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6

Judea/Israel under the Roman Empire

What might a postcolonial optic highlight in the interactions between Rome and Judea/Israel in the centuries between 63 BCE when Pompey asserts Roman control, and 135 CE when the Bar Kokhba-led revolt is crushed?¹ The question gains some pointedness with the general abandonment of the old stereotype of Judea/Israel as a seething cauldron of rebellious anger that finally boils over in the 66–70 CE war.

Martin Goodman has largely argued the opposite view in proposing a double thesis: the lack of anti-Roman resentment and an accidental war. ‘The travails of Judea up to 66’, he writes, ‘do not suggest a society on the brink of rebellion for sixty years’. Rather, the tensions of the 50s CE comprised ‘terrorism within Jewish society rather than revolt against Rome... [They were]...internal to Jewish society rather than symptoms of widespread resentment of Roman rule.’ The reason for the lack of ‘blatantly revolutionary behavior to support [Josephus’] picture of a decline into war was that no such revolutionary behavior occurred’. Josephus makes ‘little mention of any consistent anti-Roman ideology’.² The destruction of Jerusalem was the

product of no long-term policy on either side. It had come about through a combination of accidents, most of them unrelated in origin to the conflict: the death of Nero, leading to Vespasian’s bid for power in Rome and Titus’ quest for the propaganda coup of a rapid conquest of Jerusalem, and the devastating effect in the summer heat of a firebrand thrown by a soldier into the Temple of God.³

Goodman concludes there was no widespread resentment against Rome and that the war of 66–70 CE was accidental.

Seth Schwartz offers a different evaluation of the interaction between Rome and Judea/Israel. He argues that ‘the impact of different types of

1. Segovia, ‘Mapping the Postcolonial Optic’.
2. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 389–95.
3. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 423.

foreign domination on the inner structure of ancient Jewish society primarily in Palestine' was, at least initially, galvanizing and integrating. Recognizing that 'the effects of domination were complex, pervasive, and varied' and emphasizing the generative and galvanizing impact of imperialism, notably Rome's strategy of autonomous provinces and empowered local elite leadership, Schwartz argues that a significant homogeneity in Jewish society resulted. 'A loosely centralized, ideologically complex society came into existence by the second century BCE [and then] collapsed in the wake of the destruction and the imposition of direct Roman rule after 70 CE'.⁴ The heart of this homogeneity comprised God, Temple, and Torah.⁵ 'I argue', writes Schwartz, 'that imperial support for the central national institutions of the Jews, the Jerusalem temple and the Pentateuch, helps explain why these eventually became the chief symbols of Jewish corporate identity. The history of the Second Temple period is one of integration, in which more and more Jews came to define themselves around these symbols.'⁶ In emphasizing Judaism as 'the integrating ideology of the society', he recognizes that Judaism was 'complex, capacious, and rather frayed at the edges... [though] I reject the characterization of Judaism as multiple'.⁷ Discussion of sectarianism does not disappear from his work and he argues for significant numbers of elite (male) adherents at least for various sects, and for their mainstream location.⁸ After 70 and the revolt of 132–135, the impact of imperialism was quite different. In a word or two, 'Judaism shattered' or fragmented.⁹

How are we to describe the interaction between Rome and Judea/Israel? A seething cauldron of resentment? Relatively benign interactions with little anti-Roman resentment and an accidental war? An initial and protracted galvanizing and integrating impact followed by a shattering and destructive impact (though the last chapter suggested considerable fragmentation from the outset)? What might a postcolonial optic offer in the consideration of this well-rehearsed but contentious material?¹⁰

4. Schwartz, *Imperialism*. He concludes (291) that imperial domination and the imperial empowerment of Jewish leaders produced 'the complex loosely centralized but still basically unitary Jewish society'.

5. Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 49.

6. Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 14.

7. Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 9, 98.

8. Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 91–98.

9. Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 15.

10. In addition to Chapters 1 and 5 above, useful introductions to postcolonial discussion include Williams and Chrisman, *Colonial Discourse*; Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*; Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*; Young,

While nearly everything about postcolonial studies is disputed, the discourse at its center concerns the assertions and representations of unequal and multi-dimensional power relations of domination (the imperializing center) and subordination (the receiving margins) that comprise complex imperial-colonial experiences marked by ambivalence, hybridity, and mimicry.¹¹ The extent of such discussion is enormous. This chapter will focus on the imperial-colonial interactions involving Rome and Judea/Israel in the period from 67 BCE–135 CE.

One danger of such an exploration is to regard all colonial interaction with the center in homogenized perspective. Studies alert us to multiple forms of negotiation employed by both provincial elites and powerless or subaltern groups. Our focus will concern the various dynamics in play when colonials of various statuses negotiate imperial power with varying, simultaneous, and sometimes violent strategies.

Some previous discussions that cast this interaction in terms of dualisms such as resistance or compliance, peaceful coexistence or violent rebellion, foreign imperializer and local rebel are simplistic and distorting. I emphasized in the last chapter the reciprocal interaction between imperializer and colonized and the ambivalent situation or 'third space' that is created. As James C. Scott argues, in-between poles of cooperation and disruption are the ambivalent spaces (the third spaces), where much actual negotiation of superior power takes place.¹² Some locals, especially elites but not exclusively so, openly and fully cooperate because it serves their needs to do so. Others do so in varying degrees, whether for reasons of self-interest or of pragmatic survival. The powerless also often use apparent compliance to disguise and mask dissent as well as to ensure survival. What seems to be cooperation can hide acts of resistance or of distancing from the imperializer's agenda. Anonymity masks defiance, and careful and self-protective calculation accompanies its expression. Compliance and resistance exist simultaneously; ambiguity is common; ambiguity and hybridity the norm. Violence is by no means the only expression of opposition and physical confrontation is not the only form of violence. To equate opposition with violence is to miss much imperial-colonial negotiation. In fact, powerless subalterns are often reluctant to employ public physical violence because they know that the rupturing of the social fabric of apparent

Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction; Young, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*; also standard works, Bhabha, *The Location*; Spivak, *A Critique*; Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*.

11. Segovia, 'Mapping the Postcolonial Optic', 66-67.

12. Scott, *Domination*, 136.

compliance is very dangerous and, more likely than not given the power dynamics, will result in their own demise. Scott argues that the powerless nurture a hidden transcript, an alternative version of reality, in spaces away from the imperializer's gaze. Local traditions and practices form the basis of this hidden transcript that contests the public transcript, or the imperializer's 'official' way of ordering the world and narrating its story. As I will note in the subsequent discussion, equating the lack of violence with a lack of opposition or resentment, equating relative public 'peace' with compliance, seems to mar much of Goodman's analysis.

In relation to violence, another dynamic of imperial-colonial interactions must be noted. As discussed in the previous chapter, horizontal disputes in the form of inter-group conflict, verbal polemic, and physical violence are common where vertical imperial pressure is exerted on a society. Various imperial situations, ancient and modern, attest this dynamic. Josephus indicates increasing divisions and inter-faction conflict in Judea/Israel and Jerusalem during the 66–70 war as imperial pressure intensifies on rebel groups: for example, Eleazar against Menachem (*J.W.* 2.442–48), John of Gischala against Josephus (*J.W.* 2.592–94), Idumeans against Ananus (*J.W.* 4.300–325), Zealots against John (*J.W.* 4.377–97), Simon bar Gioras (*J.W.* 4.503–44), and Eleazar, John, and Simon (*J.W.* 5.1–20) to name but some factional conflicts.¹³ In discussing the situations created by the exertions of power by recent European empires, David Abernethy notes increasing horizontal violence between Hindus and Muslims in India and between competing groups in Kenya and Malaya under British imperialism, in Vietnam under French control, and among groups in the former Belgium Congo.¹⁴ We could add black-on-black violence in South Africa in the 1980s' and the 1990s' struggle with apartheid and white power.¹⁵

As noted in the previous chapter, the postcolonial pioneer Frantz Fanon, in his study of imperial power dynamics in the French colony of Algeria, examines the creation and role of horizontal violence as vertical imperial power is asserted.

The native is a being hemmed in... The first thing which the native learns is to stay in his place, and not to go beyond certain limits. This is why the dreams of the native are always of muscular prowess; his dreams are of action and aggression... The colonized man will first manifest this aggression which has

13. E.g. 'στάσις', Josephus, *J.W.* 4.133, 388, 395, 545; 5.98, 105, 255, 257, 441; 6.40.

14. Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance*, 147–61.

15. Hamber, 'Who Pays for Peace', 238–41.

been deposited in his bones against his own people. This is the period when the natives beat each other up, and the police and magistrates do not know which way to turn when faced with the astonishing waves of crime... The settler keeps alive in the native an anger which he deprives of an outlet; the native is trapped in the tight links of the chains of colonialism. But we have seen that inwardly the settler can only achieve a pseudo petrification. The native's muscular tension finds outlet regularly in bloodthirsty explosions—in tribal warfare, in feuds between septs, and in quarrels between individuals.¹⁶

In Fanon's analysis, horizontal conflicts—whether tribal or individual, physical or verbal—are multi-faceted. They result in part from subjugated people being hemmed in and contained by imperial controls and from restriction without outlet. They indicate considerable imperial (vertical) pressure. In addition to containment, horizontal struggles also develop because the oppressed mimic, as Fanon and Homi Bhabha note, the competitiveness and violent domination that mark the imperial situation. Violent domination 'has been deposited in his own bones'. The subjugated yearn for power while simultaneously and angrily resisting the imperial power exercised over them. Such horizontal violence is a means whereby subjugated groups compete with each other for power. In so doing they assert various identities that subvert the imperialists' attempts to control them by homogenizing them as 'the colonized'.

Yet as Fanon also argues, horizontal violence is a means of avoiding direct confrontation with the oppressor, since the oppressed know that they cannot win such struggles. Rather, they turn on each other with attacks that substitute for attacks on the oppressor. Assuming imitation of the oppressor, and noting that displacement of, yet identification with, the oppressor go hand in hand, Paulo Freire observes in relation to Latin American struggles, 'Because the oppressor exists within their oppressed comrades, when they attack those comrades they are indirectly attacking the oppressor as well'.¹⁷ That is, horizontal violence occurs as oppressed groups in negotiating imperial power substitute attacks on other oppressed groups for direct confrontation with the oppressor. Lashing out against similarly oppressed groups is a safer option. Horizontal violence thus attests the restricting pressure of overwhelming imperial power, its imitation, and its engagement by avoidance and attacks on substitute groups.

I will return to this dynamic of horizontal violence in our subsequent discussion. But the recognition of it likely renders false Goodman's claim that inter-faction violence among Judeans/Israelites has nothing to

16. Fanon, *The Wretched*, 52-54.

17. Freire, *Pedagogy*, 44.

do with resentment toward Roman power. A postcolonial optic establishes Goodman's claim as comprising a false alternative that misses a vital connection. Following Fanon, factional violence among Judeans/Israelites has everything to do with Roman imperial pressure and its negotiation by Judeans/Israelites. It attests the expression and management of considerable anti-Roman sentiment and a context in which war is not surprising. Moreover, recognition of this dynamic of horizontal violence similarly calls into question Schwartz's insistence on the initial, predominantly integrating impact of Roman power on Judean/Israelite society. This dynamic indicates that we might expect conflictual fragmentation and some integration to occur simultaneously, not sequentially, as in Schwartz's analysis.

My argument will be that a postcolonial analysis alerts us to the complexities and ambivalences of imperial-colonizer interactions in Judea/Israel in ways that conventional analyses of relatively benign interaction without much resentment, accidental war, and ready integration have not been able to identify. Because of space constraints, the discussion must be limited, partial, and perspectival. I will employ as a partial framework the three spheres that Scott identifies as arenas in which imperial rule is exerted and encountered by the colonized.¹⁸ After an introduction in Section I, I begin in Sections II and III with *ideological domination* that utilized a set of convictions and/or a metanarrative that justified and expressed elite oppression, privilege, self-benefiting rule, and societal inequality. The elite's political, economic, societal, and cultural hierarchical order and exploitative practices were sanctioned as the will of the gods, as the metanarrative shows. This stable, 'natural', and immutable societal and cosmic order awed, impressed, and cowered the subordinated, while bolstering the elite.¹⁹ This metanarrative and the spheres of domination it sanctioned comprised the 'Great Tradition', the official version of reality. In Sections 4-9 I consider two further forms of domination. Roman elites and their provincial allies also exercised *material domination*, using political and military power to exact agricultural production through taxation, services, and labor. Land ownership, the hard manual work of non-elites, including slave labor, and coerced extractions of production sustained the elite's extravagant and elegant lifestyle which was marked by conspicuous consumption. Further, elite alliances also enacted *status domination*, comprising societal and economic practices, social interactions, and punishments

18. Scott, *Domination*, 198.

19. Scott, *Domination*, 2.

that damaged the personal well-being of the subjugated non-elites and deprived people of dignity through humiliation, insults, degradation, and forced deference, exacting a personal toll of anger, resentment, and learned inferiority.²⁰ I will argue throughout that previous analyses have not paid sufficient attention to the indignities and psychological terror of the imperial-colonial situation. Goodman's attention to open conflicts, for example, pays little attention to such daily experiences and underestimates the conflict-contributing legacy of such treatment over decades of imperializer-colonized interactions. The discussion assumes the outline of postcolonial theory in Chapter 1, and the discussion and approach of Chapter 5. Because of space consideration, I will not repeat those here.

I. Historical Introduction

By way of orientation to Rome's interaction with Judea/Israel, I begin with a brief and standard sketch of some major moments and players across this nearly two-hundred-year period. The subsequent discussion selectively, but not comprehensively, elaborates aspects of this sketch with a postcolonial optic.

In 63 BCE, the Roman general Pompey Magnus (Pompey the Great) takes control of Judea/Israel. Pompey's intervention came about partly because of Roman imperialist expansion (in 64 BCE Pompey had taken control of the Seleucid's territory of Syria) and partly because of civil strife in Jerusalem.

Queen Salome Alexandra, widow of Alexander Jannaeus who had ruled Judea/Israel as king and chief priest from 103–76 BCE, died in 67 BCE. A power struggle and civil war developed between her two sons, Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II. After several military battles, both brothers appealed to Pompey. Followers of Aristobulus established themselves in Jerusalem. Pompey attacked the city and after three months defeated it and sacrilegiously entered the temple in 63 BCE. The Jewish historian Josephus reports that 12,000 died in the fighting (*J.W.* 1.150). He laments the loss of independence, the end of the one-hundred-or-so-year reign of the Hasmoneans over a Judea/Israel independent of foreign control, and the establishment of Roman rule:

20. Scott, *Domination*, 111–15; see 198 for a summary chart.

Now the occasions of this misery which came upon Jerusalem were Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, by raising a sedition one against the other; for now we lost our liberty, and became subject to the Romans, and were deprived of that country which we had gained by our arms from the Syrians, and were compelled to restore it to the Syrians. (*Ant.* 14.77).

The next twenty or so years after 63 BCE, predictably in a context of the assertion of imperial power, are marked by horizontal conflicts among various factions competing with each other for Rome's favor. Power struggles among factions of the Hasmoneans continue. In the mix also was the powerful Antipater from Idumea to the south whom Julius Caesar appointed governor of Judea/Israel in the 40s BCE. In turn, Antipater appointed his son Phasael governor of Jerusalem, and his younger son, Herod, governor of Galilee. By the year 40 BCE, there were further complications with the Parthians setting up a Hasmonean king in Judea/Israel while Rome supported the seemingly more stable and less nationalistically ambitious Herod. By 37 BCE Herod had won the military struggle with the support of several Roman legions to emerge as Rome's client-king (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.381-93).

Herod ruled until his death in 4 BCE. His reputation has been of a cruel and ruthless ruler who even put his own sons and other family members to death. He has never lived down the comment that Macrobius attributes to the emperor Augustus in saying that he would rather be Herod's pig than his son (*Saturnalia* 2.4.11)! One historian comments, 'Through a combination of political cunning, good luck, and an occasional murder, King Herod retained his Roman support, his throne, and his life!'²¹

Recent scholarly work, however, has significantly modified the wholly negative evaluations of Herod with an appreciation for his astute and practical adaptation to the increasingly Roman world, and for his effective handling of the numerous challenges he faced.²² His reign was marked by constant challenges from Hasmoneans, a lack of popular support, a need to keep his Roman patrons happy through changing political alliances, numerous strategic building projects including the Jerusalem temple, and a high level of paranoia concerning possible rebellious family members and officials.

Herod's death in 4 BCE led to an unstable succession. His succession plan divided his kingdom among three sons with one son, Archelaus, becoming ruler of Idumea, Judea, and Samaria. The plan needed Rome's

21. Levine, 'Visions of Kingdoms', 356.

22. For a summary, see McCane, 'Simply Irresistible'.

approval but public opinion was divided. A series of civic disturbances broke out requiring the Roman governor of Syria, Varus, to intervene by sending a legion into Jerusalem. Further unrest resulted from the harsh actions of the legion's commander Sabinus. More disturbances in Galilee and Perea led to Varus returning to put down the rebellion and to crucify several thousand locals. In 6 CE the emperor Augustus removed Archelaus and exiled him to Gaul.

Augustus added Judea/Israel and Samaria to the province of Syria, and (with the exception of 41–44 CE) they were ruled by Roman governors until the war of 66 CE. This period of rule combines both calm and conflict; I shall return to it below. Certainly the Jewish historian Josephus sees in the inability of the governors, especially in the 50s and 60s, to maintain order and to refrain from self-enriching greed a contributing factor to the war that breaks out in 66 CE.

The outbreak of the war, as with its continuation, was marked by constant internal conflicts among Jewish groups. It seemed to promise initial Judean/Israelite success when the governor of Syria, Cestius Gallus, having marched troops south from Antioch, withdrew from Jerusalem before securing control, his troops being decimated in the retreat. By 70 CE, though, Roman forces under the command of Titus, son of the new emperor Vespasian (69–79 CE) and himself to be emperor in 79–81 CE, captured the city after a siege and burned the temple.

Emperors Vespasian and Titus and their successors used the war to enhance their prestige and to vilify Jews as Rome's enemies. Rome did not permit the temple to be rebuilt. In 130 CE, the emperor Hadrian refounded Jerusalem as a Roman colony, naming it Aelia Capitolina and dedicating a new temple to Jupiter Capitolinus. Such an act was extremely provocative and in 132 CE another revolt broke out. Led by Shimon bar Kokhba, it asserted, as did the war of 66–70 CE, Israel's independence from Roman rule. But as with the 66–70 CE war, this assertion was crushed after fierce fighting in 135 CE.

This brief outline of some of the main events between 63 BCE and 135 CE is standard fare. It is a 'top-down' approach that focuses on the powerful, on key moments of the assertion of military power, on Roman success. A discussion shaped by a postcolonial optic seeks to trouble such a benign account, to expose the strategies and violating misuse of imperial power, to identify the ambivalences, mimicry, and hybridities that arise in imperialized–colonized interactions, to recognize its psychological terror, and to identify the agency whereby local peoples (who were not destroyed by it) negotiated this power with multivalent and simultaneous strategies along a spectrum bounded by opposition and

acceptance. This postcolonial optic is interested in foregrounding the complex dynamics of the unequal power relations of imperial-colonial interactions. It seeks to understand the emergence and consequences of such an assertion, its self-representation as superior to the subjugated 'Other', and its reframing by local people. And this optic questions the ongoing effects of historical representations that have more often admired than questioned Roman power, more often lauded its benefits than evaluated its cost, more often attended to its supposed benefits than noticed its ambivalences.²³

A postcolonial optic, for example, raises again the question of nomenclature. Naming, of course, is an act of power, an assertion of control, a means of defining, an expression of perspective. So what name do we employ for the territory and people over which Rome asserts its power? Noting the slogans on the coins issued by Jewish 'rebels' (or are they 'freedom fighters?') in the 66–70 CE war, Martin Goodman points out the significance of the act of naming. With slogans such as 'Jerusalem is holy', 'Freedom of Zion', and 'Shekel of Israel', these rebels/freedom-fighters explicitly avoid the term 'Judah' which 'was too close to *Judaea* (the Roman name for the province)'.²⁴ They refuse Rome's naming of them and contest it by turning to the past (a common strategy of colonized peoples as postcolonial studies have noted) to retrieve terms that presented their independent state as 'Zion' and 'Israel'. These terms freshly asserted old and central traditions of Israel's covenant and royal identities with YHWH as God. In 130 CE, Hadrian, also knowing the power of naming, removes the name Jerusalem from the city, renaming the newly established Roman colony Aelia Capitolina. The province also receives a new name, Syria Palaestina, 'resurrecting an ancient Greek designation of the region, which referred not to the Jews but to their ancient enemies, the Philistines'.²⁵ During the 132–35 CE revolt, the rebels/freedom fighters again draw from their own 'native' traditions and past to employ slogans on coins that present their identity as an independent people with the nomenclature of 'Israel' and 'Jerusalem' ('for the freedom of Jerusalem') as counter assertions to Roman naming.

