtues were mixed.”⁹⁵ More than just their personalities clashed however, as Vespasian and Mucianus butted heads politically.

Josephus writes that “Nero sent this general [Vespasian] to take command of the armies in Syria.”⁹⁶ This has been taken by Nicols and others to mean that Vespasian was temporarily the governor of Syria after Cestius Gallus’ death, until Mucianus.⁹⁷ Vespasian employed the Syrian legions in the Jewish War, used the province as his base of operations, and attacked Jewish held cities in Syria. As Nicols concludes, it is possible that the conflict between Mucianus and Vespasian originated from this period of overlapping jurisdiction.⁹⁸ Certainly, it continued afterwards, when they governed the neighboring provinces of Syria and Judaea.⁹⁹

Titus emerged as the man who reconciled Mucianus and Vespasian. Upon Mucianus’ arrival in Syria in the autumn of 67, Titus was sent by Vespasian from the siege of Gamala to welcome the new governor.¹⁰⁰ This meeting could only have been simply an exchange of niceties between the neighboring governors, as according to Tacitus, relations between Vespasian and Mucianus remained strained.¹⁰¹ It is likely, however, that the encounter between Titus and

⁹⁴ Tac. *Hist.* 2.5

⁹⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 2.5: *egregium principatus tempermentum, si demptis utriusque vitiis solae virtutes miscerentur.*

⁹⁶ Jos. *BJ* 3.7: *πέμπει τὸν ἄνδρα ληψόμενον τὴν ἡγεμονίαν τῶν ἐπὶ Συρίας στρατευμάτων* Trans. Thackeray, LCL, vol. 2, p. 577.

⁹⁷ Nicols, 113ff.

⁹⁸ Nicols, 115.

⁹⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 2.5

¹⁰⁰ Jos. *BJ* 4.32

¹⁰¹ Jones, *Titus*, 43.

Mucianus was a positive one, as Titus was repeatedly used as the negotiator between the two governors.

Jones hypothesizes that throughout 68, during the chaos of Vindex's revolt and the suicide of Nero, Titus spent much time traveling between Syria and Vespasian's base camp, handling delicate negotiations between the two men. Jones states that Vespasian knew of Vindex's revolt before it was officially proclaimed. Therefore, "prudence demanded that he should be aware of the attitude of his colleague in Syria; after all, Vindex had sent letters to various provincial *legati*."¹⁰² Tacitus writes that after Nero's death, the feud finally ended, and "having put aside their hatred, they consulted together, first through friends, then Titus, the principal assurance of their friendship, erased their wicked rivalry by noting their common interests, his nature and skill were united to attract even the character of Mucianus."¹⁰³ As Vespasian made his bid for emperor, it became even clearer that there was a positive relationship between Titus and Mucianus. While Vespasian and Mucianus may have had cooled relations, there is nothing to indicate hostility between Titus and Mucianus at this early stage.

III.3 – Conclusion

It is likely that when Berenice's relationship with Titus was attacked years later, much was made of the two lovers' role in forging the early coalitions that later become the Flavian party. What began as a logical political alliance between Vespasian and Agrippa II took on a new dimension as Titus and Berenice started their affair in the summer of 67. Using this relationship between Flavians and Herodians, Vespasian won the support of Tiberius Alexander, Berenice's brother-in-law. Finally, Titus utilized his natural charm and skills of negotiation to end the

¹⁰² Jones, *Titus*, 43.

¹⁰³ Tac. *Hist.* 2.5: *positis odiis in medium consuluere, primum per amicos, dein praecipua concordiae fides Titus prava certamina communi utilitate aboleverat, natura atque arte compositus adliciendis etiam Muciani moribus.*

rivalry between Vespasian and Licinius Mucianus. From these negotiations, it is apparent that there is no evidence for a rivalry between Mucianus and Titus or that their relationship was anything but positive.

The key players in these early days were Titus and Berenice. Without Titus' charisma and charm, important members of the Flavian party would have remained hostile to Vespasian. Berenice, having already demonstrated herself as a confident and capable queen before the Jewish War, continued to increase her importance to the Flavians, providing valuable links through her familial relationships.

IV – The Dawn of the Flavian Dynasty

The narrative of the Year of Four Emperors and the civil war that saw Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and, finally, Vespasian as ruler of the Roman world has been dealt with by other authors, and in this paper, a full history of the events is neither required nor feasible.¹⁰⁴ This time period is critical, however, in understanding the opposition to Titus and Berenice's relationship. As such, this chapter will focus on two main points: first, it will discuss the role Titus and Berenice played in Vespasian's accession, from Titus' journey to Galba in late 68 to the Council of Beirut in July 69 to his tour of the East to just before the Flavian triumph of 71. Second, in an effort to provide more evidence that Mucianus was not the central figure of opposition to Titus and Berenice's affair, the relationship of Titus and Mucianus will be discussed, as well as a brief summary of Mucianus' subsequent career and rewards.

On July 1, AD 69, Vespasian was proclaimed emperor by Tiberius Alexander and the Alexandrian legions. By December 20, Flavian forces seized Rome from the Vitellians, and on the following day the Senate conferred full imperial powers upon Vespasian. The new emperor remained in Alexandria, however, while Mucianus took control of the city and secured the state. At the end of the summer of 70, the main fighting of the Jewish War came to an end, as Titus captured Jerusalem and razed the Temple. Shortly thereafter, Vespasian returned to Rome, and Titus toured the Eastern empire holding processions similar to triumphs, demonstrating the military might of the new Imperial family. His victory celebrations were so extravagant that rumors circulated that Titus intended to revolt from his father and establish a rival empire in the East. The controversy was so great that according to Suetonius, Titus cut short his procession to Rome by land in order to demonstrate his loyalty and, in the early summer of 71, sailed across

¹⁰⁴ See B. Levick, *Vespasian* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999); J. Nicols, *Vespasian and the Partes Flaviana* (Wiesbaden: Historia Einzelschriften 28, 1978); G. Morgan, *69 AD: The Year of Four Emperors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) for detailed accounts and chronologies of the 69 civil war.

the Mediterranean to Italy. Father and son reunited with younger brother Domitian, and the world saw the power of Flavian unity. Only a few days later, Vespasian and Titus celebrated the joint triumph that marked the ceremonial establishment of the Flavian dynasty.

IV.1 - The Role of Titus and Berenice in Vespasian's Accession

It can be said that without Titus Vespasian never would have become emperor. Titus was instrumental in building the alliance between Mucianus and Vespasian. The fact that Vespasian, though elderly himself, had an extremely talented and capable son in the prime of his life, perfect for an heir, elevated Vespasian's prospects over Mucianus' to become the East's candidate for the throne. Indeed, Titus was so well suited to be heir that Mucianus suggested that if he himself were emperor, he would have adopted Titus.¹⁰⁵ The Roman people likewise believed in Titus' potential, for they twice believed him capable of becoming emperor, once as Galba's heir,¹⁰⁶ then, as the founder of a separate eastern dynasty.¹⁰⁷ Josephus tells us that Vespasian's soldiers said, "[i]f then, sovereignty calls for the experience of years, we have Vespasian, if for the vigour of youth, there is Titus; the pair of them will combine the advantages of their respective ages."¹⁰⁸

Berenice's role was more subtle, but also integral to Vespasian's success. In Agrippa's absence, it is likely that she helped coordinate the proclamation of Tiberius Alexander, her former brother-in-law. Her financial support for the war is stressed by Tacitus, as well as Vespasian's favor for her. During the siege of Jerusalem, Agrippa II was at Titus' side, and Berenice likely joined her brother and lover in the military camp. After the end of the Jewish

¹⁰⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 2.77

¹⁰⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 2.5

¹⁰⁷ Suet. *Titus* 5.3

¹⁰⁸ Jos. *BJ* 4.597-8: εἴτε οὖν ἐμπειρία γήρωσ προσήκει τὸ ἄρκειν, Οὐεσπασιανὸν αὐτοὺς ἔχειν, εἴτε νεότητος ἀλκῆ, Τίτον· κραθήσεσθαι γὰρ τῆσ παρ' ἀμφοῖν ἡλικίας τὸ ὠφέλιμον. Trans. Thackeray, LCL, vol. 3, p. 177.

War, she would have accompanied Titus during the eastern tour as part of his entourage. The presence of an eastern queen at his side likely contributed to the speculation that Titus planned on establishing his own separate dynasty.

Opponents of Berenice's relationship with Titus saw her contributions to the rise of the Flavian dynasty to be a threat. From her important role in these early days, it was thought that she held considerable influence over the Flavians, especially Titus. The thought of an experienced and capable eastern queen having influence over a charismatic general recalled the relationship of Cleopatra and Antony, not a desirable association for the new dynasty.

V.1.1 – The Journey to Galba

The death of Nero dramatically changed the situation in the East. Whereas Vespasian had enjoyed Nero's favor, the new emperor Galba's attitude was uncertain. As noted above, it is likely that Titus spent much of the year 68 acting as the go-between of Vespasian and Mucianus. The two governors had reconciled after Nero's death,¹⁰⁹ realizing that they needed to form a united front during this period of turmoil. Yet, despite their recognition of Galba, there was no confirmation of their positions, a typical attitude when Galba mistrusted someone.¹¹⁰ Adding further to the problems, Galba's march to Rome was long and bloody, and many of Nero's supporters were executed.¹¹¹ Sabinus, Vespasian's older brother and the city prefect, was removed from his post, and his son lost a promised consulship.¹¹² It was clear that if Vespasian hoped to protect himself, he would need to establish some type of positive relationship with

¹⁰⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 2.5

¹¹⁰ Jones, *Titus*, 44.

¹¹¹ Tac. *Hist.* 1.6

¹¹² Levick, 44.

Galba. Once again, Vespasian utilized Titus, in hopes that his diplomatic skills would win over Galba just as they had Mucianus.

Titus set out for Rome along with Agrippa II in the winter of 68. Almost immediately, rumors began to swirl about the young general. It was suggested that he intended on beginning a political career in earnest, or even that Galba had summoned Titus to adopt him.¹¹³ When Titus arrived in Corinth, he received word that Galba had been assassinated by Otho. Furthermore, he learned that Vitellius had taken up arms and joined the war. At this point, Titus called his friends together to debate what ought to be done. If he continued to Rome, he would merely be held as a hostage by either Otho or Vitellius to secure his father's loyalty. If he returned to Judaea, the action would be seen as an insult to the new emperor, but if the Flavians had supported the victor, the affront would be forgiven. However, a third possibility existed: if Vespasian himself claimed the throne, then such insults would be trivial, and war the prime concern of all involved.¹¹⁴

Agrippa continued on to Rome, to act as the Flavian agent in the city. Titus turned back, but first stopped at the Temple of Paphian Venus on the island of Cyprus. Here, he asked the oracle about the possibility of imperial power, and the signs were favorable.¹¹⁵ Titus returned to Vespasian and, with the help of Mucianus, preparations were made to join the civil war.

It is important to note that it was not until Titus' return that it seems Vespasian considered becoming emperor. Certainly, Vespasian did not plan on revolting against Nero or Galba, as confirmed by Mucianus' speech to convince Vespasian to join the civil war.¹¹⁶ Indeed,

¹¹³ Tac. *Hist.* 2.1; Suet. *Titus* 5.1. Both of these rumors are easily dismissed. For one, the officials for 69 were already decided upon by this point, and Titus cannot have expected to take an office for that year. The possibility of adoption must also be immediately dismissed. Though Galba was old and childless, and Titus was young and charismatic, there is little possibility that Galba thought a man from a new family like Titus was a potential adoptee.

¹¹⁴ Tac. *Hist.* 2.1

¹¹⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 2.2,3; Suet. *Titus* 5.1;

¹¹⁶ Post Galba: Suet. *Vesp.* 5.1; Mucianus' speech: Tac. *Hist.* 2.77.

Tacitus informs us that before Titus returned to the East, both the armies of Judaea and Syria swore allegiance to Otho.¹¹⁷ Dio's epitomator, Zonaras, likewise connects the return of Titus to the first stirrings of rebellion.¹¹⁸ There is no reason to doubt that Titus was the first to suggest that Vespasian should take the title of emperor.¹¹⁹ It fits the character descriptions we are given of a young, ambitious man who saw great things for himself.¹²⁰ Titus' role as initiator of imperial ambition fits well with his later actions and character. He enjoyed being the center of attention and having power so much so that many believed he intended on succeeding from his father and forming a separate empire.

It is easy to see how Titus' ambition would seem threatening later on. Unlike Vespasian, who liked to be portrayed as Augustus was, emperor not by choice, but because he was a concerned citizen, Titus *wanted* to be emperor. There could be no claim that Titus was forced into the situation by an emergency of state, or that he wished to retire to private life but was required to remain in power by fate. For senators who saw the possibility of a return to a more constitutional monarchy like the Augustan principate, if not a restoration of the Republic, Titus would have crushed their hopes. Benevolent though he was as emperor, there was no debate about who ruled Rome.

¹¹⁷ Tac. *Hist.* 2.6

¹¹⁸ Dio-Zon. 11, 16, p. 49, 1-8 D, as quoted in *Dio's Roman History*, LCL, vol. 8, p. 232-3.

¹¹⁹ Some suggest that Vespasian's imperial ambitions can be traced to the siege of Jotapata in July of 67, when Josephus predicted Vespasian would one day be emperor (Jos. *BJ* 3.401-3). However, this can be explained as either retroactive propaganda by Josephus, or, like Vespasian first believes it to be, a flattery tactic by Josephus to save his own life (Jos. *BJ* 3.403-4). Regardless, there is much evidence to support that Vespasian was loyal to Nero, and did not intend on revolting against Galba.

¹²⁰ Tac. *Hist.* 5.1: "he believed himself to be greater than his fortune [*super fortunam crederetur*]"

IV.1.2 – Preparation and Proclamation

Vespasian, Titus, and Mucianus did not act at once. The Jewish War was suspended for a year as they waited to see what would happen in Rome.¹²¹ There was a realization that there was no reason to join the civil war until there was a victor from the conflict between Otho and Vitellius, although preparations were made to enter the contest. Mucianus and Vespasian had only recently agreed to work together, but others had already declared their allegiance, motivated by either love of the state, the possibility of spoils, or a chance to right insults.¹²²

Titus is absent from much of the narrative from February to June of 69. However, it is logical to assume that he acted as Vespasian's diplomatic agent during this time. His actions can be seen in the events that took place later. Mucianus was still closer to Titus at this point,¹²³ and, at the actual time of proclamation by the Judaeen legions on July 3, Titus was in the process of returning from Syria finalizing negotiations with Mucianus.¹²⁴ Tiberius Alexander had already thrown his support behind the Flavian cause,¹²⁵ and closeness between Titus and Alexander is suggested by Alexander's later promotion as Titus' second-in-command for the Jewish War,¹²⁶ as well as his service as prefect of the Praetorian Guard along with Titus.¹²⁷ Finally, as Agrippa had continued on to Rome and remained there until after Alexander's proclamation, Berenice became the most important of the client rulers. Not only did she offer exceptional amounts of financial support, but certainly she cooperated with Titus in the negotiations with Alexander and was likely the one who sent secret communication to Agrippa II in Rome.

¹²¹ Tac. *Hist.* 5.10

¹²² Tac. *Hist.* 2.7

¹²³ Tac. *Hist.* 2.74

¹²⁴ Tac. *Hist.* 2.79

¹²⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 2.74

¹²⁶ Jones, *Titus*, 46.

¹²⁷ E.G. Turner, "Tiberius Iulius Alexander," *JRS* 44 (1954): 61.

The secret negotiations came to an end at a conference at Mt. Carmel. Mucianus made one final speech to convince Vespasian to seize the principate, and then Vespasian himself went to sacrifice at the mountain's temple. The priest confirmed Vespasian's hopes for empire, and the plans were set into motion. Mucianus went to Antioch, and Vespasian went to Caesarea.¹²⁸

Josephus tells us that Vespasian sent a letter to Tiberius Alexander, formally asking for his support. Vespasian wrote that as he was "being forced to shoulder the burden of empire himself, he desired to enlist his co-operation and assistance."¹²⁹ On July 1, AD 69, Tiberius Alexander read this letter in public, and he, his legions, and the populace immediately swore allegiance to Vespasian, proclaiming him emperor.¹³⁰ This day would come to serve as Vespasian's *dies imperii*, his day of imperium. On the third of July, the Judaeans took the oath before Vespasian himself, so excited that they did not wait for Titus to return, who was on his way back from Syria, handling the final arrangements with Mucianus.¹³¹ Soon afterwards, Mucianus' Syrian legions swore their allegiance to Vespasian,¹³² and by the fifteenth of July, the remainder of Syria took the same oath. At the end of the month, Vespasian held a grand council of war at Beirut¹³³

The council was attended by Mucianus, his lieutenants and tribunes, and select soldiers from the Syrian army; the Judaeans likewise sent representatives. The eastern client rulers

¹²⁸ Tac. *Hist.* 2.78

¹²⁹ Jos. *BJ* 4.616: ὡς αὐτὸς ὑποδύς ἀναγκαιῶς τὸ βάρος τῆς ἡγεμονίας συνεργὸν αὐτὸν καὶ βοηθὸν προσλαμβάνοι. Trans. Thackeray, LCL, vol. 3, p. 183.