Goodman helpfully raises the question of nomenclature but the title of his book, *Rome and Jerusalem*, offers an unhelpful solution even if we regard his nomenclature as a synecdoche. While it creates a 'tale of two cities', the title also creates a false pairing and a perspective that focuses on the powerful elite, to the neglect of poor non-elites. Roman power

23. Morley, *The Roman Empire*.

24. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 14–15; Goodman, 'Coinage and Identity'.

25. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 471; also Eck, 'The Bar Kokhba Revolt'.

was by no means restricted to Jerusalem, extending as it did over the province of 'Judea', what the resistance of 66–70 CE and 132–35 CE called 'Israel', and whose power was negotiated by non-elites as well as elites. Throughout this chapter, I will again use the hybrid form 'Judea/Israel' to denote the contested nature of the subjects of this discussion.

II.

The Metanarrative of the Roman Empire

In the reciprocal relationship between imperializer and colonized, Rome's self-presentation legitimates its subjugation of peoples with divine sanction even as Rome depends on these subjugated peoples to confirm and authenticate its metanarrative.

Virgil's *Aeneid* and Horace's *Carmen Seculare*

The Augustan poet Virgil presents Rome as chosen by the gods to exercise 'rule without end' (*Aeneid* 1.279) and as inaugurating a golden age of superior cultural blessing. Peter Brunt observes that 'What was most novel in the Roman attitude to their empire was the belief that it was universal and willed by the gods'.²⁶ At the heart of this imperializing identity is 'a myth of supernatural character...beyond military, economic, and socio-political bases of power',²⁷ even as it includes and sanctions such bases. John Dominic Crossan styles this metanarrative as Religion which leads to War which leads to Victory which leads to Peace.²⁸ The cultural blessing of peace, a linguistic euphemism for subjugation, comes about through the assertion—often militaristic but not always so—of divinely sanctioned, Roman supremacy and victory. I survey several literary and visual/material examples.²⁹

Virgil's epic poem *The Aeneid* emerges after the torturous decades of the 40s–20s BCE, which saw the end of the republic, civil wars, economic struggle, and apparent religious and social decline. With the emergence after the battle of Actium in 31 BCE of Octavian (named Augustus by 27 BCE) as supreme leader, a significant reversal of fortune followed for Rome consisting of civic peace, prosperity for some elites,

26. Brunt, 'Laus Imperii', 291.

27. Fears, 'The Cult of Jupiter', 5–7.

28. Crossan, 'Roman Imperial Theology'.

29. Crossan, 'Roman Imperial Theology', highlights the *Aeneid*, Octavian's Tent Site Inscription, the Actium Coinage, the *Gemma Augustea* Cameo, the Prima Porta Statue, the Altar of Augustan Peace, and the *Sebasteion* at Aphrodisias.

renewed religious piety with Augustus' rebuilding of temples and reconstituting of rites, and an emphasis on responsible social and civic participation. Reflecting this optimism, Horace, at the occasion of Augustus' Saeculum games in 17 BCE, happily sang of a Golden Age in his *Carmen saeculare*, performed by twenty-seven boys and girls, the very personification of the domestic fertility and civic order that were the mark of Augustus' golden age. Horace celebrates

- Morality: 'Rear up our youth, O goddess, and bless the Fathers' edicts concerning wedlock and the marriage-law, destined, we pray, to be prolific in new offspring' (17-20);
- Fertility: 'Bountiful in crops and cattle, may Mother Earth deck Ceres [goddess of agriculture, corn, and harvest] with a crown of corn; and may Jove's wholesome rains and breezes give increase to the harvest' (29-32);
- Social Conformity and Harmony: 'O gods, make teachable our youth and grant them virtuous ways; to the aged give tranquil peace' (45-46);
- Blessing on Rome: 'If Rome be your handiwork...[give] to the race of Romulus, riches and offspring and every glory' (47-48);
- Military Victory and Alliances with the Submissive: 'And what [Augustus]... entreats of you, that may he obtain, triumphant o'er the warring foe, but generous to the fallen!' (49-52);
- Renewed Social Morality: 'Now Faith and Peace and Honour and old-time Modesty and neglected Virtue have courage to come back, and blessed Plenty with her full horn is seen' (57-60);
- Eternal Empire: may Apollo 'prolong the Roman power and Latium's prosperity to cycles ever new and ages ever better' (66-68).

The poet Virgil was at work through the 20s BCE on the *Aeneid* and reflects this optimism in his work. Just how he reflects that optimism is debated. Some see the poem as ambivalent about Augustus' power, somewhat appreciative yet also subversive of and pessimistic about Augustus' achievements, while others see it much more as a celebration of his accomplishments.³⁰ Whatever the final verdict, the epic with its appeal to the past certainly articulates key emphases in Rome's imperial self-presentation, notably Rome's divinely sanctioned right to empire. It

30. See the brief discussion (and cited literature) in Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*, 195-202.

tells the story of the Trojan Aeneas who, along with other Trojan survivors, leaves the ruins of Troy and guided (Jupiter) and thwarted (Juno) by gods undertakes a mission to travel to Italy to establish a city. Detoured through Carthage and the underworld, his party arrives in Italy and through battles takes control of Latium from which Rome emerges.³¹

In Book 1, Jupiter delivers a prophecy that outlines a version of Rome's certain and magnificent future (1.254-96). It sets out the divinely destined events of Aeneas' military success in founding Latium, the royal line of Alba Longa from which emerge Romulus and Remus and Rome's founding, the success of Julius Caesar, and of Augustus in closing 'the gates of war', in restraining 'impious Rage', and establishing peace. Jupiter describes Rome's identity and mission:

For these I set no bounds in space and time; but have given empire without end... Romans, lords of the world and the nation of the toga. Thus it is decreed (1.278-83).

With Jupiter's words, Rome is presented as divinely commissioned to rule without any temporal or geographical limits. As 'lords of the world', global domain is in view. As 'the nation of the toga', Roman males are to attend actively to the task of bringing peace and 'civilizing' other nations.³² Whether nations and peoples want Roman civilizing is not an issue.

A second prophecy about Rome's future comes in Book 6 as Aeneas journeys into the underworld to meet his father Anchises. Beside the River Lethe, Aeneas sees a parade of the future 'great ones', including Romulus whose 'blessed' Rome has worldwide empire (6.781-84), and 'Augustus Caesar, son of a god' (Julius Caesar) who will 'establish a golden age [and] advance his empire' (6.788-807). The parade conveys a sense of inevitability, that Rome's domination is predestined, unstoppable, natural, and divinely sanctioned. Subsequently, Anchises exhorts and commissions his son: 'you, Roman, be sure to rule the world...to crown peace with justice, to spare the vanquished and to crush the proud' (6.851-53). Romans are to rule, but in refusing to recognize any ambivalence, reciprocity, and hybridity, and thereby removing any agency from the subjugated, Roman rule is to be worthy rule in imparting the benefits not only of peace but also of justice and mercy.

31. For discussion, see Galinsky, *Aeneas*; Bonz, *Past as Legacy*, 31-65; Kamudzandu, *Abraham*, 59-86.

32. The toga has ideological significance signifying a national identity of 'peaceful, civilized, male', which mandates for Roman (elite) males active attention to such a civilizing mission. Vout, 'The Myth of the Toga', 214.

The presentation, of course, envisages a benign and noble Rome engaged in a 'civilizing' mission for the benefit of all, but it cannot disguise the fact that this 'rule' consists of coercive domination over nations and that it requires 'vanquishing' and 'crushing' any who stand in Rome's way. At heart is a presumed military superiority and a cultural arrogance derived from divine sanction that assumes and asserts Rome's way as superior and desirable. Of little concern are any reciprocities between conquerors and conquered and any sense of the disruptive and destabilizing impact of the assertion of empire.

There is plenty of written and visual evidence that attests the seriousness with which Rome and its elite provincial allies promoted this self-representation as a divinely sanctioned empire with superior military power and a civilizing mission. Augustus displayed the Aeneas myth in his *forum Augusti* in Rome particularly in the temple of Mars Ultor (Mars the avenger) where both Aeneas and Romulus feature. On the Ara Pacis (the Altar of Peace), both are again displayed but in ways that highlight, according to Paul Zanker, 'divine providence that governed Roman history from the beginning'.³³ Aeneas, for instance, is depicted arriving in Latium under an oak tree where the prophesied pig and piglets are found (cf. *Aeneid* 3.390; 8.84).

Res Gestae

Augustus' work, *Res Gestae*, displayed on his mausoleum in Rome as well as in the provinces (copies have been found in Galatia at Ancyra, Apollonia, and Antioch), outlines his numerous accomplishments and benefactions as 'father of the fatherland' (*pater patriae*). Augustus' opening boast in presenting himself is that he ensured Rome's security and extended 'the power of the Roman people' over 'the entire world' (1). He did so by filling political offices at the behest of the senate (1, 7), by waging many battles 'throughout the whole world' and extending mercy where appropriate (3), by subduing and administering Spain and Gaul (12), by 'securing peace on land and on sea...by victories throughout the whole empire of the Roman people' (13), by taking 'control of the sea from pirates', by returning rebellious slaves to their owners, by securing with oaths of loyalty the allegiance of 'all of Italy' and 'the provinces of Gaul, Spain, Africa, Sicily, and Sardinia' (25), by enlarging 'the territory of all provinces of the Roman people', pacifying Gaul, Spain, Germany, the Alps, and Arabia and Ethiopia, where 'great forces of both peoples were cut down in battle and many towns captured'

33. Zanker, *The Power*, 201-10, esp. 203.

(26), by adding Egypt, subduing Armenia, and recovering the provinces from the Adriatic to the east (27), by recovering military standards lost in battle in Spain, Gaul, Dalmatia, and Parthia (29), by extending the 'authority of the Roman people' over Pannonia, Illyricum, and Dacia (30), and by friendships and alliances with various Eastern (client) kings (31-33). As ruler of the world—land, sea, people—he extended the empire 'where the ocean encloses it' (26).

Augustus calls this benefaction the rare situation of peace, effected through submission to Roman will and rule. 'The doorway of (the temple of) Janus Quirinus' had been shut—to signify 'peace on land and on sea'—only twice 'from the time of the city's foundation until before my birth'. During Augustus' time 'the senate ordered it shut three times' (13). The *Res Gestae* presents Augustus' ordering of the world, at times by military might, at times by negotiation and alliance. It portrays a hierarchical dichotomy between Rome and the rest of the nations.³⁴ Augustus' 'matter-of-fact' tone in summarizing his deeds cloaks his actions with a sense of the natural and inevitable. He maintains this sense by omitting detailed or humanizing description of the impact on local peoples of his actions. There are no casualty lists, no public opinion polls, no catalogues of personal or collective indignities and resentments and no recognition of the psychological terror inflicted by Roman rule, no voice for subalterns, and no recognition of any acceptable 'push back' against Roman power.

The Sebasteion at Aphrodisias

From the mid-first century CE, from the city of Aphrodisias in Asia Minor, comes a graphic display of Rome's divinely sanctioned mission.³⁵ Worshippers approached its Sebasteion, dedicated to Aphrodite and the emperors, Augustus, Tiberius (14-37 CE), Claudius (41-54 CE), and Nero (54-68 CE), through a large paved area or processional way, eighty meters long (about 250-300 feet) and fourteen meters wide (about 45 feet). This large paved or processional way was flanked on both its north and south sides by porticoes or three-story high walls that provided, by one estimate, some one hundred and eighty spaces for panels and statues.

The panels and statues order the Roman world in particular ways, only some of which can be discussed here.³⁶ As worshippers approached the temple, they were not just reminded of, but were enabled to experience,

34. Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered*, 86-113.

35. Erim, *Aphrodisias*, 106-23; Smith, 'The Imperial Reliefs'; Smith, 'Sacra Gentium'.

36. Carter, *John and Empire*, 99-101.

the divinely sanctioned and overwhelming power of Rome. Statues personified peoples and provinces that had been conquered by Rome, including Cretans, Cypriots, Sicilians, Egyptians, Judeans, Arabs, Bosporans, Bessi, Dacians, Dardanians, Iapodes, Andizeti, Pirousti, Rhaeti, Truppilini, and Callaeci. The statues, displayed in the approach to an imperial temple, represent a peaceful/submissive empire gained by military conquest under religious sanction. Moreover, significantly, these subjugated people are presented as female figures. Roman power is gendered as manly power; defeated people are womanly and weak. Roman power is also sexualized as sexually violent power. One panel depicts a divinely nude and macho emperor Claudius with a spear or sword standing over and holding down a defeated and semi-nude female figure Britannia who raises her right hand either in defense or to beg for mercy. The scene personifies Claudius' invasion and annexation of Britain (43–47 CE) as a sexual conquest in which the rapist Claudius prepares to penetrate the defeated people. A similar panel presents the divinely nude and heroic emperor Nero subduing a slumping, kneeling, mostly nude, female figure who represents Armenia. Military conquest is rape. By penetration, the 'Father of the Fatherland' produces more children/subjects/slaves for his empire-wide household. Rome's self-presentation of its imperial military power is gendered and sexual.³⁷

And who was responsible for such a visual/material and dramatic display of the empire's metanarrative? It would be tempting to think that this was a 'top-down', centrally coordinated message sent out to the provinces from Rome. But while emperors and their agents did plenty of that, these displays in provincial Aphrodisias did not originate in Rome. They express the hybrid identity of colonized elites celebrating their place in the hierarchy of Roman power. Members of two very wealthy Aphrodisian families were responsible for funding these impressive structures. Two brothers, Menander and Eusebes, funded the northern wall, and another two brothers, Diogenes and Attalus, funded the southern wall. The porticoes were not forced on Aphrodisians by Rome. They were 'home-grown', the voluntary actions of two very wealthy Aphrodisian families experiencing the ambivalence of being elite provincials under power and intent on honoring Rome's 'accomplishments' as well as displaying and enhancing their own wealth, power, and prestige as loyal participants in the empire. There are many such examples of provincial elites grasping opportunities to express their place in and loyalty to the empire.

37. Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered*, 42–48.

Tacitus

Tacitus' biography of his father-in-law Agricola, written in the 90s CE, attests to this Roman self-presentation as conquering and civilizing power in the province of Britain. Agricola was governor of Britain from 77–84 CE, an agent and beneficiary of Roman power, just as Tacitus himself is. Tacitus presents Agricola's service as comprising his role as Rome's agent, notably as military commander and administrator 'who first thoroughly subdued' Britain (*Agricola* 10). Tacitus celebrates elite virtues, holding up for admiration and imitation Agricola's conventional male roles as warrior (*Agricola* 18, 22–25, 35–38), ruler and administrator (19), judge (19, 21.1), and priest (9). Agricola collects taxes and tributes (13, 19), and imposes and upholds Roman order. He spreads Roman 'culture' among the British by constructing temples, market-places, and houses, by educating sons of chieftains, and by advocating the use of Latin and wearing the toga (21).

Tacitus' commentary on this civilizing mission is, nevertheless, biting just as it is culturally arrogant in its assumed superiority: 'and little by little the Britons went astray into alluring vices: to the promenade, the bath, the well-appointed dinner table. The simple natives gave the name of "culture" to this factor of their slavery' (*Agricola* 21.2). Elsewhere Tacitus returns to this theme and has Civilis, a Batavian military commander, warn his people against Roman culture: 'Away with those pleasures which give the Romans more power over their subjects than their arms bestow' (*Histories* 4.64.3).

Whatever Tacitus' ambivalent presentation of the colonized under imperial power, he is unhesitating in presenting Agricola's greatest accomplishment as military conquest. About a quarter of the biography is concerned with the year 84 CE, including a description of the bloody battle of Mount Graupius in which Agricola slaughtered the united British tribes (29–39). Tacitus gives voice to anti-Roman sentiment by attributing a speech to Calgacus, the leader of the British forces (30–32).³⁸ Ironically, Tacitus supplies Calgacus with words of protest; the constructed speech includes some terse critique. Tacitus' Calgacus offers a very different construction of Roman identity from below: 'robbers of the world... to plunder, butcher, steal, these things they misname empire; they make a desolation and they call it peace' (30). Tacitus has Agricola describe his own rule as 'armed occupation' and he boasts from his Romocentric perspective without any regard for the locals' history in the land that he has 'discovered and subdued Britain' (33.3). Interestingly,

38. See James, 'The Language of Dissent', 279–89.

Tacitus says he writes this account in part to show that ‘great men can live even under bad rulers’ (42.4). He, of course, is not referring to the British tribes under Roman rule but to Roman elites having to negotiate the emperor Domitian and his (for Tacitus) tyrannical ways. Ironically, Agricola provides a fine exemplar of the metanarrative that is, in Tacitus’ view, larger than and betrayed by the emperor.

Josephus

This same metanarrative appears in the speech that the elite Jewish writer Josephus (client of the Flavians Vespasian and Titus) gives to the general, later to be emperor, Titus (79–81 CE). In Josephus’ account, Titus addresses his troops in the Galilee as they prepare to battle Jewish troops outside Tarichaeae on the shores of the Sea of Galilee during the war of 66–70 CE. He begins by appealing to their identity as Romans:

Romans—it is well at the outset of my address to remind you of the name of your race, that you may bear in mind who you are and whom we have to fight. Our hands to this hour no nation in the habitable world has succeeded in escaping. (*J.W.* 3.472–73)

His immediate construction of Romanness consists of undefeated military power. Titus goes on to present Romans as superior to Jews in military discipline (3.475), preparation (3.475–76) armour and leadership (3.477) courage (3.478–79), and cause:

You will contend for a higher cause than the Jews; for though they face war for liberty and country in jeopardy, what higher motive could there be for us than glory and determination, after having dominated the world, not to let the Jews be regarded as a match for ourselves? (*J.W.* 3.480)

Titus pits Jewish liberty and defense of country against Roman glory which comprises the maintenance of Rome’s domination of the world. The latter has, for Josephus’ Titus, the greater value. At the heart of the antithesis is Rome’s unrivaled domination over all peoples expressed in and secured by military supremacy. Jewish concerns simply recede before this value. And what underwrites it? Titus declares:

Do you then not fail me, have confidence that God is on my side and supports my ardour. (3.484)

Divine sanction for Rome’s empire means the battle is inevitable as is victory which creates a situation of subjugation that Rome calls peace. For the record, Titus prevails, and Vespasian dispatches the conquered under military supervision to nearby Tiberias. There he executes (accepting that Josephus’ numbers are exaggerated) twelve hundred of the ‘old and unserviceable’, sends six thousand youths to Corinth to

work on Nero's canal, and the remaining thirty thousand he sells into slavery (*J.W.* 3.532-42). Whatever the accuracy of the numbers, the ripples of the indignities, resentment, and psychological terror of military defeat throughout families and villages were far-reaching and permanent.