¹³⁰ Jos. *BJ* 4.617

¹³¹ Tac. *Hist.* 2.79

¹³² Tac. *Hist.* 2.80

¹³³ Tac. *Hist.* 2.81

all attended, promising their support,¹³⁴ and Volgaesus, the king of Parthia, even promised to provide 40,000 archers.¹³⁵

At this time, Agrippa “by way of the secret messages of his friends, while Vitellius was still ignorant, had quickly hastened back by sea.”¹³⁶ Yet, his support must not have been that great, for he was across the Mediterranean during the entire period where Vespasian prepared for his proclamation. However, “with no small spirit, Queen Berenice helped the party, being in the prime of her age and beauty, and also pleased the aged Vespasian because of her magnificent presents.”¹³⁷

Certainly, at this point in the bid for empire, Vespasian was desperate for money. Indeed, Mucianus frequently said, “Money is the sinews of civil war.”¹³⁸ Elsewhere, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio all comment on Vespasian’s affinity for money, which according to those authors, bordered on avarice.¹³⁹ Berenice was exceptionally wealthy,¹⁴⁰ a benefit of her inheritance from her deceased husbands. Her support was attractive, and, as she and Titus had already engaged in their affair for almost two years, it was logical that Berenice would offer her resources to the Flavian cause.

In addition to her money, Berenice would have been useful in gaining the support of the other client kings. Through marital relationships, Berenice had a tie to nearly every ruler in the region. With Agrippa absent in Rome for much of the planning, it had to have been Berenice who filled his spot and tackled the negotiations with the client kings. Just as Titus was

¹³⁴ Tac. *Hist.* 2.81

¹³⁵ Suet. *Vesp.* 6.4

¹³⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 2.81: Mox per occultos suorum nuntios excitus ab urbe Agrippa, ignaro adhuc Vitellio, celeri navigatione properaverat.

¹³⁷ Tac. *Hist.* 2.81: Nec minore animo regina Berenice partis iuvabat, florens aetate formaque et seni quoque Vespasiano magnificentia munerum grata.

¹³⁸ Tac. *Hist.* 2.84: eos [pecunias] esse belli civilis nervos dictitans Mucianus

¹³⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 2.5; Suet. *Vesp.* 16.1-3; Dio-Xiph. 65.8.3-4

¹⁴⁰ Jos. *AJ* 20.146

responsible for negotiating with Mucianus and Tiberius Alexander, so Berenice was responsible for negotiating with the client kings.

Sullivan observes: “The evidence indicates that it was Berenice rather than Agrippa who had the best opportunity to aid the Flavians.”¹⁴¹ By seizing that opportunity, Berenice provided her enemies with tremendous ammunition. Vespasian showed great loyalty to those who supported him from the start, including the client kings.¹⁴² Imagine, one of Berenice’s enemies might suggest, how much Vespasian would reward the loyalty of the queen who provided him with so much support from the very beginning and could possibly be Titus’ empress. She had already won over Vespasian with her beauty and riches, which made her bad enough, but she also demonstrated her political capabilities during her reign as queen. To her enemies, she could become a new Cleopatra, an Oriental monarch who dominated a dynasty that was founded by a proclamation in Egypt.

As a reward for their loyalty, Berenice and Agrippa would have expected a restoration of the Kingdom of Judaea with Agrippa as monarch.¹⁴³ Indeed, at this time, the excitement of Vespasian’s proclamation and the possibility of victory might have been so great that already Berenice and Agrippa thought that one day Berenice could be *Augusta* alongside the Emperor Titus. Years of working to continue the programs that made it possible for Agrippa I to be King of Judaea now combined with amazing luck for the Herodians, and it seemed that there would be no limits to the rewards.

¹⁴¹ P. B. Sullivan, “A Note on the Flavian Accession,” *CJ* 49, no. 2 (1953): 70.

¹⁴² Note the lengths to which Vespasian went to help out Antiochus of Commagene, who was deposed because of suspicion of collaborating with Parthia. Vespasian was mindful of their “ancient friendship [*palaia philia*]” (Jos. *BJ* 7.239) and provided Antiochus with an extremely comfortable lifestyle in Sparta. G.W. Bowersock, “Foreign Elites at Rome,” in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, ed. Jonathan Edmonson, Steve Mason, and James Rives (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 59-60.

¹⁴³ D. R. Schwartz, “Herodians and *Ioudaioi* in Flavian Rome,” in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, ed. Jonathan Edmonson, Steve Mason, and James Rives (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 64ff.

With the enthusiasm of all the participants, the war council at Berytus ended with a clear plan of action to win the empire. Mucianus would take an army to Italy to challenge Vitellius, while Vespasian went to Alexandria to secure the grain supply and prepare to starve out Rome, and Titus took command of the Jewish War.¹⁴⁴ After Mucianus set out, Vespasian and Titus went to Egypt for the final months of 69 to prepare an invasion of Africa by land and sea in order to completely control Rome's grain supply.¹⁴⁵ In October, Flavian forces led by Antonius Primus defeated the Vitellians at the Battle of Cremona. By the end of December, after a bloody battle for Rome between Primus and the Vitellians, Vitellius had been executed, and Mucianus and Vespasian's younger son Domitian ruled Rome. In the span of a few months, Vespasian went from a mere new man with no noble parentage, to the most powerful man in the world: Vespasian was emperor.

IV.1.3 – The Flavian Victory

The new emperor Vespasian dispatched his son Titus from Alexandria to finish the Jewish War. Vespasian set out for Rome and told him “to contribute to the state by war and by arms, he himself would care for peace and his house.”¹⁴⁶ After a long and brutal siege that saw the destruction of the Temple, Titus took Jerusalem and effectively ended the war in September, 70. To celebrate both his victory and that of his father, Titus, with Berenice and Agrippa at his side, toured the eastern provinces holding magnificent games and processions similar to triumphs, displaying the glory of the new Flavian dynasty. Titus received so many honors and carried himself so much like an emperor that rumors circulated that Titus intended on breaking

¹⁴⁴ Tac. *Hist.* 2.92

¹⁴⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 3.48

¹⁴⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 4.52: belloque et armis rem publicam attollere: sibi pacem domumque curae fore.

away from his father and forming his own eastern empire. To end this dangerous speculation, Titus cut short his victory march and immediately sailed home to join his father.

At the siege of Jerusalem, Titus took with him the loyal supporters of the Flavian cause. The client kings increased their contribution of auxiliary forces. Agrippa and Sohaemus even led their troops personally.¹⁴⁷ Tiberius Alexander was rewarded for taking the risk of first declaring for a new emperor and appointed Titus' second in command.¹⁴⁸ Alexander was put into a position where his knowledge of the Jews would be of use and his close relationship with Titus is attested to. Alexander remained close to the Flavian heir after the war, serving as Praetorian Prefect, presumably until his death.¹⁴⁹

The siege of Jerusalem was hard and bloody, but on August 10, Titus destroyed the Temple, and on September 8, the Upper City was taken.¹⁵⁰ After the Romans seized the temple, the legions took their standards into the sanctuary and sacrificed. The Temple still burning around them, “with rousing acclamations [they] hailed Titus as imperator.”¹⁵¹ This was unusual, for while it was common in Republican times to have soldiers acclaim their victorious general as *imperator*, it had not been done since the time of Tiberius. However, “the soldiers’ salutation was comprehensible in the excitement of the moment, after a long siege, but Titus’ reaction to it, together with his behavior immediately afterwards, gave rise to adverse comment.”¹⁵² It is also worth noting that according to Josephus, Titus, when parleying with the leaders of the Jewish revolt, referred to himself and his father as “emperors [*autokratōras*].”¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷ Jones, *Titus*, 50.

¹⁴⁸ Jos. *BJ* 5.45-6

¹⁴⁹ Turner, 63ff.

¹⁵⁰ Jones, *Titus*, 209.

¹⁵¹ Jos. *BJ* 6.316-7: τὸν Τίτον μετὰ μεγίστων εὐφημιῶν ἀπέφηναν αὐτοκράτορα. Trans. Thackeray, LCL, vol. 3, p. 469; Suet. *Titus* 5.2

¹⁵² Jones, *Titus*, 58.

¹⁵³ Jos. *BJ* 6.341

After the capture of the city, Titus praised and rewarded his legions.¹⁵⁴ Their loyalty was so great that “when he was retiring from the province, they held him back, demanding with supplication, and even with threats, that he either remain, or either lead them all away together with him.”¹⁵⁵ From all of these events, Suetonius tells us that “a suspicion was born, as if Titus would try to revolt from his father and claim a kingdom of the East for himself.”¹⁵⁶

There was still more activity that some could see as hinting at this ambition. Vespasian had arrived at Rome shortly after Titus’ victory, but his son did not set out to join him immediately. According to Josephus, it was too late in the year to sail to Italy, and so Titus went to Caesarea Maritima with the *V* and *XV* legions,¹⁵⁷ and with Berenice and Agrippa. Soon afterwards, he set out to Casarea Philippi, where he remained a considerable time and began a massive victory celebration. He held spectacular games, including the execution of many prisoners through wild beast hunts and gladiatorial contests.¹⁵⁸ Titus returned to Caesarea Maritima and, on October 24, he held games in honor of Domitian’s birthday, resulting in the deaths of 2,500 prisoners, by wild beast, or by flame, or in gladiatorial combat,¹⁵⁹ and, after moving his entourage to Beirut, he held even more extravagant games in honor of Vespasian’s birthday on November 17.¹⁶⁰ Titus continued his tour all throughout Syria, again hosting games and spectacles in each city.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁴ Jos. *BJ* 7.5-17

¹⁵⁵ Suet. *Titus* 5.2-3: subinde decedentem provincia detinuerint, suppliciter nec non et minaciter efflagitantes, aut remaneret aut secum omnis pariter abduceret.

¹⁵⁶ Suet. *Titus* 5.3: nata suspicio est, quasi desciscere a patre Orientisque sibi regnum vindicare temptasset

¹⁵⁷ Jos. *BJ* 7.20

¹⁵⁸ Jos. *BJ* 7.23-25

¹⁵⁹ Jos. *BJ* 7.38

¹⁶⁰ Jos. *BJ* 7.39

¹⁶¹ Jos. *BJ* 7.96

Each stop ought to be seen as a minor triumph, based upon the descriptions by Josephus.¹⁶² We are told that in the Syrian spectacles, Titus made the “Jewish captives serve to display their own destruction.”¹⁶³ This morbidly ironic display is similar to the way that captive generals would be forced to reenact their defeat during a triumph.¹⁶⁴ Ando notes that Titus would have made a formal *adventus* into each city, concluding: “what was the formal *adventus* of a victorious *imperator*, when leading thousands of captives, if not a triumph?”¹⁶⁵

Unfortunately, Josephus does not tell us the reaction of Berenice and Agrippa to the destruction of the Temple or the bloody executions of the Jewish prisoners. However, when one recalls that the revolutionaries had driven them from the city at the outbreak of the war¹⁶⁶ and burnt down their palace,¹⁶⁷ it is possible that they felt little sympathy for the dead.

In addition to these magnificent small triumphs, Titus received exceptional honors from the eastern kings that had regal connotations. At Zeugma, envoys from the Parthian king Volgaeses gave Titus a golden crown in honor of his victory over the Jews.¹⁶⁸ Suetonius offers another incident, one that he presents as one of the primary reasons for the rumors of succession. While Titus was on the way to Alexandria in April 71, he stopped at Memphis. He participated in the consecration of the Apis bull, and wore a diadem, “which was done with respect to the custom and ritual of the ancient religion; but there was not a lack of those who interpreted it otherwise.”¹⁶⁹ The wearing of a diadem was one of the few taboos still remaining for an emperor

¹⁶² M. Beard, “The Triumph of Flavius Josephus,” in *Flavian Rome: Image, Culture, Text*, ed. A.J. Boyle and W.J. Dominik (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 553.

¹⁶³ Jos. *BJ* 7.96: τῶν Ἰουδαίων τοὺς αἰχμαλώτους εἰς ἐπίδειξιν τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἀπωλείας ἀποχρώμενος Trans. Thackeray, LCL, vol. 3, p. 535.

¹⁶⁴ Beard, 553.

¹⁶⁵ C. Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 257.

¹⁶⁶ Jos. *BJ* 2.406-7

¹⁶⁷ Jos. *BJ* 2.426-7

¹⁶⁸ Jos. *BJ* 7.105-6

¹⁶⁹ Suet. *Titus* 5.3: de more quidem rituque priscae religionis; sed non deerant qui sequius interpretarentur.

in representing his monarchical power. Even Julius Caesar had refused Antony's diadem at the Lupercalia,¹⁷⁰ and Augustus had refused to pay homage to Apis because specifically because of the required taking of a diadem.¹⁷¹ Caligula contemplated taking the diadem and thereby, would have changed the semblance of a constitutional principate into an absolute monarchy.¹⁷²

Charlesworth writes that the diadem was the symbol of a despot: "that is what Romans feared, and what they were determined not to endure."¹⁷³ While there were rational explanations for Titus' behavior, namely that he was attempting to appease local customs and secure eastern loyalty, his actions provoked controversy at home.

His proclamation as *imperator*, the extreme loyalty of his legions, casual reference of himself as emperor, magnificent celebrations appropriate to a triumphant princeps, and the taking of diadems all combined to create the suspicion that Titus did not intend on serving as Vespasian's heir, but as a rival emperor. Certainly, Titus had great ambition, and he had a "tendency to reject caution and to take a risk."¹⁷⁴ Perhaps with his extravagant tour of the East, he had also cultivated his reputation of living a riotous lifestyle, and holding all night drinking parties with his friends.¹⁷⁵ Certainly, his relationship with Berenice was prominent. Her family had a history of supporting the entertainments and pleasures of the Greek culture,¹⁷⁶ and Titus made frequent use of the cities in her and Agrippa II's domain to host his victory celebrations.¹⁷⁷ There is absolutely no reason not to assume that she was at Titus' side throughout the entire tour

¹⁷⁰ Suet. *Jul.* 79.2

¹⁷¹ Suet. *Aug.* 93.1

¹⁷² Suet. *Gaius* 22.1

¹⁷³ M.P. Charlesworth, "The Fear of the Orient in the Roman Empire," *CHJ* 2, no. 1 (1926): 10.

¹⁷⁴ Jones, *Titus*, 59.

¹⁷⁵ Suet. *Titus* 7.1

¹⁷⁶ Jos. *AJ* 19.335-7: Agrippa I built Beirut baths, a theater, and an amphitheater in which he held gladiatorial games. Indeed, he came down with the illness that killed him while celebrating games.