Rome's 'myth of supernatural character', its divine sanction for *imperium sine fine* ('empire/rule without end') foregrounds what Michael Mann calls Rome's ideological power or control of meaning-making and interpretation. This power existed along with military (violence and concentrated coercive power), economic (control of labor and production) and political (territorially centralized control of organization and institution) power, to which we will return below.³⁹ Scott observes that such metanarratives or 'great traditions' exist primarily for the benefit of elites. They empower and embolden elites in the exercise of their power, legitimating and confirming their privileged place in the social order and self-benefitting rule, rendering such structures 'natural' and 'god-given'. In Scott's words 'elites are also consumers of their own performance'.⁴⁰ That is indeed true, but it cannot be overlooked that the metanarrative was not the preserve of elites. Its public and multimedia declaration in literary texts and inscriptions, on coins and statues, by images and buildings, with altars and ritual, ensured non-elites were exposed to it also, and, to varying degrees, found it variously persuasive, convenient, and/or unconvincing in making meaning of their world.

The assertion of such a metanarrative in the midst of provincial subjects interacts with local traditions, practices, and power structures to create ambivalence and hybrid identities that hold together Roman dominance with dependence on subjugated Judea/Israel to confirm and authenticate the former's metanarrative.

III.

Rome and Judea:

Roman Religious Acts and Imperial Cult Observance

While claiming religious sanction for its empire, Rome—with a few exceptions—did not impose its polytheistic religions on subjugated provinces and it did not prohibit local religious practices. This is true for Judea/Israel for much of the period from 37 BCE–66 CE. For much of this time, with two notable exceptions (Gaius Caligula and Hadrian), Rome did not attempt to shut down worship in the Jerusalem temple or

39. Mann, *Sources of Social Power*, esp. 11, 22-28, 250-300.

40. Scott, *Domination*, 49.

forbid obedience to the Torah, as the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes had attempted to do in the 160s BCE. With the destruction of the temple in 70 CE, however, Rome steadfastly prevented any temple rebuilding until Hadrian's humiliating action of 130 CE.

Since religious claims and practices were simultaneously self-presentations of political claims and identities, as the previous section makes clear, it is not surprising that the hybridity that marked Judea/Israel under Roman rule featured a considerable strand of religious-political tensions and indignities. For example, this period is marked by a series of 'incidents' concerning the temple that created tensions and resentments. Among the more prominent are the following:

- In 63 BCE supporters of Aristobulus took refuge in the temple (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.143). Pompey's troops captured the temple, and killed both supporters and priests 'in the act of pouring libations and burning incense'. In contradictory manner Josephus first says that the Romans 'butchered' many; but then he blames the factions of Aristobulus and Hyrcanus for killing each other (in total, twelve thousand; *J.W.* 1.150-51). Josephus also notes Pompey's entry into the temple and comments that 'of all the calamities of that time none so deeply affected the nation as the exposure to alien eyes of the Holy Place, hitherto screened from view' (*J.W.* 1.152). The effect no doubt included horror, outrage, resentment, and hope for revenge. By his own words, Josephus notes this truly offensive act on Pompey's part. But Josephus, living the hybrid identity of Jewish apologist for and client of the Roman Flavian emperor, sets about minimizing any Roman offense by presenting Pompey, the 'able general', as a respectful sightseer in the temple who did no damage and 'conciliated the people' (1.153).
- In 54–53 BCE, Crassus, the governor of Syria, funded a war against Parthia by stripping 'the temple at Jerusalem of all its gold, his plunder including the two thousand talents left untouched by Pompey' (*J.W.* 1.179). Josephus continues to minimize the impact of such an act by ignoring any local response and invisibilizing any local agency. Again we are left to imagine the indignity and resentment of it.
- Herod, Rome's client-king, placed a golden eagle over the great gate of the temple (*J.W.* 1.650). This act not only set a forbidden image on the temple, but as 'a symbol of empire' (Josephus, *J.W.* 3.123), the eagle proclaimed Judea/Israel's submission and

Herod's loyalty to Rome. Two legal scholars encouraged students to 'avenge God's honor', which they did by cutting down the eagle. Herod avenged Rome's honor by burning alive the scholars and students, and executing the other forty or so who had been arrested (*J.W.* 1.648-55). The subsequent violence attests the depth of the insult sustained by the subjugated body politic.

- Pilate, governor from 26–37 CE, continued these provocations. He brought images of Caesar attached to military standards into Jerusalem. Offended by these images in the city, and exerting considerable agency in countering Roman violation of their local traditions, Jews followed Pilate to Caesarea to protest their presence. Sustained and non-violent demonstrations of a willingness to die persuaded Pilate to remove the images (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.169-74). Pilate also took money from the temple treasury for construction of an aqueduct; the resultant angry protest saw 'large numbers' of Jews killed, creating further ripples of resentment and indignity throughout households and towns (*J.W.* 2.175-77).
- Governor Florus (64–66 CE) removed seventeen talents from the temple treasury. The resultant protest that pushed back against this indignity that violated both national identity and sacred space provoked Florus to march troops into Jerusalem (*J.W.* 2.293-300).

The hybrid space of interactions between Rome and Judea/Israel also involved observances of the imperial cult. In a context of monotheistic and aniconic Judaism, claims of Roman superiority and divine sanction were asserted in the cult, thereby contributing to tensions with the local population. Some have argued that Jews had formal exemption from the cult, but there is no evidence for such a view since observance of the imperial cult was not compulsory throughout the empire.⁴¹ Jews in Judea/Israel did, though, have to negotiate its presence even though it was not a centrally imposed phenomenon, nor was observance required. Frequently in Rome's empire, elite citizens in local cities and provinces were the driving force for its celebration, embracing it as a way of negotiating and honoring Roman power and advancing their own interests. The surviving evidence from the hybridized situation of Judea/Israel certainly confirms the key roles of local elites in its promotion, notably Herodian rulers and Roman governors.

41. So correctly, Bennett, 'Roman Imperial Cult', 340-41.

James McLaren argues that while it might seem that 'a clash of world-views was bound to happen' over this practice in Judea/Israel, such a (violent and open) clash was avoided because Herod negotiated the ambivalent situation by establishing a basic strategy of 'separate but parallel sacred space'. This strategy accommodated the cult, and kept his Roman masters happy without offending Jews.⁴² While rebuilding the Jerusalem temple, for example, Herod also built three temples for the worship of Rome and its emperor in Sebaste (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.403), Baniyas (*J.W.* 1.404), and Caesarea Maritima (*J.W.* 1.414). McLaren points out that Herod chose towns of mixed population with perhaps Jewish populations in the minority in Sebaste and Baniyas. Nor is there evidence for a Jewish abandonment of Caesarea Maritima, suggesting that Jewish inhabitants could accommodate the presence of an imperial temple and were not pressured to participate. Perhaps some chose to, though Josephus does not describe any such reactions. McLaren also notes that Herod, not surprisingly, did not try to establish an Augusteum in Jerusalem, thereby securing 'separate but parallel sacred space'.

McLaren's observation is astute, but the separation of space, Herod's assumed sensitivities to local religious concerns, and a lack of local offence may not be quite as clearly delineated as he suggests. As both 'king of the Jews' and 'friend of the Romans', to use Peter Richardson's phrase, Herod walked the difficult path of hybridity, leading his subjects into the Romanization of the new world while also maintaining faithful Jewish practices.⁴³ As a result, observance of imperial honoring (perhaps without cultic and iconic dimensions?) was by no means restricted to the sites of Caesarea Maritima, Sebaste, and Baniyas as McLaren's argument suggests. Herod introduced games in honor of Augustus in Jerusalem, which, according to Josephus' multiple references, clearly troubled many, who feared this violation of their customs and introduction of foreign practices 'would be the beginning of great evils' (*Ant.* 15.267, 280-81). Herod also covered the theater with 'inscriptions concerning Caesar and trophies of the nations which he won in war'. These trophies 'irked' native Judeans/Israelites who, thinking of them as forbidden images, 'were exceedingly angry' (*Ant.* 15.272-76). Herod was unable to placate this anger and removed the images (15.277-79). According to Josephus, the construction of the temple for Augustus at Paneion also seems to have caused considerable resentment and fear concerning 'the dissolution of their religion and the disappearance of their customs', so much so that Herod tries to buy favor by remitting taxes by a third. To

42. McLaren, 'Jews and the Imperial Cult', 257, 276.

43. Richardson, *Herod*; McCane, 'Simply Irresistible', 726-27.

establish control, he initiates a rule of terror by forbidding gatherings, setting up surveillance with spies, using the death penalty for dissenters, and requiring an oath of allegiance and commitment to a 'friendly attitude to his rule' (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.363-69). Subsequently, embracing his hybrid location and identity, he required an oath of allegiance to himself and to Augustus, though Josephus does not describe the range of strategies local people employed to negotiate that act (*Ant.* 17.42). In addition, priests in the Jerusalem temple embraced their hybrid location by offering sacrifices of lambs and a bull twice daily in the temple *for* (but not *to*) the emperor and the Roman people until lower-ranked priests refused to do so in 66 CE, an action that also blurred the notion of the separated space claimed by McLaren (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.197, 409-10; *C.Ap.* 2.77; Philo, *Leg. ad Gaium* 157, 317).

Moreover, Herod's sons continued to emphasize imperial honoring. Monika Bernett argues that when Antipas founded and named the city Tiberias after the emperor Tiberius as the capital of Galilee (19-20 CE), he formed a very Hellenistic city in structure and facilities. Antipas, though, avoided conflict over the imperial cult by promoting imperial games that probably lacked cultic and iconic dimensions. Antipas' successor in ruling Galilee and Judea/Israel from 41-44 CE, Agrippa, however, seems to have been a more active proponent of the cult. His coins of 42-44 CE present himself, a sacrificial act, and the emperor Claudius.⁴⁴ While honoring the emperor Claudius in 44 CE, he himself receives address as a god, only to be struck down with intense pain and to die, a death interpreted both in Josephus (*Ant.* 19.343-50) and Acts 12:19-23 as divine punishment for overstepping human limits. Bernett finds evidence from coins issued between 44 and 66 CE by Agrippa II that the presence of 'the imperial cult in Judea-Palestine (including Galilee)' was 'strong'. She argues that the cult's expression of foreign rule in the land of the God of Israel contributed to increasing tensions between locals and Rome leading up to the war of 66-70 CE. It must also be recognized, though, that if its presence was 'strong', significant numbers participated perhaps without major doubts or concerns about its disruptive impact.

Bernett's argument for a strong presence of the imperial cult gains some support from Joan Taylor's examination of governor Pilate's activity.⁴⁵ She examines numismatic and epigraphic material to argue that governor Pilate promoted the imperial cult, including a Tiberium in Caesarea Maritima. Literary evidence (Philo's account of Pilate, *Leg. ad*

44. Bernett, 'Roman Imperial Cult', 349.

45. Taylor, 'Pontius Pilate'.

Gaium 299-305) confirms his encouragement of appropriate imperial honoring. Taylor does not regard these attempts as an attack on Jewish sensibilities, but they reflect the duty of a Roman governor to advance the Roman imperial cult in Judaea. While these actions are not open attacks on Jewish sensibilities, they give impetus to the presence of imperial honoring. If Taylor's analysis is correct, it would follow that all the governors through the first century undertook a similar responsibility to varying degrees, creating an ambivalent location that comprises a range of responses from willing compliance to feigned cooperation to outright avoidance and to resentment.

The most direct confrontation over the imperial cult pre-70 takes place in 39–40 CE when the emperor Gaius Caligula ordered a statue of himself as Zeus be set up in the Jerusalem temple, by military force if necessary.⁴⁶ If the command was carried out by Petronius, the legate of Syria, it would mean the end of Jewish practices and the introduction of the imperial cult into the Jerusalem temple. For both Philo and Josephus, the central motivation for this demand seems to be Gaius' insistence that Jews do not honor him as a god with statues as other peoples do (Philo, *Leg. ad Gaium* 198; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.257-60). All three accounts emphasize the agency of thousands of Jews, elites and non-elites, male and female, adults and children, who met Petronius at Ptolemais and Tiberias and declared that they were willing to die rather than allow the statue to be placed in the temple. The whole situation is resolved when Gaius Caligula dies in 41 CE, before the order is enacted. Gaius' actions are an aberration in terms of forcing a direct and public confrontation with the Jerusalem temple pre-70 CE. The rest of the evidence, though, suggests that, fostered by various governors, the imperial cult was actively, if somewhat sporadically, observed throughout our time period. How extensive its presence, and the various ways in which local peoples, especially subalterns, negotiated it, have largely not been remembered in the surviving record.

Nearly a century after Gaius Caligula, and sixty years after the temple was destroyed in 70 CE, the emperor Hadrian inflicted an even greater indignity in 130 CE. The temple was not rebuilt after 70, partly, as Martin Goodman argues, because portraying Jews as villains well served the self-presentation of the Flavian emperors, Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian (d. 96 CE), as legitimate rulers.⁴⁷ Frustration at this failure seems to have been a factor in the Jewish revolts of 115–117 CE. Goodman argues that in turn punishment for these revolts saw Hadrian

46. Among others, Bilde, 'The Roman Emperor Gaius'.

47. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 428-46.

establish the colony of Aelia Capitolina with a temple for the supreme all-conquering Roman god Jupiter Capitolinus on the site of Jerusalem. This was not to be a rebuilt city for Jews with a restored temple, but a city for Gentiles that explicitly excluded Jews and their religious practices by placing the worship of Jupiter at its center.⁴⁸ Such a humiliation, such an indignity, so typical in Scott's description of the interactions between the powerful and the powerless,⁴⁹ signaled that no temple was to be rebuilt. Goodman sees the revolt led by Bar Kokhba in 132–35 CE, and provoked by Hadrian's action, as a (temporary) assertion of both deep-seated resentment and a new identity until it was crushed by Rome.⁵⁰

IV. Imperial and Provincial Rule

In addition to ideological/religious and military power, Rome also exercised political power, which Michael Mann defines as the control of 'centralized, institutionalized, territorial' organization and institutions.⁵¹ Rome did not rule, though, as some other empires have done, with a huge civil service sent out from the metropole to colonies and provinces. Rather, in part it sent a small number of officials (governors) from Rome, and it worked through alliances with local elites and political institutions. In Judea/Israel, Rome ruled with Herodian client-kings (Herod, 37–24 BCE; his son Archelaus 4 BCE–6 CE; his grandson Agrippa I, 41–44 CE), governors (6–41, 44–66 CE), and alliances with local elites, notably the chief priestly families and lay, wealthy landowners.⁵² While the Sanhedrin played some role, probably under high priestly leadership, it was not a fully recognized or consistently powerful local assembly equivalent, for example, to the Senate.⁵³

Roman rule in alliance with the Herodians placed the latter in the difficult ambivalent third space of representing both Judean/Israelite traditions and Roman imperial interests. Herod was appointed king of Judea/Israel in 40 BCE by the Roman senate and with the support of

48. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 457–65.

49. Scott, *Domination*, 111–15.

50. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 465–69.

51. Mann, *Sources of Social Power*, 11.

52. Goodman, *Ruling Class*; on high priestly families, see VanderKam, *From Joshua*, 337–436.

53. On the Sanhedrin and its fluctuating influence, see Grabbe, 'Sanhedrin', 16–19.

Octavian and his patron Antony. It took three years of military action for him to secure his power from the Parthian-backed Hasmoneans. His dependence on his Roman overlords and his identity as a client or puppet king are clearly illustrated in 31 BCE when Octavian and not Antony emerged as the victor from the decisive battle of Actium. Herod persuaded Octavian/Augustus on the basis of his former loyal friendship to Antony that he (Herod) would have even greater allegiance to Octavian. Octavian confirmed his appointment as king. Josephus notes that Herod now had greater 'honour and freedom of action' and, typically, attributes his success to 'the kindness of God' (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.187-98). For Josephus, just as God's favor resided with Rome (*J.W.* 2.390; 3.351-54; 5.367), so it resides with this local imperial representative. Herod's 'greater freedom' meant little interference from Rome in Herod's reign, since Herod maintained rigid control of the societal order for his own benefit.

Roman legitimization for Herod's rule also, of course, carried the mandate for Herod to promote Roman interests in Judea/Israel. Herod walked the hybridized line between honoring Judean/Israelite religious sensitivities (with varying success as noted above), and keeping his Roman bosses happy. In the scholarly makeover of Herod in recent discussions, Herod appears very much as a 'friend of Rome'. As an 'astute reader of the times', in which republican practices gave way to a new constellation under Augustus, so Byron McCane argues, Herod and Augustus 'were able to recognize that the material and social conditions of their world had changed and that Roman administrative control was going to generate a new pattern for civilization. Augustus stepped out front to lead the parade, and Herod fell right in step behind him.'⁵⁴ McCane offers the examples of the two temples Herod built, one for Augustus in Caesarea Maritima and the temple in Jerusalem. McCane notes Herod's addition of the large Court of the Gentiles to the Jerusalem temple as a place both to welcome Gentiles from Rome's empire as well as to impress Judeans/Israelites. It facilitated hybridity in altering the Judean/Israelite impressions of the empire and the empire's impressions of Judeans/Israelites. That is, while Herod attended to and fostered Jewish traditions, he also carried out his 'responsibilities as a Roman client to socialize the Jews of Palestine to the Roman empire'.⁵⁵

Herod's honoring of Augustus, of course, paid huge dividends. He kept his throne until his death in 4 BCE. Augustus has Herod's back, for example, when Gadarenes complain that Herod was too 'severe...and

54. McCane, 'Simply Irresistible', 727, 735.

55. McCane, 'Simply Irresistible', 732-33.

tyrannical' (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.354-59). Such a complaint conveys an enormous depth of resentment for numerous (social, economic, political, religious, and personal) indignities, but the local concerns are dismissed. However, when things did not go well, as with discontent over Herod's son Archelaus, Rome freely intervened. 'Leading men', presumably a grouping of high priestly and elite lay families, brought charges to Augustus against Archelaus of 'cruelty and tyranny'. With the failure of the local elite ruling alliance, Augustus exiled him to Gaul in 6 CE (*Ant.* 17.342-44).

Even with Herod's death and Archelaus' exiling, members of the Herodian family continued to exercise power and influence in their ambivalent place of being both representative of their people and tradition, yet friends of Rome. Berenice, sister of Agrippa II, voicing the terror and indignation of the people, petitions the governor Florus to stop 'the carnage' of his soldiers' attacks on Jerusalem (*J.W.* 2.309). Josephus attributes to her brother Agrippa II a key speech in 66 CE, pleading with a Jerusalem crowd not to pursue war with Rome. As Tessa Rajak has observed, the speech is remarkable for what it reveals about the 'ambiguous stance of the native governing class, superficially pre-Roman ([*sic*] pro-Roman, in varying degrees), but harboring doubts and even deep resentments'.⁵⁶ Agrippa, educated in Rome and an active ally of the Flavians and supporter of their war effort in 66-70 CE, ruled territory to the north of Jerusalem in Galilee and Transjordan. He also had responsibility for oversight of the Jerusalem temple, including appointment of chief priests. The speech Josephus provides for him covers predictable, even 'Josephan', ground: for example, those in favor of war were only a vocal minority; power should be 'conciliated by flattery not irritated' (*J.W.* 2.350); bad governors do not reflect all emperors or the empire as a whole (2.352-54); fortune or God has prospered the empire (2.360, 390); it is too late to fight now—that should have happened more than one hundred years ago against Pompey (2.356-57); and the temple will be destroyed if war occurs (2.400).

Yet while Agrippa pleads for war-free acceptance of Roman rule, there are undertones of critique in 'the voice of the realists' who knew the demerits of empire but the necessity of compliance. Agrippa affirms that Rome's rule is slavery (2.356). Roman military power is so intimidating that a relatively few soldiers control and deter large populations (2.365-80). Gaul is willing to be exploited as a 'source of revenue' (2.372). Africans 'ungrudgingly devote their contributions' through 'tribute of all kinds' (2.383). Yes, God has prospered this empire

56. Rajak, 'Friends, Romans, Subjects', 133.

(2.390), but all apocalyptic thinkers know that God will, finally, bring down all empires, including Rome's. The critique is sharp even as it is veiled. The public message is clear in its demand for cooperation but so too is a subtext that recognizes the harsh realities of imperial rule. The ambivalence is explicit. As an agent and ally of Rome and a huge beneficiary of Roman rule, yet as a Judean/Israelite, Agrippa expresses the ambiguities of his liminal location. The provincial ruling elites cannot be understood to embrace one homogenized attitude to Roman rule.

After Archelaus' exile in 6 CE, Rome appointed governors to rule from 6 CE until 66 CE, with the exception of Agrippa I's reign (41–44 CE). Governors, with some troops, were based in Caesarea Maritima. Their duties were to be the 'face' of Rome in the province, looking out for and promoting Roman interests and those of their elite provincial allies. Top priorities for a governor involved law and order (commanding troops, hearing cases, and carrying out the death penalty; Josephus, *J.W.* 2.117), collecting revenues, and promoting public works and building projects. It was a difficult role and no doubt governors of Judea/Israel tried hard to perform their basic tasks.

Though Josephus' agenda to maintain elite privilege is front and center, he nevertheless presents the governors as largely inept, ineffective in quelling local uprisings, greedy in their accumulation of personal wealth, and generally not well-intentioned toward Judeans/Israelites. I have noted above Pilate's insensitivities concerning images and the misuse of temple funds (*J.W.* 2.169–77). While Cuspius Fadus (44–45 CE) and Tiberius Alexander (46–48 CE from an Alexandrian Jewish family) 'kept the nation at peace' (*J.W.* 2.220), Cumanus (48–52 CE) could not and was banished by the emperor Claudius after a dispute between Galileans and Samaritans (*J.W.* 2.232–46). Felix (52–60 CE) was a tough law-and-order governor: 'of the brigands whom he crucified, and of the common people who were convicted of complicity...and punished by him, the number was incalculable' (*J.W.* 2.253). Of course, the existence of brigands attests a violent form of dis-ease with Roman rule and the socio-economic challenges that resulted for local people.

Also incalculable was the residual terror, resentment, and bad will between people and governor as Rome's representative. Festus (60–62 CE) continued the attack on brigands (*J.W.* 2.271). With Albinus (62–64 CE), Josephus' tone changes: 'there was no form of villainy which he omitted to practice'. His 'villainy' included stealing private property, increasing taxes, accepting bribes, and colluding with brigands (*J.W.* 2.272–76). But Albinus was a 'paragon of virtue' compared to the last governor Gessius Florus (64–66 CE), who engaged in robbery, violence,

collusion with brigands, avarice, theft from the temple, and violence against the people (*J.W.* 2.277-79, 293, 305-308). Josephus' harshest criticism is clearly reserved for the last three governors Festus, Albinus, and Forus. Running through his account is the claim that their mis-governings were significant factors in leading to the war of 66-70 CE. The claim covers a multitude of personal indignities, resentments, and desire for retaliation.

Governors exercised rule in alliance with local elites. Petronius, legate of Syria, charged with enacting Gaius Caligula's command to install a statue in the Jerusalem temple, meets with local 'aristocracy' to secure their compliance with the emperor's will (*J.W.* 2.199). Florus seeks the support of 'the chief priests and leading citizens' in securing the loyalty and compliance of Jerusalem citizens (*J.W.* 2.318). These alliances among the ruling elites were often tense in being marked by both contest and cooperation. Both groups quested for power and sought their own advantage and interests, yet both needed the other to protect their mutual interests.

The tense quality of these interactions is clearly seen in the Gospel accounts of Pilate's dealings with Jesus (Mark 15:1-15; Matt. 27:1-2, 11-26; Luke 23:1-25; John 18:28-19:16).⁵⁷ Pilate's allies, the Jerusalem chief priests and 'elders of the people', bring Jesus to Pilate for crucifixion. Since Jesus is of concern to his allies, he must be, in the reciprocal interaction of Roman and Judean/Israelite, of concern to Pilate because they have shared interests in maintaining public order. But it will not do for Pilate to acquiesce immediately to their request to crucify Jesus. That would make the governor subservient to the wishes of the provincials. So Pilate appears reluctant, seemingly not persuaded that Jesus is any threat. This response forces the Jerusalem leaders, along with the crowd, to beg for Jesus' crucifixion. With this display of their dependence on and subservience to Pilate's power, Pilate orders Jesus' crucifixion.

A further dynamic existed in the relationship between governor and local elites in Judea/Israel. Josephus makes clear that after the demise of Herod and Archelaus, 'the high priests were entrusted with the leadership of the nation' (*Ant.* 20.251). In the first half of the first century CE, governors appointed the chief priests. Josephus records that Pilate's predecessor, the governor Valerius Gratus (15-26 CE), appointed and deposed five chief priests. The first four seem to last a year in office at the most; the last one 'Joseph, who was called Caiaphas' was chief priest

57. For the following, see Carter, *Pontius Pilate*.

from 18–36 CE, through the rest of the governorship of the apparently hard-to-satisfy Gratus as well as that of Pilate. Caiaphas was clearly very adroit at the difficult and ambiguous task of representing his traditions while keeping his patron's happy (*Ant.* 18.33–35, 95). Later in the century, Agrippa II became overseer of the temple. He appointed 'six different men... from a different priestly family between 59–66' as chief priest, perhaps to prevent any one person becoming too powerful.⁵⁸

Such priests, like Rajak's analysis of Antipas' location as a member of the native ruling class, occupied a difficult ambivalent or hybrid third space, though its lines are drawn somewhat differently. They represented a tradition that affirmed Jerusalem and its temple to be the dwelling place of Israel's God to whom the earth and its fullness belonged (Ps. 24:1). Yet they were appointed and accountable to Roman governors, agents of a metanarrative that declared Rome as sanctioned by the gods to rule the world. Betwixt-and-between, the priests occupied a liminal place.

Something of the same ambivalence is seen in Josephus' evaluation of the governors. Josephus, a Jew yet writing as a client of the Flavians in Rome, recognizes the crucial role of governors as Roman representatives. Yet, as I have noted above, he does not draw back from criticizing their misrule and identifying their role in contributing to the outbreak of war. In a surprising but somewhat 'oblique' passage, he evaluates the whole gubernatorial system as consisting of 'blood-sucking flies' (*Ant.* 18.172–76). Josephus presents the emperor Tiberius explaining that he prefers long-term gubernatorial appointments because new appointments mean new governors who bleed provincials dry. Tiberius tells a parable to explain that it works against a wounded man to shoo flies away from his wound because new flies will replace the sated ones and his life-blood will be sucked out more quickly. The parable, told by the emperor about his own governor-appointing practices, is stunningly critical in its presentation of governors as blood-sucking flies who suck the life blood out of provinces by exploitative maladministration. Josephus allows the emperor to condemn himself by his own words even as he names one of the imperial power's self-benefitting dependencies as the province of Judea/Israel. But it is also eerily prescient in its presentation of the wounded man's hybridity. The man is capable of asking a stranger not to shoo the flies away and is thereby complicit with the gubernatorial system, but he is utterly incapable of making any other request or taking any other action that might ameliorate his situation.

58. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 363.

Conventional analyses commonly see the exercise of power in the hands of these elite functionaries, albeit with ambiguity for these provincial figures. But to look only there is to miss the powerful agency exercised by non-elites in negotiating Roman power and influencing events. Josephus frequently refers to ‘crowds’, ‘multitudes’, ‘the people’, and ‘the Jews’ (δῆμος, ὄχλος, ἔθνος, λαός). At key moments these constantly shifting and contextualized groups exercise significant agency, surrounding and intimidating Roman troops after Herod’s death (*J.W.* 2.42-44), extending their necks and exposing their throats to Pilate’s troops, thereby forcing him to remove images of the emperor from Jerusalem (*J.W.* 2.169-74), non-violently resisting Gaius Caligula’s order to Petronius concerning the statue ca. 40 CE (*J.W.* 2.192), protesting Florus’ use of violence in 66 CE that killed many Jerusalemites in the upper market (*J.W.* 2.315), and resisting Titus’ breach of the city’s second wall (*J.W.* 5.331-42). Such efforts—and this is but a very partial listing—exerted considerable power, reciprocating Rome’s exercise of power, influencing the outcome of events, and asserting the dignity and will of local people in the face of terrifying power. Informing such agency is a long history of indignities that empower people to risk an open challenge to imperial power.

Also to be noted are numerous popular movements of social unrest that arose through the century. In a number of studies, Richard Horsley has drawn attention to this important phenomenon. Following Fanon, such movements express the splintering of society under imperial pressure in which resentment is directed more often horizontally to scapegoats rather than vertically in direct confrontation with Roman power. In some cases direct and violent challenge to Rome is also avoided by the use of speech and symbolic actions. To claim that these movements had nothing to do with Rome as Goodman does but were directed toward local Judean/Israelite rulers fails to understand the alliances between Rome and local elites and the various ways subjugated peoples negotiate the assertion of imperial power. Oracular prophetic figures emerge, for example, such as John the Baptist who attacks Herod Antipas’ lifestyle (*Ant.* 18.117-19), and the temple-denouncing Jesus ben Hananiah (*J.W.* 6.300-309), and those who just before the 66 CE war exercised considerable power by promising with signs and declarations that God would assist the revolt (*J.W.* 6.285-87), while ignoring ominous signs (*J.W.* 6.288-315). These prophetic figures risk a contrary word contestive of the status quo.

Prophetic movements also emerged around leaders with sizeable groups of followers who performed some sort of symbolic action, often based on the actions of Moses and Joshua, to declare divine deliverance

from Rome.⁵⁹ Josephus' elite perspective disparages such figures. He identifies prophets—whom he regards as false—as 'villains' and as 'deceivers and imposters' in leading people into the desert to receive from God 'tokens of deliverance'. These 'madmen', however, received the sword from governor Felix's troops (52–60 CE; *J.W.* 2.258–60). A similar fate befell the 'Egyptian false prophet' and the 'thirty thousand dupes' (four thousand in Acts 21:38) he led against Jerusalem and the Roman garrison (*J.W.* 2.261–63; *Ant.* 20.169–70). Earlier, under the governor Fadus (44–45 CE), 'a certain imposter named Theudas' amassed people at the Jordan river and awaited its parting, while later under governor Festus (60–62 CE) a 'charlatan' and his followers awaiting deliverance into the wilderness found Festus' cavalry instead (*Ant.* 20.188). We cannot expect Josephus to have mentioned every such instance of these prophets claiming acts of divine deliverance. Nor does he mention the ripples of terror and resentment that emanated from each harsh military response to a prophet. However unreliable Josephus' numbers, these figures clearly indicate some significant social reach by these prophetic figures. They attracted sizeable followings and were certainly perceived by governors to pose some threat requiring vicious and swift military action. The governors gambled that severe military responses would kill more such rebels than harsh socio-economic conditions would breed them, even though these responses contributed to the indignities and anguish of local peoples whose households and villages were impacted. Horsley argues that participants were common people, a mixture of urban and rural, discontented with the status quo and under increasing economic pressure, questing for 'freedom' and a change in social and political conditions.⁶⁰

Moreover there were also popular movements led by figures who presented themselves as popular kings mimicking and desiring the imperial power they were resisting. The sources, notably Josephus, indicate that such figures emerged at two moments of social upheaval in particular. After Herod's death in 4 BCE, the rural-based Judas, Simon, and Athronges appeared with their largely peasant followers who were facing economic difficulties and seeking relief from Herodian-Roman rule (*J.W.* 2.55–65; *Ant.* 17.271–84). In the 66–70 CE war, Menachem assumes a leadership role in Jerusalem 'like a veritable king' and with armed followers (*J.W.* 2.433–48). Subsequently Simon bar Giora

59. Horsley, 'Like One of the Prophets of Old'; Horsley, 'Popular Prophetic Movements'.

60. Horsley, 'Popular Prophetic Movements', 12–20.

exercised leadership in 68–70 CE in Jerusalem as a king (*J.W.* 7.26–36, 153–57). Also to be included is Jesus of Nazareth who is crucified around 30 CE as ‘king of the Judeans’ (Mark 15:18–20, 26). Since kingship was Rome’s prerogative to grant, these figures committed a treasonous act for which retaliation was again swift and severe, and the ripples of fear and resentment considerable. Horsley argues that in addition to reflecting economic hardship, these movements indicate a ‘religio-political consciousness’ of a society of ‘just social relations’ under God’s sanctioned or anointed leader.⁶¹

Further, the widespread presence of ‘bandits’ or ‘brigands’ who violently attack people and seize or destroy property also attests both popular dis-ease with Roman administration as well as economic injustices and exploitation.⁶² According to Josephus, within twenty years of Pompey’s imposition of Roman rule, Herod (as governor of Galilee) takes action against a ‘large horde of bandits’ (*J.W.* 1.204). As king, he takes further actions (*J.W.* 1.304). The kingly (rebel) figure Simon allies with brigands after Herod’s death to attack elite property and houses before being killed (*J.W.* 2.57). Brigands largely disappear from Josephus’ account of the period from Archelaus to Agrippa I (d. 44 CE). But thereafter, at least according to Josephus’ narrative, they play an increasing role during the governorship of Cumanus (*J.W.* 2.228–29) and explode during the governorship of Felix in the 50s as ‘the imposters and brigands, banding together, incited numbers to revolt...threatening to kill any who submitted to Roman domination...[and] they looted the houses of the wealthy, murdered their owners, and set the villages on fire... throughout all Judea’ (*J.W.* 2.264–65). Felix crucifies an ‘incalculable’ number of brigands and their local supporters (*J.W.* 2.253), as does Festus (*J.W.* 2.271). Albinus (62–64 CE), though, takes a completely different approach, being susceptible to bribes (*J.W.* 2.273–76). Florus also becomes an active partner with brigands, collecting a share of their takings (*J.W.* 2.277–79). Josephus also calls the *Sicarii* brigands. These were dagger men who emerged in the 50s under Felix to assassinate leading Jewish figures who were allies of Roman rule (*J.W.* 2.254–57). They participated actively in the revolt (*J.W.* 2.425) as did various other ‘brigands’ (*J.W.* 2.441, 541, 587, 593).⁶³ Fanon’s articulation of the experience of natives hemmed in by imperial power and absorbing its violence and indignities suggests that excitement, relief, and a sense of justice and revenge accompanied every bandit figure that

61. Horsley, ‘Popular Messianic Movements’, 494–95.

62. Horsley, ‘Ancient Jewish Banditry’; Shaw, ‘Tyrants, Bandits, and Kings’.

63. Horsley, ‘Ancient Jewish Banditry’, 426–32.

emerged. Imitating the violence of imperial power, they redeploy it as they resist it. Every death of a bandit or follower—and they were numerous judging from Josephus' account—meant that further ripples of terror and resentment spread through Judean/Israelite villages and households.

Horsley contextualizes this phenomenon of banditry in relation to the work of Eric Hobsbawm.⁶⁴ Social banditry, Hobsbawm argues, arises in agrarian societies where peasants are exploited by landowners, are economically vulnerable to taxes, rents, and debt, face an unstable social order, and experience an inadequate administration that creates a power vacuum. They gain support from local peasants who ally with bandits over a sense of justice and 'righting of wrongs'. The existence of widespread banditry attests such socio-economic conditions in Judea/Israel across the first centuries. I will examine economic conditions more specifically below.

There is, though, a further dimension of the phenomenon of banditry. Frantz Fanon observes that in an imperial situation 'the native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor'.⁶⁵ That is, as much as there might be dynamics of distancing and disavowal or disputing the presence and impact of imperial power, there are also dynamics of imitation and mimicry, of desiring to be the beneficiary of and agent of its power. Fanon recognizes the powerful draw of wanting to escape its oppressive realities in order to reverse the exercise of power. While banditry reflects social deprivation and vacuums of power, Fanon's insight suggests it also reflects and enacts the impact of marinating in a violent and exploitative system that hems in and confines the oppressed. Some dream of using the oppressor's methods of violence to redress their situation, of competing with other figures and groups to become precisely what they resist and hate.

Goodman claims that these attacks by brigands on other Judeans/Israelites 'should not suggest that Jerusalem in these years was really a haven of peace, only that the tensions...in general turn out...to have been largely internal to Jewish society rather than symptoms of widespread resentment of Roman rule'. He continues, 'the causes of such class resentment lay less in Roman rule than in the inequitable distribution of resources within what was essentially a prosperous society'.⁶⁶ A post-colonial optic highlights several problems with this claim and points to a

64. Horsley, 'Ancient Jewish Banditry', *passim*, esp. 411-12, 416-22. See also the helpful summary in Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, 86-91.

65. Fanon, *Wretched*, 53.

66. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 390.

much more complex situation. First, the hybrid nature of the colonized space does not allow for the neat binary of two separated entities named 'Jewish society' and 'Roman rule'. The two are entangled, hybridized, reciprocal. Second, the discussion above of Fanon's and Freire's notion of horizontal violence in imperial-colonial contexts exposes the limits of the claim that unrest is 'internal' with no connection to Roman rule. The presence of such violence has everything to do with Roman rule. It expresses, as Hobsbawm's analysis highlights, economic hardship resulting from the imperial economic system in which both Romans and elite Judeans/Israelites participated (see next section). The 'inequitable distribution of resources' was foundational to the imperial system and its elite provincial beneficiaries; a neat division of Jewish society from Roman rule in which 'class resentment' is expressed against the former but not the latter is simply not possible given the dynamics of imperial rule with local alliances. Moreover, banditry expresses the resentment that has been building in Fanon's native 'hemmed-in' by imperial controls, and mimics the violent domination that 'has been deposited in his own bones'. The subjugated yearn for such power while simultaneously and angrily resisting the power exercised by the imperializing power. And, fearful of direct and open confrontation with the vertical power of Rome and its local allies, the horizontal violence of banditry self-protectively avoids a direct confrontation because of the perception of the imperializer's overwhelming power advantage. Finally, in the next section I take up questions of economics. To anticipate the conclusion, claims that Judean/Israelite society was 'essentially a prosperous society' is a very misleading generalization for many in a highly stratified society.

V. Economics

With Pompey's assertion of Roman power, Judea/Israel was incorporated in 63 BCE into the tributary economy of the empire. John Kautsky declares that 'to rule in aristocratic empires is, above all, to tax'.⁶⁷ Garnsey and Saller describe Rome's empire as comprising an 'under-developed pre-industrial economy' in which labor-intensive agriculture dominates, trade is important, and manufacturing is underinvested and technologically limited,⁶⁸ though more recent work disputes some of

67. Kautsky, *Politics of Aristocratic Empires*, 150.

68. Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 43-103; Safrai, *Economy of Roman Palestine*.

these claims and posits the presence of a market economy.⁶⁹ Cities consume goods and food produced in surrounding areas and procured through trade. Provinces supplied Rome with funds and production especially of food. Massive disparities of wealth, power, and status were the norm.

As a primary means of effecting imperial domination, taxes and tribute extracted and moved resources from provinces to center, from non-elites to elites, from ruled to rulers, from colony to metropole. Yet in the reciprocal relationship of imperializer and colonized, taxes expressed not only Rome's domination but also Rome's dependence on provinces for supplies and wealth. Gerhard Lenski comments, 'the exercise of proprietary rights, through the collection of taxes, tribute money, rents, and services, undoubtedly provided the chief sources of income for most agrarian rulers'.⁷⁰

The central question concerns the economic nature of this rule in Judea/Israel and the role of taxes and tribute in it. Were economic conditions in Judea/Israel from 67 BCE–135 CE harsh and oppressive?