¹⁷⁷ Jos. *BJ* 7.23

of the East and that they lived together as husband and wife, just as they had in the summer of 67 and as they would when she joined him in Rome.¹⁷⁸

Indeed, during this seven month victory celebration, the pair would have come to resemble Antony and Cleopatra. When Tacitus describes Berenice as “being in the prime of her age and beauty”¹⁷⁹ and winning over even the aged Vespasian with her wealth and generosity, it calls to mind Plutarch’s description of Cleopatra:

For when Caesar and Pompey had known her when she was still a girl and inexperienced in affairs, but she was going to visit Antony at the very time when women have most brilliant beauty and are at the acme of intellectual power. Therefore, she provided herself with many gifts, much money, and such ornaments as her high position and prosperous kingdom made it natural for her to take; but she went putting her greatest confidence in herself, and in the charms and sorceries of her own person.¹⁸⁰

Note also the similarities in descriptions of Titus’ love for Berenice and Antony’s love for Cleopatra. Titus had a “conspicuous love for Queen Berenice,”¹⁸¹ and Antony “lust for Cleopatra.”¹⁸² When Titus returned early from his trip to Galba, his original mission incomplete, Tacitus tell us that “there were some who had believed that he had changed his course because he was impassioned by longing for Queen Berenice.”¹⁸³ Antony is also described as not being able to complete his duties in the pending conflict with Parthia because he was so eager to spend the winter with Cleopatra that he hurried the war and botched the campaign.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁸ Dio-Xiph. 65.15.4

¹⁷⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 2.81: *florens aetate formaque*

¹⁸⁰ Plut. *Ant.* 25.3-4: ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γὰρ αὐτὴν ἔτι κόρην καὶ πραγμάτων ἄπειρον ἔγνωσαν, πρὸς δὲ τοῦτον ἔμελλε φοιτήσῃ ἐν ᾧ μάλιστα καιροῦ γυναῖκες ὥραν τε λαμποτάτην ἔχουσι καὶ τὸ φρονεῖν ἀκμάζουσι. διὸ πολλὰ μὲν συνεσκευάσατο δῶρα καὶ χρήματα καὶ κόσμον οἷον εἰκὸς ἦν ἀπὸ πραγμάτων μεγάλων καὶ βασιλείας εὐδαίμονος κομίζειν, τὰς δὲ πλείστας ἐν ἑαυτῇ καὶ τοῖς περὶ αὐτὴν μαγγανεύμασι καὶ φίλτροις ἐλπίδας θεμένη παρεγένετο. Trans. Perrin, LCL, vol. 9, p. 193.

¹⁸¹ Suet. *Titus* 7.1: *insignem reginae Berenices amorem*

¹⁸² Plut. *Ant.* 25.1: “ὁ Κλεοπάτρας ἔρωσ”; *Ant.* 36.1: “ὁ Κλεοπάτρας ἔρωσ”

¹⁸³ Tac. *Hist.* 2.2: *Fuerunt qui accensum desiderio Berenices reginae vertisse iter crederent*

¹⁸⁴ Plut. *Ant.* 37.4

It certainly appears as if the ancient authors had Antony and Cleopatra in mind when they wrote of Titus and Berenice, and this could be a reflection of popular sentiment against their relationship. Certainly, there are many similarities between Titus and Antony. Both were charismatic and victorious generals, both enjoyed a pleasure-filled and riotous lifestyle, and both seemed not to be the dour and serious “citizen” of Augustus or Vespasian, but men who loved power and the extravagance of monarchy.

Since Cleopatra’s affair with Julius Caesar, “the fear of Eastern despotism cast a shadow” over Rome,¹⁸⁵ with rumors abound that Caesar intended on making Alexandria the capital of the empire.¹⁸⁶ This antagonism directed towards the East continued with Antony, when gossip “showed him dominated by an Eastern queen, subservient to her wishes, parceling out Roman provinces as kingdoms for her children, and recognizing her as *Queen of Kings*.”¹⁸⁷ And Antony, like Titus, held a triumph, “a festival proper to Rome alone,” in the East.¹⁸⁸ In this context, Titus and Berenice publicly displayed their relationship. Perhaps because of their affair, along with so many other actions that connected Titus to the image of an eastern monarch, Romans began to fear that the Flavian victory in 69 would lead to a reversal of Actium. The East, led by a “new Antony” complete with his own “Oriental queen,” had defeated the West, and instead of a return to the Augustan principate the Roman Empire would now be ruled by an Eastern tyrant.

This would have caused considerable embarrassment and distress to Vespasian. He had just won a civil war and now was in the process of legitimizing his rule, primarily through connection to the Augustan principate and a return to traditional Roman values. Now, his son and chosen heir was acting like a flamboyant Oriental, accepting diadems. It ought to be made

¹⁸⁵ Charlesworth, 10.

¹⁸⁶ Suet. *Jul.* 79.3

¹⁸⁷ Charlesworth, 11.

¹⁸⁸ Charlesworth, 11.

clear that Vespasian would not have suspected any disloyalty from his son, for Titus had shown nothing but the utmost fidelity to his family. He was the primary instigator of Vespasian's bid for empire and truest ally in preparations for war. He celebrated lavish games on the birthdays of both his brother Domitian and his father.¹⁸⁹ In his own reign as emperor, Titus even offered credit for the final victory in the Jewish War to his father on the inscription of a triumphal arch that stood in the Circus Maximus.¹⁹⁰ As perhaps even more evidence of his loyalty, Titus' ambition can be cited. Vespasian was an elderly man, and Titus was in the prime of his life. It was guaranteed that Titus would succeed Vespasian, and it is "not consistent with what is known of Titus' character to suppose that he would jeopardize his chances for empire by opposing his father, who had now established himself in Rome."¹⁹¹

Despite Vespasian's own knowledge of Titus' loyalty, the rumors persisted. In an effort to reassure the people of Flavian unity, CONCORDIA became a persistent legend on the coinage in Rome from 71-73.¹⁹² But something far more dramatic than just numismatic propaganda had to be done in response to Titus' behavior. Suetonius tells us that shortly after Titus accepted the diadem at Memphis, he learned of his father and Rome's reaction to his behavior in the East. Though Titus may have been known to react rashly and thoroughly enjoyed the grandeur of his procession, he put the security and stability of the dynasty above all other things. Instead of finishing his overland procession to Rome, he took a mere transport ship and immediately sailed across the Mediterranean. Titus arrived at Rome and "with his father caught off guard, as if to prove the thoughtlessness of the rumors about him, he said: 'I have come, father, I have

¹⁸⁹ Domitian: Jos. *BJ* 7.38; Vespasian: Jos. *BJ* 7.39

¹⁹⁰ *CIL* 6.944 = *ILS* 264 as quoted in Millar, "Monuments," 120.

¹⁹¹ Jones, *Titus*, 59.

¹⁹² H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, vol. 2, *Vespasian to Domitian* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1930), xlv, 113, 150.

come.”¹⁹³ Suetonius goes on to write that “he did not, from that point, cease to play the part of partner and even protector of the empire.”¹⁹⁴

Josephus offers a very different story of Titus’ return. He makes no mention of the rumors of Titus’ possible disloyalty, and presents the son’s homecoming as a pre-arranged matter, in which Vespasian came to meet Titus once he arrived in Italy. We are told that the son was given as great a welcome as had been given to Vespasian, and that the “crowd of citizens as thus afforded an ecstasy of joy by the sight [*to blepein*] of the three princes now united.”¹⁹⁵ It is important to note here that Josephus emphasizes the visual importance of seeing the Flavian family together for the first time since seizing the throne. He uses *to blepein*, to see, look, specifically to denote the impact of the united family on the Roman people. Vespasian’s message of dynasty and family unity could be “seen” in this orchestrated homecoming for the victorious Titus. Though it offers a very different narrative from Suetonius’ account, it is equally fascinating, and reveals the same themes. The unity of the Flavian family is emphasized so greatly that one can conclude that Josephus’ officially endorsed account was in reaction to the negative rumors surrounding Titus. The key component of both accounts is the relationship between father and son. Titus returns to his father Vespasian so that there is no possibility of disloyalty, and the Flavian family formed a united front for the good of the state.

IV.2 – Titus and Mucianus

At this time, it is necessary to return to the relationship between Titus and Licinius Mucianus. It has already been proposed that a positive relationship existed between the two, and

¹⁹³ Suet. *Titus* 5.3: *inopinantique patri, velut arguens rumorum de se temeritatem: Veni, inquit, pater, veni.*

¹⁹⁴ Suet. *Titus* 6.1: *Neque ex eo destitit participem atque etiam tutorem imperii agere.*

¹⁹⁵ Jos. *BJ* 7.120-1: τῷ δὲ πλήθει τῶν πολιτῶν δαιμόνιον τινα τὴν χαρὰν παρεῖχε τὸ βλέπειν αὐτοὺς ἤδη τοὺς τρεῖς ἐν ταύτῳ γεγονότας. Trans. Thackeray, LCL, vol. 3, p. 541.

it will now be suggested that this relationship continued during and after the civil war, and into Vespasian's principate. Therefore, Mucianus should not be seen as the leader of an anti-Titus faction within Rome.

As has been mentioned above, it was Titus who first provided the link between Vespasian and Mucianus, and handled all negotiations between the two, even up to the point of Vespasian's proclamation. Mucianus' attitude just before the proclamation was even said to be "favorable to Titus."¹⁹⁶ Moreover, Mucianus' words, as recorded by Tacitus, are overwhelmingly positive to Titus.¹⁹⁷ When Mucianus delivers his speech to Vespasian about why he should go to war, Titus is given as one of the primary reasons for Vespasian's candidacy:

Your house has the honor of a triumphal name, and two young men, one of whom already is fit to hold the empire, and has a distinguished reputation among the German legions because of his first years of military service. It would be absurd not to bow to the authority of a man whose son I would adopt, if I myself were emperor.¹⁹⁸

These are not the words of a man who considered Titus to be a rival and an enemy. Again, we see their closeness soon afterwards, when Titus was with Mucianus just before Tiberius Alexander's proclamation.¹⁹⁹

If then, the evidence until the Flavian victory demonstrates nothing but a positive relationship between Titus and Mucianus, where does the evidence for hostility arise? There are only two examples that show even the possibility of a strained relationship between Mucianus and the Flavians. After the victory at Cremona and the capture of Rome, Domitian and Mucianus ran the city as *de facto* rulers. While Vespasian and Titus were still in Alexandria, Vespasian

¹⁹⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 2.74: in Titum pronior

¹⁹⁷ Tac. *Hist.* 2.76ff

¹⁹⁸ Tac. *Hist.* 2.77: tuae domui triumphale nomen, duo iuvenes, capax iam imperii alter et primis militiae annis apud Germanicos quoque exercitus clarus. Absurdum fuerit non cedere imperio ei cuius filium adoptaturus essem, si ipse imperarem.

¹⁹⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 2.89

received a report on Domitian's conduct: Domitian was acting as if he were emperor and overstepping his bounds as prince.²⁰⁰ Vespasian intended on setting out immediately to discipline the young Domitian, but Titus, who was just about to march to Jerusalem, calmed down his father by stating:

Neither legions nor fleets are as strong a monument to imperial power as a number of children; for friends are reduced, changed, and lost by time, fortune and sometimes by greed or mistakes: a man's blood is inseparable from him, but most especially from emperors, the prosperity of whom others also delight in, but the misfortunes of whom reach only those closest to him. Not even brothers will remain at peace, unless the parent first offers the example.²⁰¹

Crook suggests that in this passage Titus spoke not out of concern for Domitian's behavior but was warning his father against the influence of the "friends," namely, Mucianus. This is especially damning if one believes that Mucianus and his associates spread the rumors about Titus' behavior in the East, but even Crook admits that this would be a foolish action by Mucianus, whose path to success depended upon a stable dynasty where he could wield power behind the scenes.²⁰² Instead, it is far more likely that Titus was reminding Vespasian about the importance of familial unity. If Vespasian chastised Domitian, he canceled the legitimacy of every action taken by Mucianus and Domitian since they took control of Rome. Furthermore, Vespasian actually confirmed the actions taken by Domitian and Mucianus,²⁰³ by upholding their decrees and appointments.²⁰⁴ It seemed that Vespasian disapproved of nothing Domitian did during this time, except perhaps acting too much the part of a monarch, for which Vespasian had chastised even his favored heir Titus.

²⁰⁰ Tac. *Hist.* 4.51

²⁰¹ Tac. *Hist.* 4.52: Non legiones, non classis proinde firma imperii munimenta quam numerum liberorum; nam amicos tempore, fortuna, cupidinibus aliquando aut erroribus imminui, transferri, desinere: suum cuique sanguinem indiscretum, sed maxime principibus, quorum prosperis et alii fruuntur, adversa ad iunctissimos pertineant. Ne fratribus quidem mansuram concordiam, ni parents exemplum praeberisset.

²⁰² Crook, 165.

²⁰³ Tac. *Hist.* 4.44: Domitian and Mucianus refused to permit the prosecution of the informers. The significance of this action will be examined at length below.

²⁰⁴ Note that Tacitus' father-in-law Agricola was appointed by Mucianus at this time: Tac. *Agr.* 7.4.

The only other ancient evidence for Mucianus' supposed rivalry with Titus or any member of the Flavian family arises from reports of his impudence and disrespect for the authority of Vespasian. After Rome was taken, Tacitus notes that Mucianus boasted, "the empire was in his own hand and he had given it to Vespasian."²⁰⁵ Suetonius reports that Mucianus treated Vespasian with little respect, for Mucianus considered himself to be the reason for Vespasian's ascendancy. Vespasian never responded to this behavior in public, and even in private, he only once quipped to a mutual friend, "I, at least, am a man," in reference to Mucianus' supposed homosexuality.²⁰⁶

Yet, despite some arrogance on Mucianus' part, Vespasian continued to favor his old rival. He held Mucianus' opinion in high regard throughout much of his reign, and took his advice on domestic policy.²⁰⁷ The senate granted Mucianus triumphal insignia,²⁰⁸ and he was even awarded his second and third suffect consulships, in 70 and 72,²⁰⁹ a total matched among non-members of the imperial family only by Agrippa and Lucius Vitellius, the right-hand men of Augustus and Claudius respectively.

Though Mucianus and Vespasian began as rivals, it is clear that Mucianus ended his life as his well rewarded and favored ally. He finished his career as a writer, editing the *Actorum* and *Epistularum*,²¹⁰ which were compilations of ancient documents, and a book of natural curiosities.²¹¹ It is not known exactly when he died, but it was between the years 73 and 77.²¹²

²⁰⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 4.4: in manu sua fuisse imperium donatumque Vespasiano

²⁰⁶ Suet. *Vesp.* 13: Ego tamen vir sum.

²⁰⁷ Dio 65.13ff: At Mucianus' advice, Vespasian expelled the philosophers from Rome. The significance of this will be examined below at length.

²⁰⁸ Tac. *Hist.* 4.4

²⁰⁹ P.M. Rogers, "Titus, Berenice, and Mucianus," *Historia* 29 (1980): 87.

²¹⁰ Tac. *Dial.* 37.2

²¹¹ Though his book is lost, Mucianus is cited 32 times in Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*.

²¹² Crook, 166.

Licinius Mucianus had a fascinating career, full of intrigue and excitement, and indeed, as he liked to boast, without Mucianus, Vespasian could never have been emperor.

IV.3 – Conclusion

In June 71, the Flavian dynasty prepared for its ceremonial coronation, a spectacular triumph, with Vespasian and Titus celebrating their ultimate victory. In the span of two chaotic and violent years, the Flavian family rose from relative obscurity to imperial dynasty. The sense of accomplishment felt by father and son would have been tremendous.

The proclamation was carefully planned and coordinated. Those who were loyal from the beginning were well rewarded. Mucianus enjoyed the honor of a third consulship, Tiberius Alexander served as Titus' second-in-command and as Praetorian Prefect. Opponents could only speculate what reward awaited the Jews Berenice and Agrippa II, the ever-loyal supporters of Vespasian and Titus.

After his victory in the Jewish War, Titus displayed his love of glory. He embraced and thoroughly enjoyed the lengthy victory procession, and gladly took up the lavish honors bestowed upon him by the eastern monarchs, even accepting the ultimate taboo, the diadem. With Berenice at his side, the pair seemed to be a reborn Antony and Cleopatra, ready to take vengeance upon the West for Actium. It seems this comparison was not lost on the ancient authors, as the descriptions of Titus and Berenice are strikingly similar to those of Antony and Cleopatra.

Vespasian, conscious of the need to preserve the legitimacy of his principate, was, according to Suetonius, distressed at this flagrant display of extravagance by his eldest son, and rumors even circulated that Titus intended on declaring himself Emperor of the East. Titus

immediately ended his ostentatious pageant, and quickly returned to Rome, surprising even his father. As much as Titus enjoyed the splendor of royal life, he held the stability and security of the Flavian principate above all.

Crook's suggestion that there was a rivalry between Licinius Mucianus and Titus must be dismissed. The ancient sources show no support for this, and in fact, demonstrate a positive relationship between Titus and Mucianus and that Mucianus was rewarded for his part in claiming the throne.

V – Opposing Berenice

In 75 AD, four years after Titus' return to Rome and the celebration of the triumph, "Berenice was at the very height of her power and consequently came to Rome along with her brother Agrippa. The latter was given the rank of praetor, while she dwelt in the palace, cohabitating with Titus. She expected to marry him and was already behaving in every respect as if she were his wife."²¹³

This section will determine why it was necessary for Berenice to wait until 75 to join her lover Titus in Rome, and how, four years after she last saw Titus, she could be "at the very height of her power." Before Vespasian could permit Titus to bring Berenice to Rome, they needed to establish the legitimacy of the Flavian dynasty. One need only to look at the Year of Four Emperors to see the precariousness of the regime's situation. Titus' succession had to be ensured, and in order to do so, there could be no possibility of controversy, as Suetonius tells us there had been when Titus was in the East with Berenice.