One view rejects analyses that depict particularly harsh or oppressive economic circumstances. Fabian Udoh, for example, states that 'the arguments used to build an impression of continuous tax oppression and economic depravity in Palestine do not stand up to scrutiny. Palestine was not continually "oppressed" by three levels of ruinous taxes from 63 BCE until the Revolt of 66 CE.'⁷¹ Richard Horsley argues, to the contrary, that

intense economic pressure had been placed upon the Jewish peasantry for several decades by the multiple demands for tithes, taxes, and tribute... many were forced eventually to forfeit their lands. Many others came heavily onto debt... Heavy taxation compounded by the tendency of the wealthy to take advantage of marginalized peasant families and the predatory behavior of the ruling families brought intense economic pressures on the heretofore independent and free-holding peasantry.⁷²

There are numerous difficulties in adjudicating this matter. Sources on economic conditions and practices are not especially prolific for the empire, and they are much more interested in elites than non-elites. The primary source for information on Judea/Israel, Josephus, is of course not disinterested in his presentation, written under the sponsorship of his Flavian patrons and with elite distance. Nevertheless we do know

69. Temin, *Roman Market Economy*.

70. Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 217.

71. Udoh, *To Caesar*, 285.

72. Horsley, 'Popular Prophetic Movements', 19-20.

something about economic conditions from historical data and from social-science models of how agrarian empires work (such as those developed by Kautsky and Lenski).⁷³ Udoh complains about the relevance of social science models, but Lenski's model explicitly builds out of, among others, studies of the Roman Empire.⁷⁴ Models provide a helpful framework within which various data can be understood as part of a larger system. For example, imperial structures such as Rome's empire were very hierarchical, with a small percentage of the population both in the center and in the provinces exercising power and making decisions for their own benefit and largely at the expense of the rest, whose value largely consists of their contribution to the wealth, power, and status of elites. It is in the context of this system of power that economic questions must be addressed.

Most 'maps of wealth' for the empire recognize considerable disparities in levels of wealth with a very sizeable group of people who were poor. Steven Friesen suggests a seven-category scale in which those 'near', 'at', and 'below' subsistence levels comprise ninety percent of the population.⁷⁵ Peter Garnsey, to whose work on food access I will return below, remarks that in the Roman Empire 'for most people, life was a perpetual struggle for survival'.⁷⁶ Such studies suggest that a significant percentage of the population lived near or just above subsistence levels, with the likelihood that at some time through any given year they might spend some period of time under subsistence level.

Given this reality—which Udoh does not take seriously in his impressive and often insightful discussion of taxes and tribute—any levying of taxes and tribute, on which the whole imperial structure depended, will be experienced as harsh or oppressive because much of the population has little surplus and economic conditions are difficult even without taxes. In these circumstances, the levying of taxes and tribute adds to the indignities and resentments of the imperial-colonial experience.

The following discussion delineates some of the tax pressures experienced in Judea/Israel under Roman rule, and then recognizes several other factors contributing to an economically harsh environment for many in Judea/Israel across the two centuries of Roman control.

73. Kautsky, *Politics of Aristocratic Empires*; Lenski, *Power and Privilege*.

74. Udoh, *To Caesar*, 284.

75. Friesen, 'Poverty on Pauline Studies', 347; Scheidel and Friesen, 'Size of the Economy'. Also Whittaker, 'The Poor'; Atkins and Osborne, *Poverty in the Roman World*.

76. Garnsey, *Food and Society*, xi.

Judea/Israel became part of the Roman tributary system in 63 BCE when, according to Josephus, Pompey places 'the country and Jerusalem...under tribute' (*J.W.* 1.154; *Ant.* 14.74, 77-78, 202). Josephus is not clear about the amount of the tribute; the reference in *Ant.* 14.78 to 'ten thousand talents' is difficult to interpret.⁷⁷ In 47-44 BCE, Julius Caesar reorganized what seems to have been a somewhat chaotic situation. He continued the tribute for Judea/Israel and for Joppa, as well as the payment of tithes to priests (*Ant.* 14.202-6; 14.196). In 43 BCE, with the changing fortunes of power among Rome's elite 'great men', Cassius demanded seven hundred talents and took punitive action on towns and officials that were slow to pay (*J.W.* 1.220-22; *Ant.* 14.275-76). Such demands of course fall largely, though not exclusively, on small peasant farmers and their yields, causing hardship for villages and households.

The circumstances under the Herodians have been a particularly contentious issue as I have noted above. Three arguments are commonly made to suggest that Herod was an oppressive and destructive ruler, namely (1) the large size of Herod's 'annual total royal income' (960 talents according to *Ant.* 17.318-21 or 760 talents in *J.W.* 2.95-99); (2) the extensive nature of his building projects; and (3) Josephus' emphasis on negative responses to Herod including his having too much to do with Gentile cities and practices at the expense of Judean/Israelite cities. Udoh rejects all three arguments, arguing that determinations of Herod's income are fraught with difficulties, that he paid for much of his building activity out of his own funds, and that scholars have not taken sufficient account of Josephus' negative spin on Herod.⁷⁸

While Udoh often argues convincingly and brings a commendable concern for what the sources do or do not tell us that functions as a necessary corrective to some excessive claims, the picture is not quite as rosy as he suggests. When he declares that 'Herod's kingdom was prosperous', he does not ask with a clear sense of the massive social inequities in the province where elites benefitted at the expense of non-elites, prosperous for whom? His assumption of trickle-down benefits needs to be demonstrated.⁷⁹ Goodman makes the same claim of an 'essentially prosperous society' but undercuts his claim by identifying in the very next sentence increasing debt among the poor!⁸⁰ Friesen reminds us that 'the poor' comprise some ninety percent of the population, in

77. Udoh, *To Caesar*, 27.

78. Udoh, *To Caesar*, 180-206.

79. Udoh, *To Caesar*, 286.

80. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 390.

varying gradations. When Udoh claims that Herod's 'extensive building program' and other projects are evidence of that prosperity, he forgets his own argument that Herod funded much of his building activity from his own fortune and that non-elites contributed to that fortune. The projects may provide evidence for Herod's wealth, but they do not attest a general prosperity. When Udoh argues that reports of complaints about Herod's taxation must be separated from claims that they attest 'excessive' taxation, he is correct—until one recognizes the general level of poverty that was the lot of most peasant farmers for which any demand was more than taxing. When he claims that Herod was not an economically harsh ruler because he twice reduced taxes—in the 20s BCE by a third (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.304) and again around the year 9 BCE by a quarter (*Ant.* 16.64-65)—he overlooks the thirty-one years (close to an average lifetime for some non-elites) in which there was no such relief and throughout which a peasant economy remained in place.

Udoh, though, is correct that the data about Herodian taxation are limited, not impartial, and not always clear.⁸¹ Josephus, the leading source, is clearly no friend of Herod's and his emphasis on the burden of taxation needs to be construed, at least in part, in the context of that agenda (*Ant.* 17.191-92; 19.328-31). Arguments and conclusions about taxation remain somewhat tentative and need to be brought into conversation with other economic indicators as I will do below.

With Herod's kingship underway in 40/37 BCE, an annual tribute paid directly to Rome was removed—only to be replaced by annual tribute to Herod. The delegation to Augustus after Herod's death complains about the tribute, including the bribes that had to be paid to Herod's slaves who collected it (*Ant.* 17.308-309). Appian's reference has inaccuracies and vagueness, though it could well suggest some payment of tribute to Rome for some limited period of time (Appian, *Bell. Civ.* 5.75). Nevertheless, Herod was deeply indebted to his Roman masters for his power. He made numerous gifts of gratitude and payments that had to be paid for either from his extensive personal wealth⁸² and/or by raising revenue from his subjects.⁸³ In addition, his extensive building projects

81. Udoh, *To Caesar*, 116, 200-204, notes that Josephus' bias is against Herod and the data cannot be accepted uncritically.

82. Udoh, *To Caesar*, 190-206 identifies four sources of Herod's personal wealth: family inheritance, Hasmonean estates, areas of his kingdom he exploited for his own gain, and money-lending ventures.

83. For example, Crassus had demanded 700 talents in 43 BCE, one hundred of which Herod raised from Galilee (*J.W.* 1.220-22). There was the bribe to be appointed king (*Ant.* 14.381), and the gift of 'a great sum of silver and gold' to Antony (which he acquired by despoiling the well-to-do) when Herod had secured

both within his territory and beyond it in numerous cities required funding (*Ant.* 16.136-49; *J.W.* 1.400-428).⁸⁴

Where did he get the money? Not surprisingly, Josephus says several times that Herod runs out of money because of, for example, 'the lavish construction of cities' in the 20s and poor tax returns because of drought-induced low agricultural yields (*Ant.* 15.304). During the famine, he cuts up gold and silver ornaments to pay for grain for both his subjects and foreign cities (*Ant.* 15.306-16). He runs out again in 9 BCE but instead of increasing taxes he raids the tomb of David and takes gold and other valuable ornaments (*Ant.* 17.179-80).

Herod's tax base comprised agricultural products and land (*Ant.* 15.109). During the drought and famine of 25-24 BCE, Josephus comments that Herod was 'deprived of the revenue which he received from the products of the earth' (*Ant.* 15.303). So too, of course, was the population of Judea/Israel who had nowhere near the levels of protection Herod enjoyed. Josephus does not say, though, at what rate Herod taxed land production. He also gained revenue from indirect taxes (tolls and duties) on the production of cities like Jericho (exported balsam and dates) and on the abundant goods that moved along the trade-routes and through the ports of Gaza and Caesarea Maritima which he built in part to compensate for the inadequacies of Joppa's and Dora's ports (*Ant.* 16.331-34). He also applied a sales tax on his own subjects who, after his death, complained of its harshness and demanded Archelaus remove it, along with a reduction in other taxes (*Ant.* 17.204-205). The subsequent delegation to Augustus also complains about another source of revenue, namely forced 'lavish contributions' to Herod and his friends (*Ant.* 17.308-309). Josephus sounds this theme of the burdensome nature of Herod's taxes several times (*Ant.* 15.365 after poor crop yields; 17.308), including in his own evaluation of Herod's 'warring tendencies' and love for honor which 'caused him to be a source of harm to those from whom he took this money' (*Ant.* 16.154-56). The delegation to Augustus sums up the negative impact of Herod's 'spend-and-tax' ways: 'while he

control of Jerusalem in 37 BCE (*Ant.* 15.5; *J.W.* 1.358-59). Herod subsequently paid tribute to Cleopatra (*Ant.* 15.106). There were supplies of money and grain (*Ant.* 15.189) for Antony's war efforts at Actium, as well as auxiliary troops and corn (*J.W.* 1.388). Likewise, after Octavian's victory at Actium and confirmation of Herod as king, there were gifts and lodging for Octavian and his friends, gifts and provisions (especially wine and water) for his army, and a cash gift to Octavian of 800 talents (*Ant.* 15.196-200). He makes a later cash gift to Augustus of 300 talents (*Ant.* 16.128).

84. Roller, *The Building Program*; Richardson, *Herod*, 191-96; Rocca, *Herod's Judea*, 323-47.

crippled the towns in his own dominion, he embellished those of other nations, lavishing the life blood of Judea on foreign communities. In place of their ancient prosperity and ancestral laws, he had sunk the nation to poverty and the last degree of iniquity' (*J.W.* 2.85-86). Josephus similarly condemns Agrippa II for taking revenue from his subjects to use on foreign cities (*Ant.* 20.211-12). Udoh rightly points out the tendentious nature of Josephus' critique, but that recognition of Josephus' spin cannot hide the discontent over economic conditions that Josephus feels the need to spin, nor the fact that the handing over of products was a constant source of indignity and subjugation.

With the removal of Archelaus and the establishment of rule by governors came some changes in taxation. Now Judea/Israel paid tribute directly to Rome. The newly appointed governor of Syria, Quirinius, was sent to assess property in Judea/Israel as the basis for the tribute (*Ant.* 17.355; 18.1-2). The move of course was controversial. Opponents argued, at least according to Josephus, along more ideological than economic lines. They oppose it as 'slavery' (*Ant.* 18.4) and/or 'tolerating mortal masters, after having God for their lord' (*J.W.* 2.118). Josephus suggests that this rebellion 'made serious progress'. It would be foolhardy to think every supporter had only ideological and never economic concerns in mind. The high priest Joazar, an elite living a hybrid identity representing Judea/Israel's traditions while in cooperation with and dependent on Rome, intervened on the side of his imperial bosses to quell the unrest and persuade cooperation.

The tribute was levied on property though it is not clear whether both land and yield are in view, and whether it was levied on persons. In 40 CE, in the struggle with Gaius Caligula's command to put a statue in the Jerusalem temple, Jewish leaders tell Petronius (the legate of Syria) that 'since the land was unsown there would be a harvest of banditry, because the requirement of tribute could not be met' (*Ant.* 18.273-75). Will the tribute not be met because it comprises a percentage of crop yield, or because the sale of some yield means enough income to pay a cash tribute on land, or a combination of both? Tribute on at least production seems clear and is perhaps confirmed by Josephus' reference to 'stores of imperial corn' in Galilee (*Vita* 71). It has been commonly assumed that tribute also included a tax per person. But while there is clear evidence for a registration of property, Udoh argues well that it does not seem that tribute was levied per person until after 70 CE.⁸⁵ The collection of the tribute seems to have been the responsibility of the Jerusalem ruling elite as agents of Roman power (*J.W.* 2.404-407).

85. Udoh, *To Caesar*, 190-206, 208-18.

It is likely that Roman governors continued Herod's lucrative collection of indirect taxation comprising various tolls and duties. We get glimpses of a couple of such indirect taxes when Vitellius, governor of Syria, in 37 CE remitted taxes on sale of agricultural products in Jerusalem (*Ant.* 18.90), and Agrippa I in 39 CE remits tax on real estate in Jerusalem which had been levied by the Roman governor (*Ant.* 19.299). Such remittances, like Herod's reduction in taxation percentages, were probably temporary. How many other such taxes were in use and at what rate are not known.

After the fall of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 CE, all land in Judea/Israel came under Vespasian's ownership, who settled some veterans in a colony at Emmaus near the destroyed Jerusalem. The land was subject to tribute and presumably rent (*J.W.* 7.216-17). People were also now subject to tribute. Vespasian added to the tribute on property the punitive tax of two drachma on all Jews (*J.W.* 7.218; Dio Cassius 65.7.2; Matt. 17:24-27⁸⁶). This tax coopted the former temple tax and made it payable to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome. The tax had remunerative, punitive, and propaganda value in constructing Judean/Israelite identity as defeated, subjugated, and subject to the divinely sanctioned power of Rome's empire. The tax that had previously honored the Jewish God now provided a rebuilt temple in Rome for the triumphant Jupiter, patron of the Flavians. Subsequently, Domitian exempts Josephus' property in Judea/Israel from taxation (*Vita* 429 also 422, 425); most of course were not so well-connected. The depth of the indignity of this tax and its construction of Judean/Israelite identity as subjugated to the all-powerful Jupiter and the divinely sanctioned Roman troops are clear.

Another layer of taxation needs to be noted. Not only were taxes due to Herodians and Romans, but tithes and offerings were also paid, with Rome's permission, to the temple and priests pre-70 CE (Josephus, *J.W.* 6.335). A tax for the functioning of the temple was also paid by Jews in the diaspora and in Judea/Israel until 70 CE. Augustus' protection and legitimation for the tax suggests significant amounts sent to Jerusalem (Josephus, *Ant.* 16.162-65, 167-70; Philo, *Leg. ad Gaium* 156-57).

The Jerusalem temple and the priesthood were supported in part by tithes from the people. For example, Tobit 1:6-8 describes three tithes—the first for priests in Jerusalem comprising 'the first of the crops...the flock...the cattle, and the shearings of the sheep', and a tenth of 'the grain, wine, olive oil, pomegranates, figs, and the rest of the fruits to the sons of Levi' in Jerusalem; a second tenth for offerings and sacrifices in

86. Carter, *Matthew and Empire*, 130-44; Carter, 'Paying the Tax'.

the Jerusalem temple; and a third tenth for orphans, widows and converts. The first two tenths were paid annually; the third every three years. Josephus largely concurs with Tobit, describing a tithe for priests and levites, one for expenditures on feasts and sacrifices in Jerusalem (both paid annually for each of six years), and a third tithe every third year for widows and orphans (*Ant.* 4.4.68, 205, 240). The high priest oversaw the collection and storage of tithes for the needs of temple personnel. According to both Tobit and Josephus, farmers were paying twenty to thirty percent of yield to the Jerusalem temple and priests.

In terms of collection, it seems dubious that every person acted like Tobit and took their produce to Jerusalem each year. Such a journey would simply be beyond the economic and physical means of many peasant farmers. Certainly some centralized collection in Jerusalem for tithes was necessary to maintain the temple and the priests on duty (also Philo, *Spec.* 1.152). But since numerous priests were not on duty in Jerusalem, the local collection of tithes from their immediate vicinity makes sense. Josephus provides support for this notion, first in his comment that the priests Joazar and Judas (his fellow commanders in Galilee) gained much wealth ‘from the tithes they accepted as their priestly due’ (*Vita* 63), and second from his declaration that in Galilee he declined the tithes offered to him (*Vita* 80).

The mode of collection raises the interesting question of levels of participation in the payment of tithes. If some collection was local, local priests were no doubt active in their oversight. Concerning Jerusalem, Josephus indicates that around the time of the transition from governors Felix to Festus (ca. 59–60 CE), high priests shamelessly and brazenly sent slaves ‘to the threshing floors to receive the tithes that were due to the priests with the result that the poorer priests starved to death’ (*Ant.* 20.181, 206–207). Josephus seems concerned to highlight high priestly greed rather than the reluctance of people to pay tithes.

Our information on taxes and tributes is by no means complete. But the above material indicates a pervasive, though somewhat shifting, constellation of taxes, tributes, and tithes paid by inhabitants of Judea/Israel across the first centuries. Did these taxes constitute an oppressive situation of ‘economic depravity’ (to use Udoh’s phrase)? Attempts to answer in terms of particular percentages (is fifteen percent fair whereas twenty-five to fifty percent is harsh?⁸⁷) or in comparison to (limited) data from elsewhere in the empire (were practices relatively commensurable?)

87. Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 228, for example, argues that governing classes received 25–50% of income in an agrarian empire.

miss a more fundamental point, namely that for many inhabitants of Judea/Israel, especially rural peasant farmers living near subsistence levels and struggling to maintain a sustainable level of food production and surplus for trade, any taxes were to some extent burdensome and oppressive. In addition, as James Scott highlights, taxes and tributes were one of the basic forms of indignities to which subjugated peoples were subjected, a very tangible display of their vulnerability to the damaging power of the empire and its local allies.

Other factors in addition to taxes suggest economic hardship for many. Martin Goodman has pointed to an increase in indebtedness among urban and rural non-elites.⁸⁸ He argues that Jerusalem elites (supporters of and allied with Rome) became increasingly wealthy as Jerusalem and its pilgrimage traffic expanded.⁸⁹ Those with wealth (priests, those with monopolies on supplying the temple, and those in service industries) displayed it in magnificent houses,⁹⁰ stored it in the temple (Josephus, *J.W.* 6.282), bought land, or made loans to urban and rural non-elites. Land was a central avenue of investment with most elites being large landowners whose estates were farmed by tenants. In addition they loaned cash, a practice made more lucrative with the introduction at least by the 50s CE of the *prosbol* that enabled repayment of the debt by the poor beyond the seven-year cycle. Goodman cites evidence for twenty percent interest rates after the fixed period of time for the loan.⁹¹ One can imagine the growing resentment among the poor at this indignity as well as their economic losses and hardship.

Urban and rural non-elites borrowed for various reasons such as to buy increasingly expensive plots of land (because of limited supply) in order to make small farms viable, to buy seed or livestock, to pay rent and taxes when there was insufficient surplus, or for urban elites to sustain households during unemployment or underemployment, and to pay rent and taxes. If loans were not repaid, misery and economic hardship increased for peasants and artisans while elites gained more wealth. Property, especially land, was forfeited, and debtors and/or their family members became slaves if the loan was guaranteed by their person. Default on loans increased the number of landless peasants and day laborers congregating in a city like Jerusalem to look for work, as well as the indignities and shame of being forced from the land, and the insecurities of day laboring (cf. Matt. 20:1-16).

88. Goodman, 'The First Jewish Revolt'.

89. Goodman, *Ruling Class*, 51-75.

90. Goodman, *Ruling Class*, 55.

91. Goodman, 'The First Jewish Revolt', 421-23.

How much of a problem was indebtedness? Goodman notes that when urban non-elites (Josephus says eighteen thousand) became unemployed after temple construction was completed in 64 CE, there was considerable social tension. Agrippa undertook a paving project to provide some work (*Ant.* 20.220-22). In 66 CE as the war gets underway, non-elites attacked elite houses (the chief priest's house and the palace of Agrippa and Bernice) and burned the debt recording agency, according to Josephus, 'to prevent the recovery of debts, in order to win over a host of grateful debtors and to cause a rising of the poor against the rich' (*J.W.* 2.427-28). Goodman also posits a link between rural indebtedness and banditry with attacks against the wealthy (*J.W.* 2.264-65). This link between banditry and economic hardship is confirmed not only by the fact that Josephus makes the connection (*Ant.* 18.274), but also, as I observed above, by social-science models of banditry that recognize the key role of increased socio-economic pressures on peasants from ecological (drought, famine) and political-economic factors like indebtedness, taxation, and land confiscation.

Peter Garnsey's work on food access in the Roman Empire provides a further indication of the likely economic and social difficulties experienced by non-elites in Judea/Israel. While there is limited specific information for Judea/Israel, the work of Garnsey and others across the empire provides some general indicators of likely conditions.

Garnsey remarks that in the Roman Empire 'for most people, life was a perpetual struggle for survival'.⁹² Economic activity based on land produced much of the empire's food, but its production, distribution, and consumption were shaped by and expressive of the fundamental values and inequities of the elite-controlled, hierarchical, exploitative political-economic system described above. Philostratus (*Vit Apoll.* 1.8) narrates the incident of empty markets in Aspendus because 'the rich had shut up all the grain and were holding it for export from the country'. Food, then, was about power, hierarchy, abundance for a few, and deprivation for many. Food practices reflected the fundamental injustices of the imperial system.

The 'Mediterranean diet' is, in theory, healthful. Staples such as cereals, olives, vine products (wine), and legumes (beans) supply energy, protein, vitamins B and E, calcium, and iron.⁹³ Yet numerous factors reduced the diet's actual healthfulness. The quantity and quality of

92. Garnsey, *Food and Society*. I follow Garnsey extensively in the following summary. See also Wilson, *For I Was Hungry*.

93. For discussion, Foxhall and Forbes, '*Sitometreia*'; Mattingly, 'First Fruit'; Purcell, 'Wine and Wealth'.

available food was subject to various factors such as weather and soil conditions (there were famines in Judea/Israel in the 20s BCE [*Ant.* 15.299-316] and 48 CE [*Ant.* 20.51-53]), affordability, variety of food, distribution and storage limitations, and geographical location. City dwellers (about 10 percent of the empire) largely depended on what was produced in the surrounding *chora* or *territorium*. Most had minimal resources to buy food; their diets were limited by high prices, low supply, and a limited range of goods. Peasants depended on their own production while also producing some surplus to trade for what they could not produce, to store against crop failures, and to pay rents and taxes. Garnsey also discusses 'Famine Foods' that peasants acquired from cultivated crops, gathering wild plants, and eating foods not normally eaten.⁹⁴

One impact of the actual diet was malnutrition. Garnsey details its impact in terms of diseases of both deficiency and of infection. The former were evident in eye diseases and limb deformities (rickets). The latter lowered immunity to diseases such as malaria, diarrhea, and dysentery that spread because of high population densities in cities, inadequate sewage and garbage disposal, limited sanitation with restricted water supply, inadequate water distribution, and unhygienic storage. Poor nutrition with low calorific value means a diminished capacity for work, a serious challenge to earning capacity when much work comprised manual labor.

Garnsey's insightful discussion of food supply, diet, malnutrition, and diseases of deficiency and contagion nevertheless neglects a further consequence of such conditions under imperial power, the phenomena of psychosomatic illness and demonic possession. Numerous studies have noted the link between these phenomena and contexts of oppression.⁹⁵ Fanon's study of the impact of imperial power in Algeria's struggle with France, for example, describes the physical impact of colonial domination on terrified locals: 'his glance... shrivels me up... freezes me, and his voice... turns me into stone'.⁹⁶ Fanon describes symptoms of pains, menstruation disorders, and muscular rigidity and paralysis.⁹⁷ Reporting on Serbian imperialism in Kosovo in 1999, ABC News reporter Deborah Amos observed extensive paralysis and muteness in response to the

94. Garnsey, *Food and Society*, 34-42.

95. For the following, Fanon, *Wretched*; Hollenbach, 'Jesus, Demoniacs, and Public Authorities'; Crossan, *The Historical Jesus*, 313-53; Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 123-27.

96. Fanon, *Wretched*, 45.

97. Fanon, *Wretched*, 289-93.

trauma and violence, phenomena well attested in research on the effects of trauma.⁹⁸ These responses attest the ambivalence of the imperializer–colonized context. On one hand, they represent subduing power, but they are also coping mechanisms, even self-protective protest against imperial power, through inactivity and non-compliance. Fanon notes the schizophrenic or hybridized identity that forms in oppressed peoples who despise the exploitative power, have to cooperate with it to survive, and desire to be free from it, thereby acknowledging that it is desirable. ‘The native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor’.⁹⁹

Martin Goodman argues in his 1982 study for a growing gap and social tensions between the rich and poor across first-century Judea/Israel.¹⁰⁰ While not pretending to name the whole of the situation—rich *and* poor Judeans/Israelites revolt against Rome—it does name an important dynamic. Josephus observes ‘those in power oppressing the masses, and the masses eager to destroy the powerful. There were those bent on tyranny, those on violence and plundering the property of the wealthy’ (*J.W.* 7.260–61). The above discussion of taxes, tributes, tithes, peasant and artisan indebtedness, banditry, limited food access, diseases of deficiency and contagion, and psychosomatic conditions bears out the difficult economic conditions under which many lived during Roman rule.

VI. Judean/Israelite Religion

Peter Brunt has argued that we should look to the peculiarity of Jewish religion to account for the revolt of 66–70 CE.¹⁰¹ My concern here is broader than Brunt’s quest for the cause or causes of that war, but his (generally unconvincing) argument raises the question of how to assess the roles of Judean/Israelite religion in the imperial–colonized experiences of the two centuries under discussion. My argument will be that the same complex and ambivalent dynamics are at work in Judean/Israelite religion as in the other spheres under consideration.

98. Amos, ‘The Littlest Victims’.

99. Fanon, *Wretched*, 53; also Bhabha, *Location*, ‘Of Mimicry’.

100. Goodman, ‘The First Jewish Revolt’.

101. Brunt, ‘Addenda’, 527–28.

As I have noted above, with the exception of Gaius Caligula's actions around 40 CE, Rome did not, prior to the 66–70 CE war, attempt to disrupt Judean/Israelite religious practices based in the Jerusalem temple. After the war and the destruction of the temple, this situation of apparent Roman cooperation and tolerance changed significantly to be marked by explicit Roman control. No action was taken to rebuild it until 130 CE when Hadrian redeveloped Jerusalem as the colony Aelia Capitolina with a new central temple dedicated to Jupiter Capitolinus.

It would be mistaken, though, to think that the apparent *laissez-faire* stance that dominated much of the two centuries reflected Roman disinterest, or that it indicated a division between the political and the religious spheres as though they were unrelated spheres. As I have shown above in discussing Rome's metanarrative, religion and politics were interlapping spheres, and, as this section will suggest, often marked by the ambivalence of cooperation and contest, accommodation, and instability. Rome permitted this provincial Judean/Israelite temple system to function, the priesthood to exist, and the collection of sacrifices and tithes to proceed. But by *granting* or *permitting* such favors, Rome replaced the sanction of native traditions and practices with the permission of the imperializer that exercised a means of managing them for its own purposes. When the temple no longer served the interests of maintaining the Roman status quo and Judean/Israelite compliance, it was destroyed.

Josephus gives the victorious Titus a speech addressed to defeated Jews in 70 CE that elaborates this imperially permissive stance toward subjugated provincials and their religious practices.

we allowed you to occupy this land and set over you kings of your own blood; then we maintained the laws of your forefathers and permitted you not only among yourselves but also in your dealings with others, to live as you willed; above all we permitted you to exact tribute for God and to collect offerings...only that you might grow richer at our expense and make preparations with our money to attack us! (*J.W.* 6.333–35)

The language is significant in its claims of Roman superiority and benign and generous permission that 'allowed' this cultural expression of Jewish identity. Titus' tone is of favor betrayed, of trust broken, of benevolence taken advantage of, of beneficence turned to treachery.

Yet there are important resonances and intertexts with authoritative Judean/Israelite traditions from the past that disclose the ambivalence of the imperialized–colonized situation and reframe Titus' claims about imperial rule. For Judean/Israelite ears, there could be nothing more false than Titus' claim, 'we allowed you to...' The traditions represented by

the temple system declared God's sovereignty, 'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof' (Ps. 24:1) or in Josephus' words, 'The universe is in God's hands' (*C.Ap.* 2.190). They similarly announced a covenant tradition which presented God, not the Romans, as giving this land to Judeans/Israelites (Exod. 3:7-8). Nor could there be anything more false than Titus' claim to have permitted kingship. He is of course speaking of the Herodians, but Judean/Israelite ears hear the traditions about God's choosing of David and the divine promise of his kingship that lasts forever, a tradition that shows Herod (Rome's puppet king) and now Titus to be imposters in this land (2 Sam. 7:11-16). Similarly, Titus' hubristic claim to allow 'the laws of your forefathers' to be observed flies in the face of the very covenant identity of this people committed to God's will revealed to them by Moses (Deuteronomy 27-30). Likewise, Titus' boast to have permitted tribute and offerings for God, a key part of temple practice, mistakenly claims superiority over traditions such as Deuteronomy 14:22-29, Leviticus 27:30-33, and Numbers 18:21-32 that authorized such gifts to be offered in worship. In the setting of Titus' speech in Josephus' narrative, legitimation for all of Titus' claims derives from divinely sanctioned military supremacy expressed in a defeated and destroyed city and temple.

But in a larger context, the speech highlights the clash of cultures and traditions and the resultant hybridized situation at the heart of the Roman-Judean/Israelite interaction. Imperial permission, sanctioned by a divine purpose, meets another mandate and identity sanctioned by another deity. Pre-70 CE, the temple, its practices, and its priests occupy this difficult contested, imperialized space, representing traditions asserting the superiority of Israel's God yet subjugated by a nation that gives no legitimacy to that God and overrides their traditional claims. The Jerusalem chief priests and priestly families have the ambivalent and fractured role of representing such traditions and practices in a context that not only betrays their claims but also embodies the occupiers' superiority in permitting them to do so. Yet the context of imperial permission is not the only word. The worship being conducted and the practices of bringing tithes and offerings to priests speak of another reality. They point to another order, another way of understanding and structuring the world, another set of priorities and commitments that destabilize claims of Rome's superiority and relocate it in submission to God's purposes. Rome, of course, permits such contestive commentary.

This ambivalence seems to be the resolution embraced by the priest Josephus. On one hand, God's favor has passed to the Roman Empire (*J.W.* 2.390; 3.351-54; 5.367). It has performed its punitive mission in punishing Israel and its unclean temple with the city's destruction and

the temple's burning (*Ant.* 20.166, 218; *J.W.* 4.323). These events have taken place, for Josephus, according to the divine plan prophesied by Daniel in Daniel chapter 8 concerning the kingdoms of the Medes, the Persians, the Greeks, the Seleucid Antiochus Epiphanes, and the Romans (*Ant.* 10.272-81). These other kingdoms have passed and come to nought in God's purposes. Will it be likewise for Rome?

Some of this ambivalence can be traced out in actions involving the construction, personnel, vestments, and festivals associated with the temple.

The Jerusalem temple was the center of Judean/Israelite political religion. Herod's rebuilding of it highlights the complexities and instabilities of the imperialized situation. His activity is motivated, according to Josephus, variously by a desire for eternal remembrance (*Ant.* 15.381), by an 'act of piety to make full return to God for the gift of this kingdom' (*Ant.* 15.387), or by a desire for honors (*Ant.* 16.153), no doubt especially the good opinion of his Roman masters.¹⁰²

McCane's analysis of the significance of the expansive Court of the Gentiles can be recalled.¹⁰³ As a meeting place of empire and temple, of the nations and Judea/Israel, it is a third place that expresses the ambivalence of the imperialized-colonized experience. It asserts and enhances local religion even while it denotes an openness to the nations. Herod gains honor even while his rebuilding mimics and promotes something of the cultural integration of the cosmopolitan empire. Josephus notes subsequently that the inner sanctuary was completed within eighteen months, provoking much celebration but also an opportunity for Herod's political glory: 'And it so happened that the day on which the work of the temple was completed coincided with that of the king's accession...and because of the double occasion the festival was a very glorious one indeed' (*Ant.* 15.423). Whatever his motivations, in addition to promoting his own political advantage, Herod financed a project (at least in the initial building; Josephus, *Ant.* 15.380; 17.162) that profoundly enhanced the appeal and reputation of Jerusalem to foreigners.

It also underscored the wealth of the temple, at least for those overseeing it. Josephus describes the incredible wealth of the physical building: the building, gates, and door were covered with gold, and it

102. Richardson (*Herod*, 192-95) identifies a multivalent rationale for Herod's building activity: gratitude and honor; self-preservation; personal comfort; family piety; economic expansion; cultural integration; imperial piety; Jewish piety; and international reputation.

103. McCane, 'Simply Irresistible', 732-33.

was decorated with a vine and grape-clusters made of gold, ‘as tall as a man’ (*J.W.* 5.207-11, 222-24). He also notes the huge amounts of wealth deposited within it over a long period of time (*Ant.* 14.110-11, 185-267; *Bar.* 1.10-14). Goodman outlines the pilgrimage economy that Herod promoted involving international visitors to the temple who required accommodation, food, and souvenirs, who delivered offerings from diaspora communities, and who spent their second tithe in Jerusalem.¹⁰⁴

The nexus of religion and politics and the ambivalence of imperial center and provincial practice are evident in the appointment of chief priests to the oversight of the temple. The power to appoint chief priests—the twenty eight who held the office from Herod’s time until 70 (*Ant.* 20.250)—resided not in genealogy as Josephus observes it did originally (*Ant.* 20.225-26), but in Rome’s designated rulers, Herod (who appointed ‘some insignificant persons’, *Ant.* 20.247), Archelaus and the Roman governors (*Ant.* 20.250), and Agrippa II whom the emperor Claudius appointed as ‘curator of the temple’ (*Ant.* 20.222; cf., 203, 213, 223). Yet Josephus describes the chief priests as being, after the removal of Archelaus, ‘entrusted with the leadership of the nation’ (*Ant.* 20.251). They were, of course, not free agents and like Herod and Agrippa II and countless other provincial elites they occupied that liminal space of constantly negotiating the interface of tradition and occupier, of representing the nation’s sacred traditions and claims, yet accountable to the interests of their imperializing patrons. In the reciprocity of imperializer–colonized interactions, imperial favor in granting the office is to be met with gratitude and loyalty. The question as to whether they were either collaborators or independent operators misses this ambivalence or hybrid location comprising multiple dimensions simultaneously.¹⁰⁵

How do they negotiate these interfaces? Something of the complexities and ambivalences of negotiation emerge in the following six moments:

- When unrest grows because of the census of property to be assessed for tribute to Rome in 6 CE, the chief priest Joazar sides with Rome and against those opposed to tribute (*Ant.* 18.2-3) even though that opposition led by Judas the Galilean argued theologically that resistance to ‘mortal masters’ [Rome] was necessary ‘after having God for their lord’ (*J.W.* 2.118). In the eyes of the opponents of the census, Joazar sides with Rome

104. Goodman, ‘The Pilgrimage Economy’.

105. Horsley, ‘High Priests’.

rather than God. Yet, whatever his motivation—perhaps for pragmatic, survivalist reasons—his alliance with the Roman ruling power does not protect him. In a demonstration of agency in which subalterns speak by their actions, he is opposed and removed from office by popular pressure (*Ant.* 18.26).

- Josephus' two accounts of the murder of the chief priest Jonathan in the mid-50s CE vary considerably. The longer account in *Antiquities* presents this murder as the result of conflict between Roman governor and Jerusalem chief priest. In this account, it was the action of the Roman governor, the ex-slave Felix, who 'bore a grudge against Jonathan the high priest because of his frequent admonition to improve the administration of the affairs of Judaea'. The frequency of these admonitions arises from Jonathan's fear and self-interest that the crowd might censure him for asking Claudius to appoint Felix as governor! But Felix resents Jonathan's critique, for 'incessant rebukes are annoying to those who choose to do wrong', moralizes Josephus. With bribes, and despite having actively attacked brigands, Felix arranges to have brigands kill Jonathan using daggers concealed beneath their clothes (*Ant.* 20.161-66). Jonathan, in this account, dies because of his advocacy of the people's welfare. In the shorter account, he dies because he was regarded by the Sicarii as too much of a collaborator with Rome (*J.W.* 2.254-57). In this latter text, another native group takes agency against him.
- The Ananias–Albinus situation demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between colonizer and colonized in the form of the dependence of the former and the gain of the latter. The high priest Ananias supplied the governor Albinus (62–64 CE) with money and 'he daily paid court with gifts to Albinus' (*Ant.* 20.205).
- In the unstable mix of religion and politics, in 66 CE, Eleazar, the son of the chief priest Ananias and himself the 'captain of the temple', persuades priests to stop offering the daily sacrifices for the emperor (cf. *J.W.* 2.197). Josephus observes that 'this action laid the foundation of the war with the Romans', a theme that will repeat through the following scenes as 'the chief priests and the notables' seek to maintain the status quo by urging them to recommence offering the sacrifices but without success. Then the chief priests meet with 'the principal citizens' and 'the most notable Pharisees' and the people. Debate results, as well as armed fighting and 'slaughter', the burning of Ananias' house,

and his escape with others to the palace of Herod (*J.W.* 2.409-29). The priests are shown to be divided over how to negotiate Roman power, whether by non-violent defiance or active cooperation. The division runs through the chief priestly family, separating son and father, Eleazar and Ananias. In the context of vertical imperial power, there is division, violence, and diversity on the periphery.

- Ananus, the (ex)¹⁰⁶ chief priest, sides with the rebellion. He is elected, along with Joseph, ‘to the supreme control of affairs in the city’ including raising the height of the walls (*J.W.* 2.563). Josephus describes him as being with others of the ‘leading men (τῶν δυνάτῶν) who were not pro-Romans’ (*J.W.* 2.648). He is also strongly opposed to the ‘domestic tyrants’, the Zealots (*J.W.* 4.158-93, esp. 178), engages in battle with them, and is killed by the Zealot-Idumean alliance (*J.W.* 4.314-17). These internal divisions and horizontal violence reflect, as Fanon argues, the pressure of Roman rule. Josephus identifies Ananus’ death as the beginning of ‘the capture of the city...and the downfall of the Jewish state dated from the day on which the Jews beheld their high priest, the captain of their salvation, butchered in the heart of Jerusalem’ (*J.W.* 2.318). Josephus’ subsequent praise of Ananus presents him as primarily desiring peace with Rome yet, failing that, wishing to conduct effective military resistance (*J.W.* 2.319-25). Ananus embodies the ambivalences and ambiguities of a local priestly elite negotiating Roman pressure and his own people’s resistance.
- When the temple is taken in 70 CE, and before the city is destroyed, the Romans ‘carried their standards into the temple court and...sacrificed to them, and with rousing acclamations hailed Titus as emperor’. Some priests in the temple begged Titus for their lives but he rejected their plea saying that ‘it behoved priests to perish with their temple, and so ordered them to execution’ (*J.W.* 6.316-22). Religious duty and service are political statements, as is their execution.