The regime faced serious opposition from the senator and philosopher Helvidius Priscus. Helvidius openly challenged Vespasian and, in particular, the succession of Titus. Titus' extravagant lifestyle and his relationship with Berenice provided ample ammunition for Helvidius' assertions that the best man should be emperor, and Titus was clearly not "the best man." After a long toleration of the dissent by Vespasian, Helvidius was exiled for his attacks on the dynasty. He was finally put to death, most likely in 74, certainly before 75. The sources do not directly state it, but there is substantial evidence to suggest that Titus was the one responsible for the execution of Helvidius Priscus.

²¹³ Dio-Chry. 65.15.3-4: Βερενίκη δὲ ἰσχυρῶς τε ἤνθει καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἐς τὴν Ῥώμην μετὰ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ Ἀγρίππα ἦλθε· καὶ ὁ μὲν στρατηγικῶν τιμῶν ἤξιωθη, ἡ δὲ ἐν τῷ παλατίῳ ὤκησε καὶ τῷ Τίτῳ συνεγίνετο. προσεδόκα δὲ γαμηθῆσθαι αὐτῷ, καὶ πάντα ἤδη ὡς καὶ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ οὔσα ἐποίει Trans. Cary, LCL, vol. 8, p. 291.

When the Senate did not respond with hostility to Helvidius' execution, Titus would have felt that the Flavian regime was secure enough to ask for permission to bring Berenice to Rome. Vespasian allowed it, and the queen joined her lover in the Imperial Palace.

V.1 – *Auctoritas* and *Maiestas*

When Vespasian ascended to the throne, “he was lacking prestige [*auctoritas*] and a certain majesty [*maiestas*], so to speak, as he was an unexpected and still newly-made emperor.”²¹⁴ This section will attempt to demonstrate how important Vespasian and Titus believed it was to legitimize their regime by showing some of the types of propaganda they used.

V.1.1 – *Summi Viri*

When Augustus built the Temple of Mars Ultor, he decorated the sides of the forum with statues of the *summi viri*, “the best men,” of both the Julian family, and of Roman history. By associating himself with these *summi viri*, he gained all the benefits of their prestige. When Vespasian and Titus needed to increase their prestige quickly, they likewise associated themselves with *summi viri*.

The Senate set an early precedent for Vespasian with the *Lex de Imperio Vespasiani*, which revealed the legal basis for the principate. P.A. Brunt convincingly argues that the *Lex* is in fact the *senatus consultum* from December 69 that conferred the powers of emperor upon Vespasian.²¹⁵ It refers only to certain emperors for precedent, namely Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius. By only referring to some of the previous emperors, and not to Gaius, Nero, Galba,²¹⁶ Otho, or Vitellius, the senators who wrote the *senatus consultum* specifically link Vespasian and

²¹⁴ Suet. *Vesp.* 7.2: *Auctoritas* et quasi *maiestas* quaedam ut scilicet inopinato et adhuc novo principi deerat

²¹⁵ P.A. Brunt, “*Lex de Imperio Vespasiani*,” *JRS* 67 (1977), 95-116. For date of *senatus consultum*: Tac. *Hist.* 3.3

²¹⁶ Galba's memory had been condemned by Otho, and was not restored until Jan. 70 by Domitian: Brunt, “*Lex*,” 104; Tac. *Hist.* 4.40

his successors with the emperors deemed worthy of memory. Vespasian followed the guidance of the Senate, and went about associating himself with the emperors included in the *Lex*.

One way in which Vespasian associated himself with *summi viri* was through his restoration of Rome. He restored the Augustan Theater of Marcellus²¹⁷ and works of art, such as the Coan Venus, and the Colossus.²¹⁸ It is important to note that Vespasian “inscribed upon them, not his own name, but the names of those who had originally built them.”²¹⁹ This nod to the leading citizens of the past gave Vespasian twice the glory he would have gained if he had inscribed his own name.²²⁰ Not only did he demonstrate respect for the past, but also implicitly linked himself with these *summi viri*.

In the same vein, Vespasian restored the Temple of the Divine Claudius. Erected by Nero on the Caelian Hill, its construction ceased after the murder of Agrippina, and was converted into a nymphaeum as part of the Golden House. Not only does this remind the public of the honors Vespasian earned under Claudius, but it promotes Vespasian as the “successor of the last reputable, and with the people deservedly popular, Julio-Claudian ruler.”²²¹

The Flavian monuments also reflected the desire to associate with *summi viri*. The Temple of Peace, with its collections of artistic masterpieces, connects the Flavians to Marcus Agrippa, Augustus’ companion. Agrippa was known for promoting that all masterpieces should be made national property instead of private and displayed to the public.²²² The dedication of a Temple of Peace also draws comparisons to Augustus’ Ara Pacis, one of the first emperor’s most

²¹⁷ Suet. *Vesp.* 19.1

²¹⁸ Suet. *Vesp.* 18.1

²¹⁹ Dio-Zon. 65.10.1: καὶ τὰ ἤδη ἐφθαρμένα ἐπανεσκεύαζε, καὶ συντελουμένοις αὐτοῖς οὐ τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἐπέγραψεν ὄνομα, ἀλλὰ τὸ τῶν πρώτως δομησαμένων. Trans. Cary, LCL, vol. 8, p. 277.

²²⁰ Cf. Suet. *Aug.* 29.4-5

²²¹ B.W. Jones, ed., *Suetonius. The Flavian Emperors: A Historical Commentary*, Classical Studies Series (Bristol: Bristol Classics, 2002), 67.

²²² Pliny *NH* 35.26

famous monuments, with the Temple of Peace acting as a compliment and expansion upon Augustus' monument.²²³ The most famous Flavian monument, the Flavian Amphitheater, known later as the Colosseum, was also intended to create a link between Augustus and Vespasian. Suetonius writes that Vespasian built the Amphitheater "in the middle of the city, as he had found out that Augustus had intended to do so."²²⁴ Nowhere else do we hear that Augustus had intended to build a stone amphitheater in the center of Rome,²²⁵ but the veracity of the statement is not important when considering matters of propaganda. It is, however, important to note that Vespasian intended the Amphitheater to connect him to Augustus.

Even the coinage of both Vespasian and later Titus showed this common theme. Vespasian minted coins featuring legends similar to those of Augustus, and images that suggested the first emperor.²²⁶ In his reign, Titus issued a series of commemorative coins. He issued only the denomination *aes* in this series, likely an effort to ensure wider circulation than the more valuable coins.²²⁷ The restored types appeared on the obverse of the coin, while Titus' own titles appeared on the reverse, with the explicit statement that Titus had restored the coin.²²⁸ Types of the Divine Augustus, Agrippa, Tiberius, Drusus, Livia, Nero Drusus, Germanicus, Agrippina the Younger, Claudius, and Galba²²⁹ were struck, as well as a new coin featuring

²²³ P. H. von Blanckhagen, "The Imperial Fora," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 13, no. 4 (1954): 22, offers an alternative theory: "The dedication of the temple to the goddess of peace after the completion of the Jewish Wars may indicate that the emperor intended it as a contrast and supplement to the Forum of Mars 'the Avenger.'"

²²⁴ Suet. *Vesp.* 9.1: *urbe media, ut destinasse compererat Augustum.*

²²⁵ G.W. Mooney, ed. *C. Suetoni Tranquilli De Vita Caesarum, Libri VII-VIII* (London: Longmans, Green and Co.; Dublin: Hodges, Figgis and Co., 1930), 421.

²²⁶ Jones, *Titus*, 121; Mattingly, xxxviii.

²²⁷ Jones, *Titus*, 121.

²²⁸ Jones, *Titus*, 121.

²²⁹ Mattingly, lxvii-lxviii, 281-292, nos. 261-305.

Britannicus, in honor of Titus' childhood friend.²³⁰ Through these commemorative coins, Titus assembled a list of his own *summi viri*.

The methods of Flavian propaganda were not limited to monuments and coins. While it may have only been wild speculation on the part of the masses that Titus visited Galba in order to be adopted,²³¹ after Vespasian was proclaimed emperor, the rumor would certainly have been encouraged. Just as Vespasian had benefited from the "endorsement" of Otho through a forged letter,²³² so he and Titus could benefit from Galba's. In addition, the Flavians could benefit from the much greater prestige of Galba's ancestry,²³³ and enhance their own legitimacy.²³⁴ By reissuing some of Galba's coinage in his own reign, Titus reminded the public of his association with Galba, whose image had been rehabilitated after the Flavian victory. Similar reasons caused the Flavians to promote Titus' friendship with Britannicus. While it is doubtful that Titus drank from the same cup that poisoned Britannicus, they were friends who were educated together. Later, Titus set up a golden statue of Britannicus in the Palace and dedicated an ivory equestrian statue that formed part of the procession in the Circus Maximus even into the second century AD.²³⁵

The *senatus consultum* that granted Vespasian the powers of the emperor offered the Flavians a practical example of how to add prestige to their name. By listing only three of the earlier emperors in the *Lex*, Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius, the Senate suggested that only those emperors were worthy of emulation. Vespasian took that message to heart, and found ways

²³⁰ Mattingly, lxviii, 293, no. 306; friendship with Britannicus: Suet. *Titus* 2.1.

²³¹ Tac. Hist. 2.5; Suet. *Titus* 5.1

²³² For the letter, supposedly written by Otho just before he committed suicide, and which asks Vespasian to avenge him, see Suet. *Vesp.* 6.4. Suetonius himself casts doubt upon the letter's veracity, and one quickly recalls his description of Titus, "that he could imitate whatever handwriting he saw, and often would declare he could have been a master forger [*imitarique chirographa quaecumque vidisset, ac saepe profiteri maximum falsarium esse potuisse*]" Suet. *Titus* 3.2.

²³³ Suet. *Galba* 2ff

²³⁴ Jones, *Titus*, 62-3.

²³⁵ Suet. *Titus* 2.1

to associate himself with those *summi viri* so that he might inherit their prestige and be seen as a worthy model for future emperors. By making himself comparable to the great emperors of the past, Vespasian could appear to be a great emperor himself.

V.1.2 – Dynasty and Political Office

From the very beginning, it was clear that Vespasian and his supporters intended on founding a dynasty. In order to grant legitimacy to his principle heir, Titus, Vespasian, along with his son, monopolized many of the highest political offices. By taking these political offices, the Flavians made up for a lackluster past and built prestige along the lines of the Augustan principate, as concerned officials of the state, and, perhaps just as importantly, designated Titus as the next emperor. Levick observes that every maneuver in this realm “was done to enhance Titus’ prestige.”²³⁶

One of the most important offices consistently held by Vespasian and Titus was the consulship. At almost the same time as the *senatus consultum* was issued, Vespasian and Titus were made ordinary consuls for the year 70.²³⁷ This consulship was made *in absentia*, as father and son were still in Alexandria at the time.²³⁸ The consulship was especially important, because like the *senatus consultum*, it legitimized the actions of Vespasian and Titus through the year and offered them a traditional office to add to their prestige. The Flavians held the consulship until at least the end of May before passing it to suffect consuls.²³⁹ It was unusual for the presiding emperor to hold the consulship this long before offering it to different men, and appears to reflect Vespasian’s desire to gain prestige from being consul.

²³⁶ Levick, 187.

²³⁷ Tac. *Hist.* 4.3

²³⁸ Tac. *Hist.* 4.51-2

²³⁹ A. E. Gordon, “Vespasian and Titus as Consuls in A.D. 70,” *CPhil.* 50, no. 3 (1955): 194-5.

Also unusual was the number of consulships that Vespasian and Titus held. Vespasian served as ordinary consul eight times from 70-79, not holding the office only in 73 and 78.²⁴⁰ Titus was ordinary consul seven times in the same time period, omitting the consulship in 71, the year of the triumph, and like his father, the years 73 and 78. The emperor and his heir held the censorship in 73, and no member of the family held the office in 78. Titus held more consulships than any other imperial heir, and Vespasian broke with the Julio-Claudian tradition, where typically the reigning emperor avoided the ordinary consulship.²⁴¹ While the intent would have been to enhance Vespasian and Titus' prestige by holding traditional Republican offices, it seems that it might have damaged their reputation with the Senate. In his *Panegyric* to Trajan, delivered in 100, Pliny the Younger referred to the Flavians as "wretched in currying favor, who were always consul only in so far as they were always emperor."²⁴² It seems that the Flavians "succeeded only in underlining the undisguisedly autocratic nature of the new regime."²⁴³

Vespasian and Titus renewed the office of censor in April 73.²⁴⁴ Ideologically, the censorship was another link to Augustus and Claudius, the only emperors who held the position, as well as Republican tradition. Realistically, the censorship allowed the Flavians to replenish the ranks of the Senate with their own men, rewarding those who were loyal in the civil war.

The tribunician power was likewise seen as important by the Flavians. Vespasian assumed the *tribunicia potestas* with the *senatus consultum* that granted him the traditional imperial powers.²⁴⁵ Titus was granted the powers on July 1, 71,²⁴⁶ likely amid much controversy.

²⁴⁰ Suet. *Vesp.* 8.1; note *a* on p. 282 of Loeb edition, ed. Henderson

²⁴¹ Jones, *Titus*, 103-4.

²⁴² Pliny *Sec. Pan.* 58: *Miseros ambitionis, qui ita consules semper, ut semper principes errant!*

²⁴³ Jones, *Titus*, 82.

²⁴⁴ Pliny *NH* 7.162; Jones, *Titus*, 83.

²⁴⁵ "Law on the imperial powers of Vespasian. AD 69-70," as quoted in R. K. Sherk, ed. and trans., *The Roman Empire: Augustus to Hadrian*, vol. 6, *Translated Documents of Greece and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 124-5.

²⁴⁶ Levick, 88-9; Jones, *Titus*, 80.

The *tribunicia potestas* gave the emperor and any other who held it the powers of the tribune of the plebs, including the call meetings of the Senate, veto any legislation, and a sacrosanct body, demanding the death penalty for anyone who would harm a man with the tribune's powers.²⁴⁷ From the Augustan principate on, the *tribunicia potestas* took on a new significance: it was typically awarded to the designated successor of the emperor.²⁴⁸ By awarding Titus the power of the tribune, as well as the title *Princeps Iuventutis*, "first of the youth,"²⁴⁹ Titus was officially designated as Vespasian's successor. This certainly would have been a point of contention for those like Helvidius Priscus, who hoped that the position of emperor would be awarded to the "best man," selected in conjunction with the Senate, instead of a hereditary monarchy.

Titus also held another remarkable position. In 71, he was appointed to be the Praetorian Prefect. This was unusual in that until Titus' immediate predecessor in late 69-70, the consular Marcus Arrecinus Clemens, brother of Titus' first wife and a strong Flavian supporter, the Praetorian Prefect had always been an equestrian.²⁵⁰ Titus' position as head of the Praetorian Guard is easy to understand in light of the historical context. The Praetorian Guard had effectively ended Nero's reign by their desertion of the emperor, and by switching their allegiance from Galba to Otho, they directly caused Galba's demise.²⁵¹ Vespasian's situation was precarious enough without having to worry about being betrayed by the Praetorian Guard. Titus, who had already demonstrated himself capable of winning over the undying loyalty of his soldiers in Judaea, was well suited to take control of the Praetorians. Moreover, by becoming

²⁴⁷ *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3d ed., ed. S. Hornblower (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1549-50.

²⁴⁸ Tiberius (Suet. *Tib.* 9.3, 16.1) and Agrippa (*OCD*, 3d ed., 1601-2) both held the *tribunicia potestas* under Augustus. Drusus the Younger under Tiberius (*OCD*, 3d ed., 780).

²⁴⁹ This was the title given to Gaius and Lucius, the young sons of Agrippa whom Augustus designated as his heirs (Gaius: *OCD*, 3d ed., 781; Lucius: *OCD*, 3d ed., 784).

²⁵⁰ Suet. *Titus* 6.1; Jones, *Titus*, 84.