The ambivalence of the priests’ location and temple’s existence in the imperial-provincial nexus is resolved by Rome’s destruction of the temple.

106. He had been chief priest for three months in 62 CE when Agrippa II deposed him for the death of James by stoning (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.197-203).

The tense relationship between Rome and the temple is also seen in the struggle over the high priestly garments. Josephus explains that Herod and Archelaus had kept the high priestly garments in the Antonia fortress because it was customary to do so. From 6 CE, the Romans continued to store them there, releasing them to the chief priest seven days before a festival and receiving them back immediately after the festival. That is, the control of the garments, symbolizing local leadership, traditions, and power, enacted the same dynamic of the granting of imperial 'permission' to allow a native tradition of subordinated provincials that Titus articulates at the fall of Jerusalem (*J.W.* 6.333-35). Interestingly, in response to a warm reception in Jerusalem, Vitellius, governor of Syria, arranges to restore the garments to Judean/Israelite control. That is, Vitellius is assured of the provincials' compliance so in 'return for their kindness', he meets their request in 36 CE, thereby continuing the same permissive power dynamic (*Ant.* 18.90-95; 15.403-405). Governor Fadus (42-44 CE), however, 'ordered the Jews to deposit the robe in Antonia for...the Romans ought to be masters of it, just as they had been before'. The 'oughtness' that Fadus claims again asserts control by reminding the priests that they carry out their duties in the ambivalent place between their own religious traditions and by Rome's permission and under Rome's watchful eye. The subsequent petition to the emperor Claudius for Judean/Israelite control is granted in 45 CE (*Ant.* 15.407; 20.10-14). Apparently, the provincials have shown themselves to be appropriately compliant and are rewarded with permission to supervise their own garments. As part of the hybridity of being colonized subjects yet Roman allies, the chief priests are *permitted* to carry out their roles.

Festivals centered on the Jerusalem temple reflect the same ambivalence. They offered an opportunity to draw from the past in order to assert Judean/Israelite identity in the midst of Roman control but thereby they also created the potential to disrupt imperial power. Josephus himself emphasizes the link between festivals and revolts, noting that 'it is on these festive occasions that sedition is most apt to break out' (*J.W.* 1.88). The elite person Josephus fears the gathering of unruly crowds, but it is to be noted that more than opportunities for violence, festivals were also occasions in which the traditions and memories that defined Judeans/Israelites as a people free from Roman or any imperial power were publically performed. It is not surprising, then, that festivals were also occasions for intimidating displays of Roman military power in Jerusalem (*J.W.* 5.244; also 2.224; *Ant.* 20.106). The display of troops in such a context embodies an ideology and practice of terror.

Josephus attests the following instances of open conflict at festivals. It seems reasonable to assume that if violence fractures the imperial interface in these instances, the same dynamics of power asserted, disputed, and deflected, permeated every festival observance, even when not expressed in violence. When violence was deployed, such experiences of terror, violence, death, and of collision of cultural traditions caused ripples of indignity and resentment.

- Passover, 4 BCE: violent protests against and clashes with Archelaus break out after Herod's death and the deaths of the teachers which Herod ordered; 'three thousand' are killed and Archelaus shuts down the festival (*J.W.* 2.4-13; *Ant.* 17.213-18).
- Pentecost, 4 BCE: 'indignation' against and major fighting with Sabinus the Roman military officer left by the governor of Syria to establish order in Archelaus' absence takes place (*J.W.* 2.39-75; *Ant.* 17.254-98).
- Passover, during Cumanus' governorship, 48-52 CE: a lewd gesture by a soldier provokes widespread violent unrest (*J.W.* 2.224-27; *Ant.* 20.105-12).
- An unnamed festival (Passover?) is abandoned in 51-52 CE in order to take revenge after an outbreak of horizontal violence. Some Samaritans murder some Galileans traveling to the festival. Further 'robbery, raids, and insurrections' follow as Rome tries to establish order (*J.W.* 2.232-46).
- At festivals during the 50s CE, the Sicarii assassinate key figures beginning with the high priest Jonathan (*J.W.* 2.254-57; *Ant.* 20.161-66).
- Festival of Tabernacles, 62 CE: Jesus son of Ananias begins seven years of announcing woes against Jerusalem and the temple (*J.W.* 6.300-309).
- Passover, ca. 65 CE: verbal complaints are made to Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria, against the governor Florus (*J.W.* 2.280-83).
- Festival of wood-carrying, 66 CE: Sicarii and others take over the upper city and (perhaps appropriately given the festival) burn the Record Office containing money-lenders' bonds (*J.W.* 2.425-29).
- Festival of Tabernacles, 66 CE: the festival is abandoned as the Roman governor of Syria, Cestius Gallus, threatens Jerusalem with troops (*J.W.* 2.517-22).

- Passover 66–68 CE(?): Sicarii based at Masada attack surrounding villages causing other bandit attacks throughout Judea/Israel (*J.W.* 4.398-409).
- Passover, 66–69 CE (?): the war envelops those in Jerusalem for Passover (*J.W.* 6.420-29).

Just as Judeans/Israelites saw festivals as an opportunity to contest power, Josephus notes Rome's use of festival occasions as moments to assert control. Governors stationed troops in the city and deployed them strategically in the temple area during festivals: 'for a Roman cohort was permanently quartered there (the Antonia fortress), and at the festivals took up positions in arms around the porticoes to watch the people and repress any insurrectionary movements' (*J.W.* 5.244; also 2.224; *Ant.* 20.106). That is, the stationing of troops recognizes, as much as it contributes to, a contestive situation with its impact of terrifying presence.

These fears of and precautions against insurrections belong to elite suspicions about non-elite urban and rural mobs. Josephus makes no attempt to hide his own animosity toward non-elite crowds (*Ant.* 4.37). They also express common imperial tactics to control gatherings of local subjects by military intimidation. Further, military preparations suggest a recognition that festivals were carriers of subversive traditions, little traditions, that were contestive and potentially disruptive. Festivals were occasions on which Judea/Israel's metanarrative of divine sovereignty and acts of liberation was remembered, and national identity as a covenant people was secured. For some, former divine actions were celebrated without any mandate to disrupt the present. But for others, celebrations of former acts interpreted the status quo and mandated contemporary actions intended to accomplish the same ends, namely deliverance from foreign enslavement and restoration of the land. The local people's metanarrative can be contestive and disruptive of imperial power.

Josephus declares at the outset of *Jewish War* that he will speak about festivals (1.26). He speaks in *Antiquities* of three pilgrimage festivals in Jerusalem held 'to render thanks to God for benefits received, to intercede for future mercies, and to promote...feelings of mutual affection' (4.203). All three festivals, namely Passover, Pentecost, and Sukkoth (Tabernacles/Booths), turned attention to the past to emphasize the people's identity in relation to God's purposes and covenant. The 'benefits received' focused on deliverance from Egypt (Passover, *J.W.* 4.402; cf. *Ant.* 17.213-14), the production of the land (Pentecost, *Ant.* 3.252-57), and the gift of Torah to shape the people's way of life (Tabernacles) where the reading of Torah played a prominent part

(*Ant.* 4.209-11; 8.100-105; 11.154-58). These benefits readily shape an 'intercession for future mercies' that is quite subversive of the status quo where political, economic, and cultural control lies in Rome's hands, and where at least some seek deliverance from the current slavery to Rome (so Agrippa, *J.W.* 2.356-57), the restoration of land and its production, and the embracing of covenant identity in a way of life obedient to Torah unencumbered by foreign presence and control.

Josephus indicates that other festivals also contribute to this metanarrative of covenant identity and carry the potential to inspire open attacks on the status quo or nourish hopes for divine intervention and transformation. The festival of wood-carrying (*J.W.* 2.425), understood pragmatically to ensure 'an unfailing supply of fuel for the (temple's) flames', becomes in 66 CE, for those restless with Rome's control, the occasion for burning the house of the high priest, the palaces of Agrippa and Bernice, and the Record Office, thereby destroying the money-lenders' bonds and preventing 'the recovery of debt'. Such a gesture is a significant strike against priestly elite, religio-political, and economic domination of which the temple economy was a primary instrument.

Josephus also notes that 'from that time to the present we observe this festival, which we call the festival of Lights' (Hanukah, *Ant.* 12.325). Again this festival, evoking the Maccabean victory over Antiochus Epiphanes, carries a subversive script, pointing to deliverance from a foreign power, to the re-establishment of the temple worship, and to faithfulness to the covenant stipulations. Josephus praises Judas Maccabeus for having 'freed his nation and rescued them from slavery to the Macedonians' (*Ant.* 12.434). These are subversive scripts in any context of domination for some, though not all, residents. To deter and control 'the some', Rome stationed troops in Jerusalem 'to watch the people and repress any insurrectionary movements' (*J.W.* 5.244; also 2.224; *Ant.* 20.106). The strategy assumes that Rome can contain or even destroy the Israelite/Judean metanarrative of an alternative identity and longing for liberty that the observance of festivals evokes and secures, even as Rome in this hybrid location enables them.

VII. Material Culture

The discussion thus far has identified political, economic, social, and religious/ideological means by which Roman imperial power was asserted and engaged in Judea/Israel. In these arenas, the ambivalent situation and hybrid identities of the imperialized-colonized situation are

experienced. It has also noted from both colonizers and colonized outbursts of violent confrontation, self-protective ambiguous acts, and constant sources of terror, indignities, and resentments that rippled through Judean/Israelite society. This section will briefly highlight material cultural expressions that also exhibited Rome's metanarrative, notably buildings and coins. Ramsay MacMullen has argued that Romanization worked both to push and to pull people into the orb of Roman power, compelling and attracting people by its benefits. Material benefits or culture could function as one of the means of 'pulling' people into positive interaction because benefits like baths and wine 'felt or looked good'.¹⁰⁷

The extensive building program of the local, Rome-appointed king Herod has been well documented. Peter Richardson has classified Herod's material benefactions, both within and outside Judea/Israel, into five categories:¹⁰⁸

- *Major Projects*: including new cities such as Caesarea Maritima and Sebaste;
- *Fortress and Palaces*: the former included Massada and the Antonia fortress, walls for Jerusalem, towers. Palaces included the Winter Palace at Jericho and at Herodium near Bethlehem.
- *Religious Buildings*: the Jerusalem temple was the center piece of his Jewish piety. But as discussed above, he also built three temples for the imperial cult of Augustus and Roma, at Caesarea Maritima, Sebaste, and Panias. Richardson comments, 'the Augustan age required 'piety' toward Augustus, and Judea must participate to attain its proper place'.¹⁰⁹
- *Commercial Construction and Infrastructure*: these projects include the harbor at Caesarea Maritima, with its facilities like warehouses for trade, and several manufacturing sites, as well as roads, sewers, reservoirs, and aqueducts.
- Richardson's fifth category concerns *cultural buildings* such as theaters, hippodromes, stadia, amphitheaters, baths, and gymnasias, the common trappings of Hellenistic and Roman culture. Josephus has Herod building a theater, hippodrome, and amphitheater in Jerusalem, Herodium, Jericho, and Caesarea Maritima. Richardson notes that Herod mostly locates these

107. MacMullen, *Romanization*, 134.

108. Richardson, *Herod*, 174-202.

109. Richardson, *Herod*, 194.

facilities away from areas where they might cause religious offense. But they also express the hybridity of Herod's commitment to 'encourage Roman culture' and foster Judea/Israel's cultural integration with the new age of Roman power.

This commitment meant that Herod included Hellenistic-Roman features in his building projects in Jerusalem as reminders of his Roman patrons and as expressions of the desire for:

cultural integration: the Temple in Jerusalem included Roman features (the Royal Basilica, the stoas); many buildings incorporated Roman decorative elements (Corinthian and Doric columns, Pompeian interior decoration); and urban design elements reflected late Hellenistic civic patterns (Hippodamian plans, agoras). Herod minimized offensive elements, but he was a good Roman and a 'Hellenist'.¹¹⁰

Josephus refers to other material signs of Roman presence including a hippodrome at Taricheae, (*J.W.* 2.599) and hot baths at Tiberias (*J.W.* 2.614). Governor Pilate builds an aqueduct using money from the temple (*Ant.* 18.60). Josephus has Agrippa I fortifying the walls of Jerusalem though he desists when Claudius rebukes him for doing so (*Ant.* 19.326-27). Josephus extols Agrippa's generosity (more so than Herod's; *Ant.* 19.328-31) and says he 'erected many buildings in many other places' and gives examples from Berytus that include a theater, amphitheater, baths, porticoes, and entertainments (*Ant.* 19.335-37). Agrippa II also built a theater and funded entertainments in Berytus though his own subjects resented it. He also enlarged Caesarea Maritima and renamed it Neronias 'in honor of Nero' (*Ant.* 20.211-12). Such buildings express the 'pull' of Roman power functioning as visual displays of the civilizing and seductive benefits of Roman rule.

Coins also provided material presentations of the ambivalence of the imperialized-colonized interplay. On one hand, they proclaimed Roman dominance by carrying the message of Roman presence and global rule. For Judean/Israelites, there was no escaping this propaganda and reality as it pervaded daily life. The common silver denarius that was widely used in everyday life bore images of emperors such as Augustus and Tiberius.¹¹¹ As I will note momentarily, coins also provided an opportunity to display Roman generosity and sensitivity to Judean/Israelite identity. Moreover, they offered client-kings like Herod a space in which to honor his Roman patrons as well as present himself as a faithful Judean/Israelite king.

110. Richardson, *Herod*, 194.

111. Burrows, 'Significant Recent Finds'.

Herod's coins, issued only in bronze, reflected the ambivalence resulting from the change from what was 'an independent Jewish state to a Roman client-kingdom'.¹¹² He employed inscriptions in Greek, and symbols that were more international. Herod's coins, at least initially, reflected his double audience and expressed his hybrid location and identity as both Roman client-king and king of the Jews. For example,¹¹³ among his early coins, one coin on the obverse has symbols of the worship of Apollo along with his title, 'King Herod', but on the reverse a censer from the Jerusalem temple. Another has on the obverse a winged caduceus (the staff of Hermes the messenger of the gods) yet on the reverse a Jewish symbol, the pomegranate, or a poppy head. Another shows on the obverse the curved stem of a ship, and on the reverse a palm branch associated with the feast of tabernacles. He did not, though, seem to sustain this hybridity, with Roman symbols tending to dominate subsequently: a military shield (#4902),¹¹⁴ caduceus (#4903, #4910), anchor (#4908, #4910, #4911). One coin also features an eagle (#4909), which created perhaps a defiant intertextuality with the incident late in Herod's life of the tearing down of the eagle image which he had placed on the great gate to the temple.

Herod's son Archelaus continued the same Roman images: cornucopia or horns of abundance (#4912, 4914, 4915), anchor (#4912, 4913), a war galley or prow (#4914, 4915, 4916), the caduceus (#4917), and helmet (#4917). Agrippa I (ruled Judea 41–44 CE) declared his identity as Roman client-king with images of Caligula (#4973, 4976), Claudius being crowned by Agrippa (#4982), Claudius and Agrippa with a temple (#4983), and, in a show of independence, Agrippa himself (#4974, 4978, 4985). Inscriptions declared him to be 'King Agrippa' or 'The Great King Agrippa, Friend of the Emperor'. Agrippa II included images of Nero as well as of himself. Under the Flavians, his coins featured images of the emperors and a goddess like Tyche/Fortuna and Nike/Victoria. Coins issued through the century from Caesarea Maritima not surprisingly feature images of Emperors Claudius (#4858, 4859), Nero (#4860, 4861), and Domitian (#2231).¹¹⁵

112. Kanael, 'Ancient Jewish Coins', 48; also Hendin, *Guide to Ancient Jewish Coins*; Meyshan, 'The Symbols on the Coinage'.

113. I follow Kanael, 'Ancient Jewish Coins', 48–49.

114. Numbers throughout this section refer to entries in the catalogue of Burnett, Amandry, and Ripollès. *Roman Provincial Coinage. Vol 1: 1-2.*; and Burnett, Amandry, and Carradice. *Roman Provincial Coinage. Vol 2: 1-2.*

115. DeRose Evans, 'Ancient Coins'.

The coins issued by the governors generally avoided images of emperors, divine figures, or religious symbols, preferring various plant representations (ear of barley, palm tree, vines, and wreaths; #4954, 4958, 4959, 4961-64). Some included the names of emperors using variously Caesar, Tiberius, and Nero (#4958, 4960, 4962, 4964, 4972).

Some gubernatorial coins pushed a Roman agenda more aggressively. There is an instance of a caduceus (#4960). Felix struck a coin, naming Nero, with two shields and crossed spears on the obverse but, in a sign of sensitivity, without the usual legionary standard (#4971). The reverse features palm tree and fruit. Governor Pontius Pilate represented a significant departure by including Roman religious symbols such as the *lituus*, a crook shaped staff used by augers for divination (#4967), and the *simpulum*, used as a ceremonial ladle or pouring vessel (#4968, 4969).¹¹⁶ His coins also explicitly named the emperor Tiberius.

The most aggressively propagandist imperial coins were the *Judea Capta* coins issued after the defeat of 70 CE.¹¹⁷ These coins issued both throughout the empire and in Judea/Israel openly proclaimed the Roman, particularly Flavian, victory over the province. The coins functioned as legitimation for the Flavians as successful military exponents of Roman rule, but also as instruments of terror for local people by coercing compliance under the threat of repeat military action. They presented on the obverse the head of Vespasian or Titus (#2310-2313). On the reverse, scenes featured Victory/Nike with a foot on a helmet usually with a shield and palm tree, and, in at least one type, a captive with arms tied (#2313). The palm tree represented the exotic East in general and Judea/Israel in particular. It also carries connotations of abundance and fertility now in the service of Roman power. The people and land are represented, as in the Sebasteion panels from Aphrodisias, by a woman on her knees with hands tied. The female body presents Judea/Israel as weak, subjugated, inferior, and humiliated by manly, superior, conquering Roman power. Rome is dominant and masculine, Judea/Israel is pacified and feminized. The gendering and militarizing of the power dynamics of the imperializing-imperialized interaction is clear as is its agenda to legitimate Flavian rule and intimidate local peoples.

Of course, the propaganda game can be played two ways with coins. The colonized can mimic and adapt the techniques used by the colonizer to their own advantage. During the 66–70 CE war, Judeans/Israelites minted their own coins, thereby announcing their rejection of Roman

116. Taylor, 'Pontius Pilate'.

117. Zarrow, 'Imposing Romanization', with bibliography; Cody, 'Conquerors and Conquered'.

rule.¹¹⁸ The minting of coins was an act of defiance in itself since Rome controlled the issue of coins. The coins themselves presented fundamental commitments of the revolt in proclaiming ‘freedom’, ‘holiness’, and asserting its traditional identity of ‘Zion’. These ‘freedom’ coins were made in silver or bronze. The silver coins announced their weight (‘shekel of Israel’, half-shekel), the year numbered from 1–5 corresponding to 66–70 CE, and in Hebrew (not Greek or Latin) ‘Jerusalem the Holy’. The obverse displayed a chalice, a vessel from the Jerusalem temple, and the reverse three pomegranates that reflect the priestly authority by which the coins were minted (cf. Exod. 28:33–34). Years two and three of the bronze coins declared ‘Freedom of Zion’ and the fourth-year coin, ‘to the redemption of Zion’.