²⁵¹ The Praetorians and Nero: Tac. *Hist.* 1.5ff; end of Galba: Suet. *Galba* 19ff, Suet. *Otho* 5.2-6ff

Praetorian Prefect, Titus was capable of being “protector of the empire.”²⁵² Just as Domitian and Mucianus “did the dirty work for Vespasian before his return to Rome, so Titus as praetorian prefect dealt with opposition in a way that protected the person of the *princeps* while preserving his reputation for clemency.”²⁵³ Simply, Titus was the regime’s enforcer. According to Suetonius, Titus’ “uncivil and violent”²⁵⁴ behavior as Praetorian Prefect severely damaged his reputation and caused great opposition to his accession to the throne.

The political offices taken up by Vespasian and Titus were designed to enhance the prestige of the Flavian dynasty, as well as ensure the security of the regime, and Titus’ accession. However, despite the attempts to present themselves as traditional citizen rulers, in the guise of an Augustan principate with respect for the Republican offices, this backfired in many ways, and revealed the autocratic nature of the Flavian monarchy.

V.2 – The Opposition of Helvidius Priscus

For a regime that was desperately trying to consolidate its power and create a dynasty while at the same time building its legitimacy by an appeal to tradition, the senator and philosopher Helvidius Priscus would have been a painful, piercing thorn in the side. Helvidius seemed to feel it was his duty to be martyred for his Stoic principles, just like his father-in-law Thrasea Paetus who died under the tyranny of Nero. Personal animosity towards Vespasian, who pardoned Thrasea’s accuser Epruius Marcellus, fueled Helvidius’ rhetoric, and slowly the philosopher drifted from Stoic, who could approve of an enlightened monarchy, to Cynic, opposed to all forms of establishment and authority.

²⁵² Suet. *Titus* 6.1: tutorem imperii

²⁵³ M. Griffin, “The Flavians,” in *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 11, 2d ed., ed. Alan K. Bowman, Peter Garnsey, and Dominic Rathbone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 17.

²⁵⁴ Suet. *Titus* 6.1: incivilis et violentus

Helvidius based his attacks upon the Stoic ideal that the emperor ought to be “the best man,” a true *princeps* or first citizen. Helvidius’ Cynicism made his rhetoric personal, and he did not assault institutions or concepts, but rather the members of the imperial family, namely Titus. Titus’ personal behavior, including his affair with the Jewish Queen Berenice and his actions as Praetorian Prefect offered much for Helvidius to criticize. Vespasian was reluctant to act against Helvidius, for that would reveal the autocracy of the principate that the Flavian propaganda attempted to shroud. However, on the advice of Mucianus, Vespasian exiled the regime’s most vocal antagonist. Helvidius was later put to death, most likely in the year 74. Ancient evidence suggests that Titus himself may have orchestrated the silencing of his critic. While there was a contingent of Romans who thought “[Helvidius] seemed too greedy for fame,”²⁵⁵ and that he was courting martyrdom,²⁵⁶ others, such as the dramatist Curatius Maternus, saw him as a new Cato standing against the tyrant Caesar and took up the themes of his rhetoric to protest against the emperor and his heir.

However, there was no general outcry at the senator’s execution and the Flavian regime remained secure. In this environment, Titus would have felt the dynasty was finally secure enough to ask his father if he could summon his lover Berenice to the city. Vespasian gave his permission, and the queen arrived in the year 75, shortly after the dedication of the Temple of Peace.

V.2.1 – The Origins of Helvidius’ Opposition

In order to understand the motivations of Helvidius Priscus, one must understand his relationship to Thrasea Paetus. Thrasea was a Stoic philosopher and senator who displayed his

²⁵⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 4.6: *adpetentior famae*

²⁵⁶ Dio-Exc. Val 65.12.3

disapproval of Nero by refusing to participate in senatorial affairs and eventually withdrawing from public life. This first occurred in 59 after Nero killed his mother Agrippina and attempted to justify the murder in the Senate, and most of the senators continued their flattery of Nero, fulfilling his every command. Thrasea normally either ignored these sycophancies or merely gave a quick approval. This time, however, he walked out of the Senate House, refusing to take part in the affair.²⁵⁷ In 62, Thrasea defended another senator, Antistius, who had insulted Nero, and prevented his execution.²⁵⁸ He finally retired into private life in 63, when Nero forbade Thrasea to come with the whole of the Senate body to congratulate him on the birth of his daughter.²⁵⁹

After this, Thrasea waited each day for an order for his exile or death.²⁶⁰ In 66, he was brought to trial, accused of formenting revolution with the implication that the end goal was Nero's assassination.²⁶¹ The prosecution, led by Eprius Marcellus, easily succeeded. Thrasea did not even attend the session of the Senate when Marcellus secured Thrasea's conviction. When Nero's official arrived to notify Thrasea of the verdict, Thrasea summoned two of his closest associates, his son-in-law Helvidius Priscus and Demetrius the Cynic. Helvidius Priscus was exiled from Italy along with Demetrius, while Thrasea was given the ability to choose his manner of death. Thrasea cut his wrists and took his own life.²⁶²

Thrasea Paetus became a saint to those senators who abhorred the tyranny of the emperors. Tacitus wrote that by killing Thrasea, Nero hoped to extinguish "virtue itself."²⁶³

²⁵⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 14.12

²⁵⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 14.48-9

²⁵⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 15.23

²⁶⁰ Epict. 1.1.26ff

²⁶¹ D. R. Dudley, *A History of Cynicism* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1937), 131.

²⁶² Tac. *Ann.* 16.21-35

²⁶³ Tac. *Ann.* 16.21: virtutem ipsam

Thrasea's enemies compared his relationship with Nero to Caesar's rivalry with Cato.²⁶⁴ This only furthered Thrasea's myth, as Cato's refusal to compromise his values had become a source of inspiration for Stoic senators who opposed the emperors. Thrasea himself was likely complimented by this comparison, for he wrote a life of Cato that served as one of Plutarch's main sources for his biography.²⁶⁵

Thrasea stood out for his moderation and assertion of the traditional rights of the aristocracy without advocating revolution. He was, according to Syme, "anything but a fanatic, or ostentatious." He was not "rigorous or obstinate. If he spoke for reform, and thus became vulnerable, he was no grim censor but an advocate of modest amelioration. He was both sensible and humane." Thrasea upheld the traditional values of the governing class: dignity, liberty, honesty, and freedom of speech.²⁶⁶ He was not inherently opposed to the principate, and stayed out of the traditional affairs of the emperor: foreign policy, the legions, and financial matters.²⁶⁷ At the same time, he believed the Senate still had an important role, and argued that by paying attention to all matters, no matter how small, the body would "demonstrate its sense of responsibility."²⁶⁸ Syme writes that Thrasea understood that all, including the Senate, could gain "if it took the government at its word."²⁶⁹

After Thrasea's death, Helvidius Priscus took up his ideals and "had selected Thrasea as the model of true glory."²⁷⁰ Helvidius was of old Italian stock, a Samnite, and the son of a first rank centurion. From his youth, he took to the higher studies, not, according to Tacitus, in order to mask laziness with the pretentious name of philosophy as most do, but in order to better

²⁶⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 16.22

²⁶⁵ P.A. Brunt, "Stoicism and the Principate," *PBSR* 43 (1975): 15.

²⁶⁶ R. Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Clarendon Press, 1958), 2:561.

²⁶⁷ Syme, *Tacitus*, 2:558.

²⁶⁸ Syme, *Tacitus*, 2:556.

²⁶⁹ Syme, *Tacitus*, 2:558.

²⁷⁰ Tac. *Hist.* 2.91

prepare himself for his career in politics.²⁷¹ He commanded a legion in Armenia²⁷² and served as tribune of the plebs in 56.²⁷³ After serving as quaestor, he married Thrasea's daughter and, Tacitus writes, "above all he derived from the character of his father-in-law his sense of liberty. As a citizen, a senator, a husband, a son-in-law, and a friend he was equal to all of life's duties, a despiser of riches, obstinate in virtue, and steadfast against fear."²⁷⁴ Like Titus, he was full of natural ability and talent and had been educated from youth for great things.

When Galba succeeded Nero, Helvidius Priscus was recalled from exile. Thrasea's son-in-law attempted to avenge his mentor by prosecuting Eprius Marcellus, but due to the uncertainty of the political climate, moderate senators prevailed upon Helvidius to drop his prosecution.²⁷⁵ This was Helvidius' first disappointment in his crusade for justice. Helvidius' feud with Marcellus brought the senator into conflict with Vespasian. Just after the Flavians took Rome in 69, the Senate received a letter from Vespasian written as emperor, but with humility and respect for the state.²⁷⁶ Many of the senators offered excessive flattery and honors towards the emperor and his party, but like his mentor, Helvidius did not join in. He gave a speech that Tacitus says was complimentary to a good emperor,²⁷⁷ but contained no false flattery. It "was

²⁷¹ Tac. *Hist.* 4.5

²⁷² Tac. *Ann.* 12.49

²⁷³ Tac. *Ann.* 13.28

²⁷⁴ Tac. *Hist.* 4.5: e moribus soceri nihil aequae ac libertatem hausit, civis, senator, maritus, gener, amicus, cunctis vitae officiis aequabilis, opum contemptor, recti pervicax, constans adversus metus.

²⁷⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 4.6

²⁷⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 4.3

²⁷⁷ J.M.C Toynbee, "Dictators and Philosophers in the First Century A.D.," *G&R* 13, no. 38/39 (1944): 52, reads "novum principem (new emperor)" instead of "bonum principem (good emperor)" at this point in Tac. *Hist.* 4.4. Unfortunately, there is a lacuna of unknown length, and we are missing most of the content of Helvidius' speech. By reading new emperor instead of good emperor, this can dramatically change the tone of his speech. A speech to a "new emperor" might be asserting senatorial rights and set a new tone for the relationship between emperor and senator. A speech to a "good emperor" however, implies endorsement of the principate and reference to a tradition of good emperors, i.e., Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius as mentioned in the *senatus consultum*. Most scholars follow "good emperor," and I feel confident in adhering to this tradition.

received with enthusiasm by the Senate,²⁷⁸ who may have held out the hope that after the collapse of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, there was the possibility for increased senatorial powers.

Almost immediately, this hope was tested, and Helvidius and Marcellus came into conflict again. At the session in which the *Lex de Imperio Vespasiani* was written, it was decided that a delegation would be sent to the new emperor in Alexandria. Vespasian, in his letter to the Senate, had proposed that the delegation be selected by lot. Helvidius argued that the delegation ought to be chosen by the senators, so that the Senate may select who would be approved advisors for the emperor, and thus have great influence with Vespasian. Marcellus, according to Tacitus, supported selecting the delegation by lot because he was afraid that if he was not part of the selected committee, he would not have influence with Vespasian. Helvidius stated in his speech before the Senate that this was one of the specific reasons he supported the Senate deciding upon the members of the delegation. He insulted Marcellus, declaring him not virtuous enough to be on the delegation, and told him to enjoy his rewards from prosecuting the innocent: “leave Vespasian to better men.”²⁷⁹

Marcellus reminded Helvidius that selecting the members by lot was Vespasian’s proposal, so that all the senators would be held as equals. What was of the utmost importance was that senators who Marcellus considered radicals, like Helvidius, not be given undue influence with Vespasian, who was new to the role of emperor and as yet unbiased. He stated his respect and admiration for a time when the Senate was more powerful, but the senators had to face the reality of the principate. Marcellus noted that it was not he who convicted Thrasea, but the Senate. Marcellus was only doing what he needed to do in order to survive under an emperor in Imperial Rome: Helvidius might have been as brave as Cato or Brutus, but Marcellus was a

²⁷⁸ Tac. *Hist.* 4.4: studiis senatus attollebatur.

²⁷⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 4.7: Vespasianum melioribus relinqueret.

mere mortal, just like many other senators. He closed his speech with a warning to his rival: do not put yourself above an emperor, Priscus, and do not try to coerce with your precepts a man like Vespasian, who was old and wise, with triumphal insignia, and two grown sons.²⁸⁰

According to Pigon, with this speech Marcellus “emerges as an advocate of ‘Realpolitik’, a marked contrast to the old-fashioned and idealistic Helvidius.”²⁸¹

Marcellus won the debate, and the Senate elected to pick the delegation by lot. Helvidius was thwarted once more, but still not beaten in his attempt to assert senatorial rights. The civil wars of 69 had left the treasury depleted, and a financial crisis seemed eminent. The praetors, managers of the treasury, asked that state expenses be limited until the crisis had passed. The consul designate wished to wait for the emperor to make such decisions, but Helvidius believed that the Senate should decide on the matter. Before the matter came to a debate, the tribune of the plebs used his veto, declaring that no decision of such importance should be made without the emperor.²⁸²

Helvidius also proposed that the Senate should be responsible for the restoration of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, which had been destroyed in the fighting between the Vitellian and Flavian forces. He suggested that Vespasian merely “help.”²⁸³ The moderate senators passed over the motion and let it be forgotten. However, Tacitus ominously notes, “there were some who remembered it.”²⁸⁴ By merely offering Vespasian the opportunity to assist, Priscus implied that the Senate had jurisdiction and that the emperor was answerable to the Senate.

²⁸⁰ Tac. *Hist.* 4.8

²⁸¹ J. Pigon, “Helvidius Priscus, Eprius Marcellus, and the *Iudicium Senatus*: Observations on Tacitus, *Histories* 4.7-8,” *CQ* 42, no. 1 (1992): 243.

²⁸² Tac. *Hist.* 4.9

²⁸³ Tac. *Hist.* 4.9: *adiuverat Vespasianus*.

²⁸⁴ Tac. *Hist.* 4.9: *fuere qui et meminissent*.

Then an opportunity appeared finally to bring about Marcellus' ruin. Musonius Rufus, another Stoic senator, charged Publius Celer, the accuser of Thrasea's comrade and fellow victim of Nero, Barea Soranus, with bringing Soranus' death through false testimony.²⁸⁵ After the start of the year 70, the trial began; because Soranus was so beloved, and Celer so hated, the proceedings were quick. Celer was declared guilty, and "the signal had been given for vengeance against the informers." Domitian, who had just taken control of the city with Mucianus, was asked to hand over the imperial records, so that the senators might know which informer brought each accusation. Domitian responded that he must consult with his father first.²⁸⁶

In the meantime, the senators took an oath, swearing before the gods that they had supported no action that caused the downfall of another, and that they had received no rewards or honors from the ruin of another citizen. Those who had been informers under Nero recited the oath timidly and changed certain words so that they would not perjure themselves.²⁸⁷ Several informers were brought to trial, and after Curtius Montanus secured the conviction of one of the most prominent, Helvidius "conceived the hope that even Marcellus might be overthrown."²⁸⁸

Helvidius' attack began with a panegyric of Cluvius Rufus, a senator who had achieved wealth and fame without informing. Tacitus writes of this encounter:

With both his accusation and his example, he hemmed in Eprius, the spirits of the senators enflamed. When Marcellus sensed this, just as if he was leaving the Senate House, he said, "I go, Priscus, and leave your Senate to you: be the king in the presence of Caesar."²⁸⁹

Marcellus and his associate Vibius Crispus prepared to leave, but not before Marcellus shot a threatening look at Helvidius, and a riot almost broke out in the Senate House. At the next

²⁸⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 4.10

²⁸⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 4.40

²⁸⁷ Tac. *Hist.* 4.41

²⁸⁸ Tac. *Hist.* 4.43: *spem caperet Helvidius posse etiam Marcellum prosterni.*

²⁸⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 4.43: *crimine simul exemploque Eprium urgebat, ardentibus patrum animis. Quod ubi sensit Marcellus, velut excedens curia 'imus' inquit, 'Prisce, et relinquimus tibi senatum tuum: regna praesente Caesare.'*

meeting of the Senate, Domitian and Mucianus, with the approval of Vespasian,²⁹⁰ ordered that the prosecutions end and effectively pardoned the informers for their actions under Nero.²⁹¹

These incidents are tremendously significant in understanding the relationship between Senate and emperor, and how Helvidius Priscus became so bitter towards Vespasian. If the Senate had chosen the members of the delegation, as Helvidius had suggested, “this is in effect an attempt to provide the emperor with a *consilium*. A measure of control of financial policy and the leading role in restoring the Capitol are not minor matters.”²⁹² If the imperial records were published and the informers and their rewards revealed, many senators would be vulnerable to prosecution, and a witch hunt would take place in the Senate House. While Vespasian may have been willing to accept a delegation selected by the Senate, it would have resulted in rivalries and political strife as members attempted to secure Vespasian’s influence by being selected to the delegation. Not allowing Vespasian to lead the efforts to rebuild the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus was a great slight to Vespasian’s authority and placed the emperor second to the Senate in power. While refusing to open the imperial records and ending the prosecution of Nero’s informers may have been an unpopular move, it was necessary. Following the crises of 69, there were more important matters at hand, and Vespasian did not want to lose capable administrators like Marcellus to political in-fighting. Perhaps also, Vespasian recalled his own position as one of Nero’s entourage and worried that his authority might be damaged if the other members of Nero’s group were brought to ruin.

²⁹⁰ Griffin, 8, writes that though Mucianus and Domitian were the ones in the Senate House that day, “there can be no real doubt that Vespasian was the architect of the policy that Mucianus, with the help of Domitian, now gradually revealed to the Senate.”

²⁹¹ Tac. *Hist.* 4.44

²⁹² A.R. Birley, “The Oath Not to Put Senators to Death,” *CR* 12, no. 3 (1962): 198-9.

One can only imagine Helvidius' disappointment at this moment. Vespasian had once been the friend of Thrasea,²⁹³ and it is possible Helvidius thought Vespasian would be an ally in his quest for vengeance. Regardless of his personal feelings on the matter, Vespasian was more concerned about preserving order in Rome and rebuilding after the civil wars. Helvidius Priscus would not forgive Vespasian for denying him justice.

V.2.2 – The Rivalry with Vespasian and Criticizing Titus' Succession

At the beginning of Vespasian's reign, Helvidius Priscus seemed to have no major objection to the new emperor, or even to the general concept of the principate. Indeed, he may have been hopeful that Vespasian would be an ally, in particular, in Helvidius' attempt to avenge Thrasea. However, soon Helvidius and Vespasian became enemies, and Helvidius' rhetoric, which was once concerned with preserving the rights of the Senate, now consisted of attacks upon Vespasian and his son.

Syme observes that Thrasea saw potential for a relationship between Senate and emperor if the government was taken at its word.²⁹⁴ It is possible to see this philosophy in some of Helvidius' early actions against Vespasian. When Vespasian arrived in Rome in October 70, Helvidius was "the only one who greeted him by his private name of Vespasian and while praetor, he passed all of his edicts with honors to or any mention of the emperor."²⁹⁵ If Helvidius took the principate at its word, then Vespasian was no more than the first citizen, and ought to be offered no more special treatment than would any other Roman office holder. Vespasian

²⁹³ Tac. *Hist.* 4.7. Vespasian was friends with the Thrasea and Barea Soranus, who was the uncle of Titus' second wife, Marcia Furnilla. In order to preserve his standing with Nero, and to remove any suggestion of complicity with the conspiracy, Vespasian severed his friendship with these men, and Titus divorced Furnilla.

²⁹⁴ Syme, *Tacitus*, 2:558.

²⁹⁵ Suet. *Vesp.* 15.1: solus privato nomine Vespasianum salutaverat et in praetura omnibus edictis sine honore ac mentione ulla transmiserat

permitted the King of Parthia, Vologaesius, to refer to him by his private name, Flavius Vespasianus, even though Volgaesus insisted on using his own full royal titles.²⁹⁶ He mocked sycophants who attempted to link his ancestry to the founders of Reate and a companion of Hercules and even paraded his former low social status. Vespasian also stopped having individuals searched when they entered his audience.²⁹⁷ All of this suggests that Helvidius was merely trying to follow the example Vespasian himself had set, even if Helvidius followed that example with bitter sarcasm.

Indeed, Vespasian seemed to take little offense to this political snubbing of his prestige, and he “did not become angry until Helvidius, by his most insolent speeches in the Senate, had nearly reduced Vespasian to the level of a commoner.”²⁹⁸ Suetonius does not elaborate as to what these speeches were, and Tacitus has broken off by this point. In Dio-Xiphilinus however, there is an episode that seems to reveal what transformed the dispute between Vespasian and Helvidius Priscus from a simple debate of senatorial rights versus imperial power into downright hostility.

Dio’s epitomator Xiphilinus writes:

[Helvidius] was at this time praetor, but instead of doing aught to increase the honour due to the emperor, he would not cease reviling him. Therefore, the tribunes once arrested him and gave him in charge of their assistants, a procedure at which Vespasian was overcome by emotion and went out of the senate-chamber in tears, saying merely: “My successor shall be my son or no one at all.”²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ Dio-Xiph. 65.11.3

²⁹⁷ Suet. *Vesp.* 12.1

²⁹⁸ Suet. *Vesp.* 15.1: non ante succensuit quam altercationibus insolentissimis paene in ordinem redactus.” I have translated *altercationibus* as “speeches in the Senate” following Pigeon, 243, who writes “Note that Helvidius’ clash with Marcellus is also referred to as *altercatio* ([Tac. *Hist.*] 4.7.1...) The word is commonly used to denote a series of exchanges between two senators (Cic. *Att.* 1.16.8; 4.13.1; Liv. 4.6.1): the implication seems to be that Helvidius treated Vespasian as an ordinary senator.

²⁹⁹ Dio-Xiph. 65.12.1: στρατηγῶν δὲ τῆνικαῦτα, οὐτε τι πρὸς τιμὴν τοῦ αὐτοκράτους ἔδρα καὶ προσέτι καὶ βλασφημῶν αὐτὸν οὐκ ἐπανύετο, καὶ ποτε διὰ τοῦτο οἱ δήμαρχοι συλλαβόντες αὐτὸν τοῖς ὑπηρέταις παρέδωσαν, συνεχύθη τε ὁ Οὐέσπασσιανὸς καὶ δακρύσας ἐκ τοῦ βουλευτηρίου ἐξῆλθε, τοσοῦτον μόνον ὑπειπὼν ὅτι “ἐμὲ μὲν υἱὸς διαδέξεται, ἢ οὐδεὶς ἄλλος.” Trans. Cary, LCL, vol. 8, p. 283.

This moment has been attributed to the meeting of the Senate in mid-71 where Titus was awarded the *tribunicia potestas*, officially marking him as Vespasian's heir.³⁰⁰ Dynastic succession "was obviously an issue sensitive enough to cause Vespasian's harsh response,"³⁰¹ for it has been shown that Titus' succession was not only a constant theme of the Flavian political program, but in fact was one of the main reasons Vespasian was made the Eastern candidate for emperor over Mucianus.

But what did Helvidius say in the Senate House that day which reduced a battle-hardened emperor to tears? His actual words are lost to us, but it is possible to reconstruct the themes of his speech and the nature of his attack on Titus as heir. First, it appears that by this point in his career, Helvidius Priscus was no longer purely Stoic in his views, but had taken on some Cynic aspects. In the Stoic sense, Helvidius was opposed to Titus because he was not the "best man." The Stoic king regards power not as personal privilege, but as his duty; he is the benefactor of his subjects, not their master, for his subjects are free men, not slaves; he must "be surrounded by friends (an allusion to the senate) who ought to have a share in the management of all the affairs of the state," who are both free and noble men.³⁰² To a Roman Stoic who took the principate at its word, "the choice of a *princeps* lay with the senate, and a man was to be chosen in the public interest as the person best fitted for the task."³⁰³ But if Helvidius had merely declaimed about the institution of the principate, speaking in general terms about government, surely Vespasian's reaction would have been as before: possible frustration, but certainly not a tearful exit and the arrest of a senator. Helvidius appears to have taken up some of the Cynic views of his associates like Demetrius. The Cynic opposition acted "by reviling and insulting the imperial person, by

³⁰⁰ Levick, 88-9.

³⁰¹ Pigeon, 241.

³⁰² M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, vol. 1, 2d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 120.

³⁰³ Brunt, "Stoicism," 30.

turbulence, by stirring up the people and by preaching revolution, by threatening the existing social order and by abusing monarchy.”³⁰⁴ This can be seen in Demetrius’ harassment of Vespasian³⁰⁵ and later the abuse heaped on Titus and Berenice by the Cynics Diogenes and Heras.³⁰⁶ Helvidius’ speech in the Senate House that day would have been along a similar path, not just criticizing the institution of hereditary monarchy, but attacking the character of Titus himself.

It is possible that when Suetonius, whose *Divine Titus* is at times “closer to romance or panegyric than biography,”³⁰⁷ writes a thorough list of Titus’ vices, he may be recalling the very speech Helvidius’ made in 71:

He was suspected of also of a riotous lifestyle, because he also prolonged his carousing with the most extravagant of his friends; nor any less because of his lust, on account of his flock of favorite boys and eunuchs... he was suspected of greed, because it was well known that in the judicial proceedings of his father he would traffic in rewards and influence; in short, people both thought and openly declared he would be another Nero.³⁰⁸

But the problems with Titus extended far beyond his personal conduct. As Praetorian Prefect, he was quick to silence dissidents. He “acted in a somewhat uncivil and violent way”³⁰⁹ and bent the law in order to eliminate his enemies. While Vespasian was still in Alexandria, he offered a pardon to all those who had been condemned on charges of *maiestas*, which defined as treason criticism of the emperor or the state.³¹⁰ In addition, “he put an end to the indictments based on

³⁰⁴ Toynbee, 55.

³⁰⁵ Suet. *Vesp.* 13.1

³⁰⁶ Dio 65.15.5

³⁰⁷ A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 62.

³⁰⁸ Suet. *Titus* 7.2: *suspecta in eo etiam luxuria erat, quod ad mediam noctem comissiones cum profussimo quoque familiarium extenderet; nec minus libido propter exoletorum et spadonum greges... suspecta rapacitas, quod constabat in conigionibus patris nundinari praemiarique solitum; denique propalam alium Neronem et opinabantur et praedicabant.*

³⁰⁹ Suet. *Titus* 6.1: *egitque aliquanto incivilius et violentius*

³¹⁰ The official title was *maiestas minuta populi Romani*, “the diminution of the majesty of the Roman people,” *OCD* 913-4.

such complaints.”³¹¹ Therefore, Titus, as Vespasian’s enforcer, could not very well deal with dissidents by merely charging them with *maiestas*, as had been done under previous emperors. Instead, Titus turned to the law of *manifestus*. This is “extrajudicial punishment of a manifest criminal: the punishment of such a person required no charge (and therefore no trial) but rather as the result of popular pressure.”³¹² This is certainly what Suetonius was describing when he wrote that “with anyone who was most suspicious to him, [Titus] secretly sent someone through the theaters and the camps who would demand their punishment as if unanimously, and without hesitation, crushed them.”³¹³ This two-facedness, proclaiming a return to law and order while using technicalities to crush opposition, would have been exploited by Helvidius as an example of what the senators could expect when Titus took the throne. As soon as Titus became emperor, Helvidius would claim, there would be a return to tyranny and fear.

To make matters worse, there was the Queen Berenice. Titus’ lover would have been made victim to savage attacks by Helvidius Priscus. He would accuse Berenice of maintaining an incestuous relationship with her brother and then remind the Senate that Rome had already defeated Antony and Cleopatra once, but by allowing Titus the throne, Actium itself was being reversed. In 62, Thrasea Paetus made a speech against a notable provincial and decried instead of true Romans running the provinces, “now we court foreigners and fawn upon them” and allow them far too much influence in Roman affairs.³¹⁴ It is reasonable to assume that Helvidius held the same views, and certainly in his declamation, he would have brought up the way that the client rulers, especially Berenice, had been crucial in the Flavian victory. Moreover, Titus’ tour of the East had drawn severe criticism from Rome. Here was the future emperor, Helvidius

³¹¹ Dio-Xiph. 65.9.1-2: καὶ τὰς γραφὰς τὰς ἐπὶ τοιοῦτοις ἐγκλήμασι καταλύων. Trans. Cary, LCL, vol. 8, p. 275.

³¹² Jones, *Titus*, 85.

³¹³ Suet. *Titus* 6.1-2: siquidem suspecttissimum quemque sibi summissis qui per theatra et castra quasi consensu ad poenam deposcerent, haud cunctanter oppressit.

³¹⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 15.21: nunc colimus externos et adulamur

would have argued, acting not like the first citizen of Rome, as the principate had long asserted, but as a Hellenistic monarch.

In addition to all of this Berenice was Jewish. The Jews were “regarded as mysterious and outlandish in [their] religious ideas,”³¹⁵ by the Romans, and indeed, Tacitus writes, “it is profane to them all that which in our opinion is sacred, in return, it is permitted among them that which is unholy to us.”³¹⁶ Their “customs, perverse and foul, persist by means of the Jews’ depravity.”³¹⁷ They are loyal to each other, “but towards all others they show the hatred of an enemy.”³¹⁸ Helvidius may have attempted to terrify his listeners, warning them of Titus’ supposed promise of marriage Berenice,³¹⁹ and insinuated that Berenice would only accept this if Titus converted to Judaism, just as her previous husbands had. He then would have reminded his audience that converts to Judaism are taught from the first to “despise the gods, lay aside their nation, and to consider their parents, children, and brothers as worthless.”³²⁰

Indeed, Helvidius could claim that Titus would be worse than Nero, for if Titus had his way, he would marry the Jewish queen, and she would assert the same political power she had enjoyed in the East, and dominate the young, lustful man. Then, after Titus had forsaken the gods and converted to Berenice’s barbarous religion, Titus and Berenice would put barbarian blood on the throne, to rule over pure Romans and convert them all to a foreign superstition.

Such was the terror that Titus would bring upon Rome, as interpreted by Helvidius Priscus. As Suetonius would write of Titus’ accession, “not for nothing had one ascended to the principate with so much negative reputation and more reluctance by all.”³²¹

³¹⁵ R.M. Haywood, “A Note on the Dialogus of Tacitus,” *CW* 36, no. 22 (1943): 255.

³¹⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 5.4: Profana illic omnia quae apud nos sacra, rursum concessa apud illos quae nobis incesta.

³¹⁷ Tac. *Hist.* 5.5: instituta, sinistra foeda, pravitate

³¹⁸ Tac. *Hist.* 5.5: sed adversus omnis alios hostile odium.

³¹⁹ Suet. *Titus* 7.1

³²⁰ Tac. *Hist.* 5.5: contemnere deos, exuere patriam, parentes liberos fratres vilia habere.

³²¹ Suet. *Titus* 6.2: non temere quis tam adverso rumore magisque invitis omnibus transierit ad principatum.

V.2.3 – Exile and Execution

In 72, many philosophers, presumably including Helvidius Priscus, motivated by Stoic principles, took advantage of the name of philosophy to publicly teach ideas which, according to Dio's epitomator, Xiphilinus, were inappropriate to the times, and were winning support among their listeners. Mucianus, suffect consul in 72, was apparently the object of much scorn by these street philosophers, and persuaded Vespasian to expel all philosophers from the city.³²² Many scholars³²³ have connected Helvidius' exile with this expulsion of the street philosophers.

Before exiling Helvidius, it seems that Vespasian tried to reach a conclusion to the feud without causing a public scene. According to the Stoic philosopher Epictetus, Vespasian sent a private letter to Helvidius, asking him not to attend a meeting of the Senate. Helvidius responded,

"It is in your power not to allow me to be a member of the Senate, but so long as I am one I must attend its meetings." "Very well then, but when you attend, hold your peace." "Do not ask for my opinion and I will hold my peace." "But I must ask for your opinion." "And I must answer what seems right to me." "But if you speak, I shall put you to death." "Well, when did I ever tell you I was immortal? You will do your part and I mine. It is yours to put me to death, mine to die without a tremor; yours to banish, mine to leave without sorrow."³²⁴

It is worth noting that Helvidius' was exiled under similar pretences as his mentor Thrasea. Dio wrote that Helvidius appealed to the mob, promoting democracy and denouncing the principate, and behaved "as if it were the function of philosophy to insult those in power, to

³²² Dio-Xiph. 65.13.1

³²³ Dudley, 136; Levick, 89; Toynbee, 55.

³²⁴ Epict. 1.2.19-22: Ἐπί σοί ἐστι μὴ ἔδασάι με εἶναι συγκλητικόν· μέχρι δὲ ἂν ὦ, δεῖ με εἰσέρχεσθαι. "ἄγε ἀλλ' εἰσελθών," φησίν, "σιώπησον." "μὴ μ' ἐξέταζε καὶ σιωπήσω." "ἀλλὰ δεῖ με ἐξετάσαι." "κάμῃ εἰπεῖν τὸ φαινόμενον δίκαιον." "ἀλλ' ἐὰν εἴπηρς, ἀποκτενῶ σε." "πότε οὖν σοι εἶπον, ὅτι ἀθάνατός εἰμι; καὶ σὺ τὸ σὸν ποιήσεις κἀγὼ τὸ ἐμόν. σὸν φυγαδεῦσαι, ἐμόν ἐξελεῖν μὴ λυπούμενον." Trans. Oldfather, LCL, vol. 1, p. 19, 21.

stir up the multitudes, to overthrow the established order of things, and to bring about a revolution.”³²⁵ The author compared him unfavorably with his role model Thrasea, however, saying that despite the differences Thrasea had with Nero, all he did was retire from public life. Helvidius, however, “bore a grudge against Vespasian and would not let him alone either in private or in public. Thus by his conduct he was courting death and by his meddlesome interference he was destined eventually to pay the penalty.”³²⁶

In Suetonius’ *Divine Vespasian*, the biographer does not explicitly connect Vespasian’s declarations that his sons would succeed him with Helvidius Priscus’ speech in the Senate as Dio does, but rather in response to supposed “constant conspiracies against him” to which no other author refers.³²⁷ It is possible that Helvidius was portrayed as a conspirator against the regime, in particular, against the heir Titus. After all, once “Titus had been actually invested with the imperial power as his father’s colleague in 71, Helvidius’ protests could plausibly have been construed as treason.”³²⁸

Vespasian likely saw exile as a mild punishment, and the easiest way to silence Helvidius’ harsh criticisms of the dynasty. But Helvidius likely followed the path of his fellow exiles Hostilianus and Demetrius the Cynic. When Hostilianus was banished with the other philosophers, he only criticized the monarchy with more vigor and venom. Demetrius, who was with Helvidius at Thrasea’s suicide, continued to harass Vespasian when they crossed paths during Demetrius’ exile. Vespasian responded, “You are doing everything to force me to kill

³²⁵ Dio-Exc. Val. 65.12.2-3: ὡςπερ που φιλοσοφίας ἔργον ὄν τό τὰ πλήθη τάραιπειν τό τε τὰ καθεστηκότα συγγεῖν καί τό νεώτερα αὐτοῖς πράγματα ἐπεσάγειν. Trans. Cary, LCL, vol. 8, p. 287.

³²⁶ Dio-Exc. Val. 65.12.3: οὗτος δέ Οὐεσπασιανῶ ἤχθετο, καί οὐτ’ ἰδίᾳ οὔτε ἐν τῷ κοινῷ αὐτοῦ ἀπείχετο, ἀλλ’ ἐξ ὧν ἐποίει ἐθανάτα, καί πολλά πράπτων ἐμελλέ ποτε δίκην αὐτῶν δώσειν. Trans. Cary, LCL, vol. 8, p. 285, 287.

³²⁷ Suet. *Vesp.* 25.1: assiduas in se coniurationes

³²⁸ Brunt, “Stoicism,” 30.

you, but I do not slay a barking dog,” making a pun off of the similarities between Cynic and the Greek word for dog, *kuna*.³²⁹ Certainly, Helvidius’s “agitation continued and was taken to be seditious,”³³⁰ offering the men whom he criticized a pretext for executing the senator.

In 74, they had their chance. Helvidius’ long time enemy Eprius Marcellus was suffect consul,³³¹ and perhaps Titus used this in order to provide senatorial sanction for the death warrant. Suetonius writes that “although Helvidius was first relegated, and then was ordered to be killed, Vespasian thought highly of any way to save him, having sent men who in order to recall the assassins; and he would have saved him, if not for a report which falsely said Helvidius had already died.”³³²

It is important to observe that Suetonius’ language does not indicate that Vespasian gave the order. He uses two passive verbs to describe Helvidius, “*relegatum... iussum* (he was exiled... he was ordered),” not active verbs that describe Vespasian as the man who exiled and ordered Helvidius’ death. It is possible that Titus was the one responsible. Observe what Suetonius writes of Titus’ position within the regime: “he took upon himself charge of almost every office, since in the name of his father, he both dictated letters himself and drew up edicts, and even recited speeches in the Senate instead of the quaestor.”³³³ The orders of Titus, carrying the authority of the emperor himself, would have been enough to send assassins to silence Helvidius Priscus.

³²⁹ It is interesting to note that the third century writer, Philostratus, when composing his fictional *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, has the miracle-working philosopher Apollonius appoint Demetrius as Titus’ guide and moral mentor. Apollonius tells Titus that Demetrius will be a dog who not only barks at other people, but who barks at Titus in case he errs. Philo. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.31

³³⁰ Levick, 89.

³³¹ Syme, *Tacitus*, 2:643.

³³² Suet. *Vesp.* 15.1: *quamvis relegatum primo, deinde et interfici iussum, magni aestimavit servare quoquo modo, missis qui percussores recovarent; et servasset, nisi iam perisse falso renuntiatum esset.*

³³³ Suet. *Titus* 6.1: *receptaque ad se prope omnium officiorum cura, cum patris nomine et epistulas ipse dictaret et edicta conscriberet orationesque in senatu recitaret etiam quaestoris vice*

The gains Titus might enjoy with Helvidius dead were numerable. The most vocal critic not only to his succession, but to his own character, was finally silenced. A warning was given to future dissidents, that the Flavian regime, with Titus as its enforcer, would not tolerate such harsh criticism. Vespasian himself could preserve his reputation for clemency, tolerance, and reconciliation, while at the same time, accomplishing the dirty work of an autocratic government, just as he had in 69 and 70, when Mucianus and Domitian took temporary control of Rome. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, “the successful removal of Helvidius made Titus even more formidable.”³³⁴ He was officially marked as heir, able to manipulate the law so as to protect the dynasty as he saw fit, and as there was no great uproar about the execution, he received an implied endorsement of his actions. These were no longer the days when he had to cut his Eastern tour short for fear that the regime would suffer for his excesses: by 75, Titus felt that the Flavian dynasty was secure, and that now, he could finally do as he wished. Titus asked his father permission to bring his lover Berenice to Rome, and with her most vocal opposition eliminated, Berenice arrived “at the very height of her power.”

V.2.4 – The Legacy of Helvidius Priscus

The response to exile and execution of Helvidius Priscus is complex and ambiguous. The death of the senator seems to not have caused a general outcry, for certainly, the Flavian regime remained in power, and there is no report of widespread dissent. Indeed, Suetonius and Dio portray Helvidius as the villain in the story, and even Tacitus may have been thinking of Helvidius when writing in the *Agricola* that a man can be great and earn glory even under a

³³⁴ Levick, 192.

tyranny, if he acts to benefit the state, instead of those men who seek fame by dying an ostentatious death that does no good for the nation.³³⁵

However, there were several prominent figures who became the heirs to Helvidius' legacy of opposition to Titus and the regime. Two Cynics returned to Rome after Berenice's arrival in 75, and raised protest against the relationship between Titus and Berenice. The first was a certain Diogenes, who, "entering the theatre when it was full, denounced the pair in a long, abusive speech."³³⁶ While it is unknown exactly what Diogenes said, it seems safe to assume that the content was similar to Helvidius Priscus' speech before the Senate and Suetonius' list of vices in *Titus* 7.1. Diogenes' denunciation was tolerated by the regime, and the Cynic was flogged for his words. After Diogenes, Heras, another Cynic philosopher, "expecting no harsher punishment, gave vent to many senseless yelpings in true Cynic fashion."³³⁷ Yet it seems the Flavian regime lost its penchant for tolerance, and Heras was put to death, executed by beheading.

While Diogenes and Heras followed Helvidius in making direct attacks upon the Flavian regime, especially upon the relationship between Titus and Berenice, another critic took a more nuanced path of protest. Right around the time of Helvidius' exile and execution (75), Curiatius Maternus, the dramatist who was a major figure in Tacitus' *Dialogue on Oratory*, wrote a tragedy entitled *Cato*, which "it was said had offended the pride of powerful men," because in performing his play, Maternus had played the part of Cato with great passion. The tragedy quickly became gossip in the city.³³⁸ During the conversation that forms the *Dialogue*, Maternus'

³³⁵ Tac. *Agr.* 42.4

³³⁶ Dio-Xiph. 65.15.5: ἐς τὸ θέατρον πλήρες ἀνδρῶν ἐσηλθε καὶ πολλὰ αὐτοῦς λοιδορήσας Trans. Cary, LCL, vol. 8, p. 291.

³³⁷ Dio-Xiph. 65.15.5: ὡς οὐδὲν πλεῖον πεισόμενος, πολλὰ καὶ ἄτοπα κυνηδὸν ἐξέκραγε Trans. Cary, LCL, vol. 8, p. 291.

³³⁸ Tac. *Dial.* 2.1: offendisse potentium animos diceretur

guest Julius Secundus asks if Maternus is going to revise his script in order to make it less dangerous.³³⁹ The tragedian replies that not only is he going to leave it unchanged, but “if *Cato* omitted anything, during my next recitation, *Thyestes* shall say it.”³⁴⁰

Based on Maternus’ own assertion that his play *Domitius* had brought about the downfall of Nero’s favorite Vatinius,³⁴¹ it can be safely assumed that Maternus’ tragedies had political connotations. By using “carefully aimed allusions to contemporaneous characters and events that might reflect upon the Emperor,”³⁴² Maternus was able to voice his objections in the theater. There has been no doubt among modern scholars that the eulogistic *Cato* was in reference to the fall of Helvidius Priscus,³⁴³ who had idolized the famous opponent of Caesar. The *Thyestes* was about the mythical son of Pelops who was fed his own children by his brother Atreus, a gruesome chapter in a bloody feud between the two brothers for the throne of Mycenae.³⁴⁴ This tragedy likely would have been a warning about the dangers of dynastic succession, “with the hope that Vespasian’s intention might thereby be changed,”³⁴⁵ and avoid the tyranny and bloodshed that many thought might happen upon Titus’ succession to the throne, and Domitian’s potential struggles to claim it..

Maternus’ third tragedy, the *Medea* can only be understood as an allegory for Berenice. While some have suggested that the *Medea* was written in light of “Nero’s repudiation of Octavia in order to marry Poppaea,”³⁴⁶ linking the tragedy to Berenice’s relationship with Titus is a far simpler and stronger connection. Medea had become the “archetypal example of the

³³⁹ Tac. *Dial.* 3.2

³⁴⁰ Tac. *Dial.* 3.3: Quod si qua omisit Cato, sequenti recitatione Thyestes dicet

³⁴¹ Tac. *Dial.* 11.2-3

³⁴² T. Frank, “Curiatius Maternus and His Tragedies,” *AJPhil.* 58, no. 2 (1937): 226.

³⁴³ Frank, 226.

³⁴⁴ *OCD*, 3d ed., 210.

³⁴⁵ Haywood, 255.

³⁴⁶ Frank, 229.

scheming, barbarian woman,”³⁴⁷ which certainly fits the gossip that surrounded Berenice at this time. Moreover, Berenice’s Judaism may have been compared to Medea’s black magic and sorcery. Though we can not be certain, as nothing of the tragedy had survived, it may be “that Maternus hoped to represent vividly what might result from the introduction into the body politic of a foreign princess who was of a somewhat exotic and predictable nature.”³⁴⁸ It is also tempting to imagine that Maternus’ *Medea* did not depict Medea’s murder of her and Jason’s children, as did Euripides’ and Seneca’s tragedies, but rather a later part of her myth, when Medea came between father Aegeus and son Theseus in Athens, and attempted to poison Theseus in order to protect her political position.³⁴⁹ Regardless of what part of Medea’s mythical history the tragedy depicted, the message would have been the same: there is no place for a conniving and ambitious barbarian woman with a strange foreign religion here, and her presence will only spell ruin for those around her.

V.3 – Conclusion

In the year 75, Titus asked his father permission to bring Berenice to Rome. The most vocal opponent of the Flavian regime had been executed and he did not instantly become a martyr to tyranny. Indeed, it seems there might have been support for the action, because of the biting, personal nature of Helvidius Priscus’ opposition. The prestige and authority that Vespasian had so desperately sought in order to preserve the stability of Titus’ succession and thus, the state itself, had not been damaged. With her primary opponent gone, Berenice truly was

³⁴⁷ *OCD*, 3d ed., 944.

³⁴⁸ Haywood, 255.

³⁴⁹ Though Aper, when speaking to Maternus about what good can come out of poetry, asks, “to whose benefit is it if in one of your works Agamemnon or Jason speaks eloquently? [*cui bono est si apud te Agamemnon aut Iason diserte loquitur?*]” Tac. *Dial.* 9.2, it is just as possible that Aper is using generic mythological characters as opposed to referring to specific parts of Maternus’ tragedies.

“at the very height of her power,” and arrived in Rome hopeful for her love with the heir to the emperor. After this victory, Titus felt he had gained unlimited license, and through his actions “he had fairly guarded his safety for the future.”³⁵⁰

³⁵⁰ Suet. *Titus* 6.2: in posterum securitati satis cavit

VI – Conclusions: Dismissal and Aftermath

In the year 79,³⁵¹ Titus emboldened by the successful downfall of Helvidius Priscus,³⁵² moved against Alienus Caecina and the former informer Eprius Marcellus. Caecina, a man of consular rank, “was called to dinner by Titus and had hardly left the dining-room when he ordered Caecina to be stabbed,”³⁵³ justified by Titus’ production of a speech in Caecina’s handwriting that would call for the legions to rise up against Vespasian. Marcellus, Caecina’s co-conspirator, was brought to trial in the Senate and condemned to death. He was permitted to take his own life instead of facing execution.³⁵⁴

There is disagreement over the veracity of this conspiracy,³⁵⁵ but it is clear that Titus’ brutal and efficient eliminations of these two men generated great hostility from the Senate.³⁵⁶ The Senate that demanded Titus be punished, and in order to pacify the senators, and protect the succession of his son, Vespasian forced Titus to dismiss Berenice.³⁵⁷ Her dismissal would be a sufficient punishment for her lover Titus, while at the same time not truly reducing Titus’ political power, and indeed, it would have been a popular move, as the opposition to her presence had not subsided, even four years after her arrival.³⁵⁸

When Vespasian died shortly thereafter, Berenice returned to the new Emperor Titus,³⁵⁹ believing that the only obstacle to their marriage was gone. Yet Titus had made his decision.

³⁵¹ Crook, 167.

³⁵² Levick, 192.

³⁵³ Suet. *Titus* 6.2: vocatum ad cenam ac vixdum triclinio egressum confodi iussit

³⁵⁴ Dio-Xiph. 65.16.3-4

³⁵⁵ For the opinion that it was generated by Titus, see Crook, 167-9, Levick, 192-3. It is wise to remember that Titus had a talent for forgery (Suet. *Titus* 3.2), and that it was “something noticeable when a Roman lawyer wrote a speech out beforehand; if Caecina had ever read out a speech to the Guard he is likely to have had a frigid reception” (Levick, 193). For the opinion that it was legitimate, see Rogers, 93, who reminds us that neither of our two ancient sources, Suetonius or Dio-Xiphilinus, implies that the conspiracy was anything but real.

³⁵⁶ Suet. *Titus* 6.2

³⁵⁷ Rogers, 94.

³⁵⁸ Dio-Xiph. 65.15.4-5

³⁵⁹ Dio-Xiph. 66.8.1

Berenice would have been too much of a liability for the new princeps, and “he immediately dismissed Berenice from the city, he reluctant, she against her will.”³⁶⁰

When Berenice returned to Rome after Titus’ succession, she found a different man. Seemingly overnight, he shed the vices of his youth, and became the “love and darling of the human race,” as he would come to be remembered.³⁶¹ Suetonius wrote that, “But that same [negative] reputation turned out to his advantage and was changed into the highest praises, and not any vice was found, but on the contrary, the highest virtues.”³⁶² Tacitus makes a similar statement, that Titus “spent his youth delighting in pleasure, but was more restrained in his own principate than in his father’s.”³⁶³ Dio-Xiphilinus states that this sudden transformation “may have been because he had really undergone a change; indeed, for men to wield power as assistants to another is a very different thing from exercising independent authority themselves.”³⁶⁴ Modern scholars differ in their opinions, for “it may be that he laid aside one mask to assume another – a move that could well be attributed to the cynical refinement and poetic versatility of a graduate of Nero’s court – but this remains a secret of his complicated nature.”³⁶⁵ Yet it is far more likely that Titus simply learned how to govern from his father,³⁶⁶ and understood the important lessons of being emperor: if a Roman ruler is to be successful, he cannot be a king, but the first citizen.

³⁶⁰ Suet. *Titus* 7.2: Berenicen statim ab urbe dimisit invitum invitam.

³⁶¹ Suet. *Titus* 1.1: amor ac deliciae generis humani

³⁶² Suet. *Titus* 7.1: At illi ea fama pro bono cessit conversaque est in maximas laudes neque vitio ullo reperto et contra virtutibus summis.

³⁶³ Tac. *Hist.* 2.2: Laetam voluptatibus adulescentiam egit, suo quam patris imperio moderatior.

³⁶⁴ Dio-Xiph. 66.8.1-2: τάχα μὲν γὰρ ὅτι καὶ μετεβάλετο (οὐ γὰρ ὁμοίως ἄλλω τέ τινες παραδυναστεύουσι καὶ αὐτοὶ αὐταρχοῦσιν Trans. Cary, LCL, vol. 8, p. 297.

³⁶⁵ A. Garzetti, *From Tiberius to the Antonines: A History of the Roman Empire AD 14-192*, trans. J.R. Foster (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1974), 259.

³⁶⁶ Garzetti, 259.

And so Berenice was dismissed, another casualty in Titus' rise to the throne. Her relationship with Titus helped define public reaction to both his accession and his reign: Suetonius lists her as one of his worst vices, and her dismissal is among the most important evidence of Titus' true virtue.³⁶⁷ Rome could not accept such a strong-willed, politically capable Jewish queen holding influence over the heir and later emperor. Helvidius Priscus certainly knew where to apply pressure, and his rhetoric lived on in the wholly negative Roman tradition to Berenice. Berenice was Cleopatra and Medea, manipulative foreign women with mysterious ways who held sway over men. But with her dismissal, Titus created another analogy for their relationship: Aeneas and Dido. Like the mythical hero, Titus denied himself love and personal happiness with his foreign queen, instead forsaking her in the name of duty to the state.

The relationship between Titus and Berenice, and the inherent conflict between love and duty, has captured the minds of many. The seventeenth-century French dramatist Jean Racine wrote a tragedy about Berenice's dismissal, *Bérénice* (1670), and in the same year, his rival Pierre Corneille followed with his own *Tite et Bérénice*. Mozart's last opera, *La Clemenza di Tito*, also mentions Berenice's dismissal, and her departure serves as an impetus for much of the opera's drama. Countless novels, such as Lion Feuchtwanger's *Josephus* trilogy (1932-42), have treated the affair, and even the renowned Roman historian Ronald Syme tried his hand at concocting an elaborate tale concerning the end of Titus' and Berenice's relationship,³⁶⁸ written in Tacitean Latin. He even speculated that Berenice was dismissed to Campania, just in time for the disastrous eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

The affair of Titus and Berenice has intrigued many, but few examinations have been made of why Berenice was seen as a liability for Titus, and what is the origin of the negative

³⁶⁷ Suet. *Titus* 7.1-2

³⁶⁸ R. Syme, "Titus et Berenice: A Tacitean Fragment," in *Roman Papers*, vol. 7, ed. A.R. Birley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991): 647-62.

tradition against the relationship between heir and queen. This paper has attempted to do so. Crook has suggested that the negative tradition originated from Licinius Mucianus and his supporters, but the ancient evidence offers no support for elaborate theories of rivalry between Mucianus and Titus. The sources do reveal a substantial opposition to Titus' succession led by Helvidius Priscus, and it is this paper's contention that Helvidius made Titus' relationship with Berenice a central aspect of his criticisms of the Flavian regime. Heirs to Helvidius' dissent, though it is extremely improbable that they acted together, likely took advantage of the themes of Helvidius' rhetoric, and attacked Titus and Berenice's relationship as well. Titus' response was brutal and efficient, but it did not silence the widespread disapproval of Berenice. Ultimately, Titus had to choose between the principate and his lover, and he chose the throne. At the same time, Titus' relationship with the Jewish Queen Berenice was one of his greatest vices, and his repudiation of her became a shining example of his virtue.

Appendix – Suetonius’ *Divine Titus*

It seemed necessary to include a new translation of Suetonius’ *Divine Titus* for several reasons. While Suetonius has enjoyed a rebirth in modern scholarship, only the author’s Julio-Claudian biographies have received the benefits of this new interest in Suetonius. His Flavian biographies are considered to be inferior, and indeed, they do lack the citation of official documents like the earlier biographies, however, Suetonius gives us many details about the Flavians and their personalities that are not included in the few other surviving sources. Despite their supposed shortcomings, the Flavian biographies are worth examining closely, and receiving greater interest from scholars.

Suetonius’ *Divine Titus* is a particularly interesting work, as it at times seems closer to panegyric than critical biography. He grants Titus one of the most complimentary epithets in Roman literature, and even in acts that clearly demonstrate Titus’ darker and more violent side, Suetonius seems willing to grant his subject the benefit of the doubt. What is even more fascinating, is that Tacitus, an author known for his cynicism and skepticism of even the most benevolent acts of an emperor, appears largely to agree with Suetonius’ assessment of Titus’ personality. Others, like Josephus, who was a client of Titus, and Cassius Dio, who tends to sympathize with the imperial power, also confirm Titus’ widely popular personality. But Dio, in an insight of rare complexity, observes that Titus was in many respects similar to Augustus in reputation. Whereas Augustus could only enjoy a good reputation because of his long reign, in which he was able to show benevolence after his cruelties during the civil war, Titus may have only enjoyed a good reputation because of the shortness of his reign. Titus “ruled with mildness and died at the height of his glory, whereas if he had lived a long time, it might have been shown that he owes his present fame more to good fortune than to merit.” (Dio-Xiph. 66.18.5)

Suetonius’ biography is significant because it allows us to observe an anomaly in the Roman Empire: a princeps who seemed to enjoy the highest praises during his reign, and after his death. It is naïve to think that Titus really could be the romantic hero that is portrayed in Suetonius’ biography, but it is truly fascinating to note how glowing Suetonius’ praise for Titus is, when in every other biography, he demonstrates a keen eye for critical observation and nuance.

1. Titus, of the cognomen of his father, the love and darling of the human race – had such an abundance of perhaps either talent, or skill, or luck, to earn the good will of all, and - that which is most difficult - while emperor, since as a private citizen and even under the principate of his father, he was not free from hatred, not even public censure – was born on the third day before Kalends of January, in a year distinguished for the murder of Gaius, near Septizonium in a sordid house, indeed in a very small and dark bedroom, for it is still maintained and shown.

2. He was brought up in the royal court together with Britannicus and educated in the same subjects and by the same teachers. During this time, they say, a brow-reader was brought by Narcissus, the freedman of Claudius, to inspect Britannicus, and affirmed most firmly that he would never become emperor, but the other, Titus, who was standing near him, certainly would. Moreover, they were such friends that it is believed Titus, reclining near by, also tasted of the potion, by which Britannicus, drinking it, died, and was afflicted with a grave sickness for a long time. Later on, in memory of all this, he set up a golden statue to him in the Palace, and he

dedicated and accompanied another, an equestrian statue, of ivory, which is carried in front of the Circus parades to this day.

3. Immediately, in boyhood, his endowments of body and spirit shown brightly, successively greater and greater through each stage of his lifetime: a distinguished body in which there was not less authority than charm, exceptional strength - although not tall in stature and having a belly protruding a little; an extraordinary memory, an aptness for almost all the arts of war and peace. He was masterfully skilled with weapons and at riding; in Latin and Greek, whether in orating or in molding poetry, he was so prompt and fluent that could speak extemporaneously; and he was not one who was ignorant of music, as he could sing and play the lyre delightfully and expertly. I found out from many people that he also was wont to take down notes with the greatest speed, competing for sport and fun with his own secretaries, and that he could imitate whatever handwriting he saw, and often would declare he could have been a master forger.

4. He served as a military tribune in both Germania and Britannia, gaining the highest fame for his industry, and not in the least for his modesty, as is apparent in the multitude of statues and portraits of him and inscriptions throughout either province.

After his military service, he gave attention to the Forum, more for reputation than for a career, and at the same time, he married Arrecina Tertulla, whose father was an equestrian of Rome but had once been prefect of the Praetorian Cohort, and upon her death, he put in her place Marcia Furnilla, of most magnificent family; he divorced her after she produced a daughter.

Then, after holding the office of quaestor, he was put in command of a legion and he reduced in power Taricheae and Gamala, some of the strongest cities of Judaea, having his horse killed under his thighs and mounting another, whose rider had fallen fighting near him.

5. Later on, when Galba acquired the state, he was sent to congratulate him, and wherever he had gone, men turned around, as if he had been summoned for the sake of being adopted. But when he felt everything had been thrown back into turmoil, he came back from his journey, and went to the oracle of Paphian Venus, and while he consulted the oracle about his voyage, he was also confirmed in his hope of imperium. He soon got his wish, and was left behind to subjugate Judaea; during the final assault upon Jerusalem, he destroyed twelve champions by the strike of just as many arrows, and on the birthday of his daughter, he captured the city to such delight and favor of the soldiers that in congratulations, they saluted him as Imperator, and immediately thereafter, when he was retiring from the province, they held him back, demanding with supplication, and even with threats, that he either remain, or either lead them all away together with him. From this a suspicion was born, as if he would try to revolt from his father and claim a kingdom of the East for himself; he increased that suspicion when, heading to Alexandria, in the consecration of the Apis bull at Memphis, he wore a diadem, which was done with respect to the custom and ritual of the ancient religion; but there was not a lack of those who interpreted it otherwise. And therefore, hurrying to Italy, he put to land in Regium, then Puteoli by means of a transport ship, from there he journeyed to Rome as promptly as possible, and with his father caught off guard, as if to prove the thoughtlessness of the rumors about him, he said: "I have come, father, I have come."

6. And he did not, from that point, cease to play the part of partner and even protector of the empire.

He celebrated a triumph with his father, and held the censorship together with him, he was that same man's colleague in both the tribunician power and in seven consulships; and he took upon himself charge of almost every office, since in the name of his father, he both dictated letters himself, drew up edicts, and even recited speeches in the Senate instead of the quaestor; he also undertook the praefecture of the praetorians, which had never up to that time been administrated by anyone except a Roman equestrian, and he acted in a somewhat uncivil and violent way, since with anyone who was most suspicious to him, he secretly sent someone through the theaters and the camps who would demand their punishment as if unanimously, and without hesitation, crushed them. Among these was Aulus Caecina, a man of consular rank, whom was called to dinner by Titus and had hardly left the dining-room when he ordered to be stabbed; to be sure, he was forced on by a crisis, since he had indeed intercepted a document written in Caecina's handwriting which he prepared to declare in public to the soldiers. By these things, just as he had guarded his safety for the future, so had he incurred much ill-will in the present, so that hardly ever had one ascended to the principate with such a negative reputation and more against the will of all.

7. In addition to his cruelty, he was suspected of also of a riotous lifestyle, because he also prolonged his carousing with the most extravagant of his friends; nor any less because of his lust, on account of his flock of favorite boys and eunuchs, and because of his conspicuous love of the queen Berenice, to whom, they say, he even promised marriage; he was suspected of greed, because it was well known that in the judicial proceedings of his father he would traffic in rewards and influence; in short, people both thought and openly declared he would be another Nero. But that same reputation turned out to his advantage and was changed into the highest praises, and not any vice was found, but on the contrary, the highest virtues.

The banquets he organized were more delightful than excessive. He chose advisors whom the princeps after him found comfort in as necessary to themselves and the state, and whom they employed before any others. He immediately dismissed Berenice from the city, he reluctant, she against her will. Some of his most favored lovers, although so skilled at dancing that they soon were masters of the stage, he not only ceased from copiously pampering them, but from watching all of their performances in public gatherings.

He took nothing away from any citizen; he abstained from the things of others, as if any ever had; and he also would not receive the even those contributions which were allowable and customary. And nevertheless, he was less than no one before him in liberality: on the dedication of the amphitheater and the quick completion of the nearby baths, he gave most sumptuous and lavish games; he gave both a naval battle in the old Naumachia, and gladiators in the same place, and also five thousand beasts of all kinds in a single day.

8. Indeed, he had a most benevolent nature, and while in accordance with the tradition of Tiberius all the following Caesars did not otherwise ratify the benefits granted by the previous emperors, which they did only if they themselves had given the same to the same people, Titus was the first who confirmed all the past benefits with one edict, and did not allow it to be asked from him. Indeed, with regards to the other petitions of men he was most obstinate: he would not send one away without hope; rather, upon being admonished by the members of his household, as though he was promising more than he could, he said that none ought to go away from a

conversation with the emperor sad; and even, when one time, he recalled over dinner that he had provided nothing to anyone all day, he gave voice to that memorable and justly praised saying: "Friends, I have lost a day."

He especially treated the entire populace with such kindness during all occasions, so that when he displayed a gladiatorial game, he declared that he would give it in accordance with the judgment of the spectators, not his own; and that's clearly what he did. For he did not deny any request, so that further he urged them to ask for what they wished. And indeed, openly displaying his zeal for those armed as Thracians, and as a fan, he often bantered with the people with words and gestures, but without violating his majesty nor less his calmness of mind. So that he not neglect any way of courting public favor, sometimes, he would admit the common folk into his baths while he was bathing.

Some chance and also sad events occurred during his reign, such as the burning of Mt. Vesuvius in Campania, and a fire at Rome which lasted through three days and just as many nights, and also a plague which could not easily be counted among others. In these misfortunes and others like them, he showed not only the worry of an emperor, but even the unparalleled love of a father, now consoling through his edicts, now helping in as far as his means were available. He appointed by lot managers for the restoration of Campania from the ranks of the consular men; the goods of those overwhelmed in Vesuvius, the heirs of whom did not exist, he assigned to the restitution of afflicted cities. During the fire in the city he said in public nothing but "I am lost," and he marked all the ornaments of his own palaces for the public works and temples, and put in charge of it many men of the equestrian order, by which everything might be completed earlier. For the purpose of healing the illness and soothing the disorders, he used every kind of aid, human and divine, searching for every kind of sacrifices and remedies.

Among the misfortunes of the times were the informers and their commanders because of their old license. After these men had continually fallen to whips and clubs, and last of all dragged through the sands of the amphitheater, some Titus ordered to come up and be sold, others to be carried off to the most cruel of islands. And indeed so that he might check forever the ones who might dare this, he forbade, among other things, bringing the same matter under multiple laws, and inquiring into the status of anyone of the deceased after a certain number of years.

9. Having declared that he accepted the office of pontifex maximus so that he might retain pure hands, he demonstrated his good word, and after that, he was neither the author of, nor privy to, the death of anyone, although occasionally, he was not lacking cause for vengeance, but he swore he would rather himself perish than destroy. When two men of the patrician class were convicted of aspiring to empire, he did nothing more than warn them to desist, informing them that the principate was given by fate, and promising that he would give them whatever they desired besides that. And he immediately sent one of his own couriers to one of their mothers, who was very far away, to announce to the anxious woman her son was safe; the men themselves, he not only summoned them to a dinner of his intimate friends, but on the following day, at a spectacle of gladiatorial games, he purposely placed them near himself, and when the swords of the fighters were offered to him, he offered it to them for inspection. It is even said that having ascertained the day and hour of the birth of each, he declared that a danger hung over them both, but on another day, and from another person; as in fact it came to pass.

His brother never desisted plotting against him, but almost professed inciting the army, and contemplating flight, he did not bear to put him to death, or banish him, or in fact, to hold

him in less honor, but as from his first day of his reign, he persisted in naming him partner and successor, and sometimes in private, he pleaded with prayers and tears that Domitian might wish to be of the same spirit as himself.

10. Meanwhile, he was preceded by death, to the greater loss to humanity than to himself.

Having completed the spectacles, at the close of which he wept copiously in the presence of the people, he made for the Sabine area, somewhat melancholy, because while he was sacrificing, the victim escaped, and because a storm thundered in a clear sky. Then, at the very first stay, he got a fever, and while he being carried in a litter, it is said he parted the curtains and looked up the heavens, and he again and again complained bitterly that his life was being snatched away from him undeservingly; and indeed there was not any action of his for repenting, except only one. What kind it was, he himself did not make known at that time, nor did it easily occur to anyone. Some thought he was recalling love affair which he had with the wife of his brother; but Domitia over and over most solemnly swore that none had been had: she would not at all deny it, if there was one at all, on the contrary, indeed she would have glorified it, which that woman was always most ready for in all of her disgraces.

11. He died in the same villa as his father, on the Ides of September, two years, two months and twenty days after he had succeeded his father, at the age of 42. When it was known that he was dead, in fact he was mourned by all in public even as they would in their homes, and the senate, before they were called together by edict, ran to the curia, and while the doors were still barred; then when they were opened, they gave such thanks and heaped such praise on him in death as they never had while he still lived and was present.

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