In 132–35 CE, a further revolt broke out in response to Hadrian’s scheme to re-found Jerusalem as the Roman colony Aelia Capitolina with a temple dedicated to Jupiter Capitolina.¹¹⁹ Led by Shimon Bar-Kokhba, the revolutionary government minted silver coins, overstriking existing Roman tetradrachms and denarii. In this instance, the colonized (over)strike back. The coins issued over three-and-a-half years starting in year one, 132 CE, show considerable variety with five denominations and diverse emblems and legends. Fundamental to their agenda was a turning to the past, in fact an idealization of the past, with a yearning to reestablish the temple. The temple is presented as an idealized form of national identity. Emblems include the Jerusalem temple, musical instruments used in temple worship such as the lyre, kithara, and trumpets, sacred vessels such as amphora, and fruit and branches (*lulav* and *etrog*) used in the festival of Sukkoth/Tabernacles. This concentration of emblems concerned with the temple, along with the name ‘El’azar the priest’, as well as legends such as ‘of the redemption of Israel’ and ‘of the freedom of Israel’ and ‘for the freedom of Jerusalem’, indicate that the restoration of the Jerusalem temple as a place of worship, as the capital of the nation of Israel, and as a symbol of independent nationhood was a foundational goal for the revolt. It was over sixty years since the temple had been burned in 70 CE, but as commonly happens in imperial–colonial interactions, the memory of the past becomes a powerful source of identity and motivation for oppressed

118. Kanael, ‘Ancient Jewish Coins’, 57–59; Meshorer, *Jewish Coins*, 88–91, 154–58; Kadman, *The Coins of the Jewish War*; Goodman, ‘Coinage and Identity’. For good images and some discussion, see Brenner, ‘Spending Your Way’, 50–51; Deutsch, ‘Roman Coins’.

119. Kanael, ‘Ancient Jewish Coins’, 59–62; Meshorer, *Jewish Coins*, 92–101, 159–69; Kindler, ‘The Coinage of the Bar-Kokhba War’.

peoples in the present. In similar vein, the prominence of the name 'Jerusalem' or 'for the freedom of Jerusalem' on more than half the coins recalled this past of peoplehood. It also recalled slogans from the 66–70 CE revolt and reasserted independence and this remembered identity in the face of Rome's new name Aelia Capitolina which expressed subjugation and Roman denial of that past.

VIII. Decolonizing the Mind

In this final section, I briefly discuss four texts produced across the 63 BCE–135 CE time period of Judea/Israel under Roman rule to examine their negotiation of Roman power. Seth Schwartz has correctly pointed out the limited levels of literacy during this period.¹²⁰ Schwartz is not alone in proposing a figure of under ten percent literacy. These texts clearly originate with elite authors but as locals who under imperial power 'write back' to the empire to express something of the ambivalence of the experience of the assertion of imperial power. The four texts are chosen because of their origin at different points across the two-hundred-year period under discussion. They decolonize the minds of colonized Judeans/Israelites by asserting Judean/Israelite identity informed by Judean/Israelite traditions, by fantasizing about Rome's demise, and by imagining a world without Roman power.

Psalms of Solomon

This collection of eighteen writings probably dates from around the time of the beginning of Herod's reign as Rome's client-king. *Psalms of Solomon* 1, 2, 8, and 17 especially seem to engage Pompey's assertion of Roman power in Jerusalem in 63 BCE.

- *Psalms of Solomon* 8:1-22 describes Pompey's entrance into Jerusalem unopposed and welcomed by Hyrcanus II (8:15-19). Aristobulus II's supporters barricaded themselves in the temple, to which Pompey responded with a siege for three months before entering the sanctuary and killing priests offering sacrifices (8:20). He exiled Aristobulus and his supporters to Rome where many were paraded in Pompey's triumph (*Ps. Sol.* 8:21-22).

120. Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 10-11.

- *Psalms of Solomon* 2:1-2 refers to part of Pompey's capture of Jerusalem, namely his use of a battering ram to break down walls around the temple and his entrance into the sanctuary. Verse 19 refers to the Roman ('Gentiles') capture of Jerusalem.
- *Psalms of Solomon* 2:26-30 makes celebratory reference to the death of Pompey in 48 BCE.
- *Psalms of Solomon* 17:7-12 also refers to various aspects of Pompey's attack on the temple (17:11) and his exiling of Aristobulus (17:12).

Rodney Werline notes that *Psalms of Solomon* 17 also seems to show signs of redaction with the referent moving from Pompey to Herod.¹²¹ Verse 9b's reference to the end of the Hasmoneans more accurately reflects Herod's elimination of them, and verse 14's reference to doing in Jerusalem what Gentiles do probably fits Herod's reign better than Pompey's in expressing disapproval for Herod's receptiveness to and advocacy of Roman culture. And the reference to a famine in 17:18b-19a is also more accurate for Herod's taking of the city in 40-37 BCE than for Pompey.

These Psalms probably come from Jerusalem, perhaps from a group of scribes.¹²² They engage these contemporary events from the perspective of Israel's covenant identity and relationship with God. Their analysis of Pompey's actions and their aftermath is very bleak. They are surprised and deeply perturbed by the Roman invasion and occupation of Jerusalem and the land in 63 BCE, as well as by the divisions and corruption among the Judean/Israelite leadership, presumably their verdict on accommodating and receptive alliances with the Romans. The opening of *Psalms of Solomon* 1:1-3 (as well as 8:1-6) expresses terror and surprise: 'Suddenly, the clamor of war was heard'. The Psalms strongly condemn the Romans under Pompey Magnus for desecrating the city and temple in 63 BCE:

Gentile foreigners went up to your place of sacrifice:
They arrogantly trampled it with their sandals...
For the Gentiles insulted Jerusalem, trampling it down. (*Ps. Sol.* 2:2, 19a)

While 'the [Jerusalem] leaders' welcomed Pompey 'with joy' (8:16), the Psalmist recoils from his violent and arrogant ways. He wrestles with explaining why this dreadful situation came about. Why did God not

121. Werline, 'The *Psalms of Solomon*', 71; see also Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*; Horsley, *Revolt*, 143-57.

122. Werline, 'The *Psalms of Solomon*', 82; Horsley, *Revolt*, 144-47.

protect the land, city, and temple? The Psalmist's explanation is that God was punishing Israel for numerous sins. That is, it employs Deuteronomic theology whereby obedience is met by divine blessing but disobedience by divine punishment in the form of disastrous national events. The 'disobedience' or 'sins' for which they are being punished (2:7-8) focus on the actions of the Hasmoneans. They expanded militarily (1:4). They exalted themselves (1:5). They profaned the temple (1:8). 'They defiled Jerusalem and the things that had been consecrated to the name of God' (8:22; also 8:9-13 using stock polemical accusations). They are also illegitimate kings, though Herod may also be in view if the Psalms were written around the beginning of his reign. 'By force' and

[w]ith pomp they set up a monarchy because of their arrogance
They despoiled the throne of David with arrogant shouting. (*Ps. Sol.* 17:6)

The Psalmist looks to the past. Only a return to the ancient line of David provides legitimate kings. It is no accident or surprise that the collection is called *Psalms of Solomon* after David's son.

Because of these terrible violations of God's will, so the Psalms of Solomon insist, Pompey, 'a man alien to our race', carried out God's purposes of overthrowing and punishing their sinful actions (17:7-10). Pompey, of course, did not know he was carrying out God's purposes, and he certainly did not see himself as an agent or puppet of God's punishment! It is the perspective of these Psalms and the group from which they originate. This presentation draws on a common motif of the foreign king who is the unwitting agent of God's wrath: the king of Assyria (Isa. 10:5), king of Babylon (Isaiah 14), king of Tyre (Ezekiel 28), Pharaoh (Ezekiel 31-32), and Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Dan. 11:40-45).¹²³ The Psalms thus construct a hybrid identity for Pompey. He is the one who violates Jerusalem yet he is also the agent of the divine work of punishing God's people.

While the Psalmist constructs this hybrid identity, he remains deeply troubled. Pompey has overstepped the mark in constructing a situation that the Psalmist thinks is marked by illegitimate rule, greedy and unclean temple leadership, disregard for religious and civil law, and the presence of foreign invaders. So the Psalmist petitions God: 'Do not delay, O God, to repay...to declare dishonorable the arrogance of the dragon' (2:25). The biblical tradition uses the image of the dragon for several oppressive rulers (Pharaoh, Ezek. 29:3; Nebuchadnezzar, Jer. 51:34). Pompey Magnus has over-reached, declaring 'I shall be lord of

123. Werline, 'The *Psalms of Solomon*', 75.

land and sea” but he did not understand that it is God who is great’, who judges ‘even kings and rulers’. Rome’s rule is thus deemed to be both a form of punishment and inevitably subject to demise at God’s timing for overreaching. Again turning to the past, the Psalmist wonders if God will be faithful to the covenant God has made with Israel to preserve Israel’s existence in the face of such horror. He reminds God:

You are God and we are the people whom you have loved... Do not take away your mercy from us, lest they set upon us. For you chose the descendants of Abraham above all the nations. (*Ps. Sol.* 9:8-9)

The Psalmist, though, does not wait long and rejoices at Pompey’s death (2:26-27), declaring to the ruling elite: ‘And now, officials of the earth, see the judgment of the Lord’ (2:32).

Psalm 17 reruns the whole scenario but, in an example of decolonizing colonized minds, with a vision of a time beyond the death of Pompey and the establishment of God’s justice on earth through another king. In contrast to the illegitimate Hasmonean (and Herodian?) kings (17:5, 9b), there will be a legitimate king from the line of David. He is God’s anointed one, the Messiah or Christ (17:32). Verse 5 identifies the Hasmonean rulers as ‘sinners’ who ‘set upon us [the Psalmist’s group] and drove us out’ (17:5b). As a result, all Jerusalem is bereft of ‘mercy or truth’ and the devout were forced to flee into the wilderness (17:15-17). The likely references to Herodian actions (17:9b, 18b-19a) suggest that this bleak scene in which ‘the king was a criminal and the judge disobedient and the people sinners’ continues after the end of Hasmonean rule, after Pompey’s death, and into Herod’s reign—as far as the Psalmist is concerned.

God’s justice comes in a new time, a third space/time, ‘in the time known to you, O God’ by another king from the line of David (17:21). His job description of justice is to ‘destroy the unrighteous rulers’, remove Gentiles from Jerusalem, destroy and subdue nations, gather a holy people, distribute land according to tribal divisions, and rule justly and wisely (17:22-29). Ending Roman rule and ordering the future according to God’s purposes is what he is ‘anointed’ to do.

How does he do it? Verse 24 says he does it ‘by the word of his mouth’. Verse 30 says he glorifies God (not oversteps like Pompey). Verse 33 says he does not rely on ‘horse and rider and bow’, does not ‘collect gold and silver (taxes) for war’, and does not look to ‘a day of war’. That is, he does not mimic imperial ways of waging war to drive out the Romans and their allies and to establish God’s rule. While he expresses the desire both to replace Roman power and to exercise power, his mimicry does not embrace the same military means. But just exactly

how ‘the word of his mouth’ accomplishes these purposes is mysterious. As with creation, the divine word is efficacious in bringing a new space into being. Non-violence, not violence, is his mode of effecting God’s will.

Interestingly, this is one of the earliest and fullest references to an ‘anointed one’ or Messiah in Jewish writings. It comes out of a situation of powerlessness where divine justice seems to be denied. This presentation of the Messiah does not imagine a superhuman or divine figure. He is a Davidic king; like Pompey, he is powerful. He is an agent of God’s justice who brings about God’s rule. The *Psalms of Solomon* endure the shame, suffering, indignity, and offence of the present by looking to God’s justice-bringing action. God will be faithful to the covenant. God’s justice will be established through this figure. The *Psalms* function to decolonize colonized minds.

Qumran: Shock and Awe

I make no attempt here to offer a representative or wide-ranging discussion of Qumran writings or history. Instead I will restrict the discussion to one group of texts.

In an interesting article, George Brooke analyzes the use of the term ‘Kittim’ in the four Qumran Pesharim that use the term.¹²⁴ Arguing that the term refers to the Romans, he investigates how the Romans are presented in this body of literature. It will be impossible to summarize here the rich detail of his discussion, so I concentrate on the main contours of the presentations. The military might of the Kittim/Romans is to the fore, but the texts also highlight the economic and cultic threat they pose, as well as the psychological terror they instill and the fear with which they are regarded.

- The Nahum pesher (4QpNah; dating to around the end of the 1st century BCE) interprets Nah. 2:12b as indicating that the Kittim/Romans will enter Jerusalem and trample it (4QpNah frgs. 3-4, l. 2-4). Military power is the focus.
- The Isaiah pesher (4QpIsa^a frgs. 7-10) interprets Isaiah 10:33-34, which refers to the Assyrian advance that Israel will halt.
- The Psalm pesher (1QpPs frg. 9) interprets Ps. 68:30-31. As a victory song, it describes an enemy that poses both a military and economic threat, the latter being concerned with taking tribute.

124. Brooke, ‘The Kittim’. For a wider discussion, see Horsley, *Revolt*, 123-41.

- The Habakkuk peshar (1QpHab) interprets Habakkuk 1–2 and contains numerous references to the Kittim. The Chaldeans/Kittim are the focus of Habakkuk 1:6–11 (1QpHab 2–4) and Habakkuk 1:14–17 (1QpHab 6). Brooke discusses in detail eleven uses of the term to reconstruct ‘the author’s picture of the Kittim, his image of empire’.¹²⁵ One emphasis falls on their military might—‘swift’ and ‘mighty in battle’, they will exercise ‘dominion’ (1QpHab 2.10–16), moving across the land and plundering cities. Their terrifying impact is also to the fore. They are ‘fearsome and terrible’ inspiring ‘fear and dread’ (1QpHab 2.163.6). They are ‘like an eagle’, they ‘trample’ the land and ‘devour’ the people without satisfaction but with ‘anger, wrath, fury, and indignation’ (1QpHab 3.7–14). They ‘deride, scorn, mock and scoff’ at rulers and threaten the temple treasury (1QpHab 3.17–4.2). They are ‘military plunderers’ and ‘their plunder may include the contents of the temple treasury’.¹²⁶ They gather ‘wealth and loot’, tribute and ‘sustenance’ by ravaging many lands ‘year by year’ in relentless taxation, an action that economically threatens annual payments for Levites (1QpHab 5.12–6.8). Sustaining all this is their merciless use of the sword (1QpHab 6.8–12), including bringing justice upon unjust priests, thereby plundering the plunderers (1QpHab 8.13–9.7). 1QpHab presents a graphic of the violence and terror of Roman military, imperializing power from the perspective of the colonized.

Brooke concludes correctly that the Romans are presented as ‘militarily mighty, economically threatening, but ultimately cultically no match for the God of Israel’.¹²⁷ Yet a further dimension needs to be highlighted from the presentation of the pesharim, namely the psychological terror and fear the Romans impart on vulnerable colonized peoples.

First Enoch 37–71: Fantasies of Revenge

Within the Enochic traditions, the section known variously as the *Similitudes of Enoch* or the *Parables of Enoch* or *1 Enoch 37–71* originates in ‘early or mid first century CE’.¹²⁸ This time-period locates the material after the end of Herodian rule and during the time of the governors, before the war of 66–70 CE. This section of *1 Enoch* offers

125. Brooke, ‘Kittim’, 142.

126. Brooke, ‘Kittim’, 148–49.

127. Brooke, ‘Kittim’, 159.

128. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 178.

insight into how this Enochic group and tradition negotiate the political, military, economic, and ideological assertions of imperial power outlined above. It sets about the task of decolonizing the subjugated mind by setting the imperial present in the context of divine purposes and fantasizing a very different future or third space marked by revenge and reversal.

I Enoch 37–71 subdivides into three main units after the introduction of chapters 37, chapters 38–44, 45–57, and 58–69. Enoch is authorized as a prophet/revealer in chapter 37 by seeing a vision and declaring the words of the ‘Holy One’. The first two units are largely concerned with revealing judgment on the unrighteous, while the third section continues this emphasis but also addresses the vindication of the righteous, thereby assuring them that their destiny is safe with the ‘Lord of the Spirits’, the dominant name for God in *I Enoch* 37–71.

Chapters 38–44 present the enacting of oppression as central to the identity of the unrighteous or the sinners, and basic to the judgment enacted on them. Chapter 38 employs a perspective from below among those who are oppressed. At the judgment, the ‘Righteous One’, God, will reveal the sinners, those who ‘denied the name of the Lord of the Spirits’ (38:2). These wicked ones ‘possess the earth’ but at the judgment ‘they will be driven from the face of the earth’ (38:1). They will no longer be ‘rulers nor princes’ since ‘at that moment, kings and rulers will perish’ (38:4–6). Significant here is the definition of sinners in terms of those with land who exercise oppressive power. The scenario of the chapter reflects a typical situation in an agrarian empire like Rome’s where land is the key commodity and those with power, wealth, and status own large quantities of it, while peasants struggle to have access to sufficient land (by owning or renting) to sustain their existence. This imperial ‘norm’ of the distribution of the land is shown in chapter 38 to be sinful and unjust, contrary to the will of the Lord of the Spirits. The wickedness on earth dominated by imperial structures is such that in chapter 42, wisdom cannot find a place to dwell among humans on earth, but she resides in heaven.

Subsequent chapters intensify this analysis and develop the fantasy of revenge in which the powerful rulers and landowners are punished. In chapters 44–57, this judgment of ‘the kings and the mighty ones’ is entrusted to the ‘Son of Man’ (46:3). In a painfully cruel image that expresses the oppressed’s lust of revenge, he will ‘crush the teeth of the sinners’ (46:4) and will ‘depose the kings from their thrones and kingdoms’ (46:5). Details of the revenge are gloatingly elaborated: their faces are slapped, they are filled with gloom and shame, and beset with worms (46:6). Their sins comprised a lack of accountability to God, not

‘glorifying and extolling’ the Son of Man, nor obeying him as ‘the source of their kingship’ (46:5). They arrogantly defied heaven, which means self-serving and oppressive rule on the earth. They ‘manifest all their deeds in oppression; all their deeds are oppression. Their power depends upon their wealth. And their devotion is to the gods which they have fashioned with their own hands. But they deny the name of the Lord of the Spirits’ (46:7-8). Their condemnation results from a failure to honor God, oppressive social actions, misused power, accumulated wealth, and idolatry associated with foreign gods and the imperial cult. The fantasy of judgment confirms Fanon’s observation that the oppressed imitate their oppressors, wanting to be like them even as they exercise destructive power over them.

Chapter 48 reruns this judgment though in abbreviated form. The Lord of the Spirits and the righteous are allied against the powerful and wealthy in that ‘they have hated and despised this world of oppression... In those days the kings of the earth and the mighty landowners shall be humiliated on account of their deeds’ (48:7-8). In an appropriate irony, their judgment day is described as ‘the day of their misery and weariness’, precisely what they have forced on peasant farmers and laborers (48:8). While they have had their way on earth, they cannot resist God. ‘Oppression cannot survive his judgment’ (50:4). Such visions serve to decolonize the colonized’s mind.

Chapter 52 adds a further dimension to the revelation and condemnation of their unjust rule and their acquisition of land and wealth. Their oppressive rule was carried out by military might. Accordingly, their judgment involves the removal ‘from the surface of the earth’ of the resources necessary for war (52:9). So Enoch sees mountains of iron, copper, silver, gold, colored metal, and lead (52:2). The mountains of iron and lead indicate resources for and stockpiles of weapons. Silver and gold suggest both the funds needed for war and the booty and loot taken in war. The angel or messenger ‘of peace’ informs Enoch that in God’s presence these mountains will disappear. They will become like melted honey—‘there shall be no iron for war, nor shall anyone wear a breastplate...all these substances will be removed and destroyed from the surface of the earth’ (52:6-9; 53:7).

Chapter 53 elaborates the economic exploitation that this military power sustained. Enoch sees ‘a deep valley with a wide mouth’, an image that suggests a huge capacity for consumption. There, the imperial tributary economy is at work. ‘All who dwell upon the earth...shall bring to it gifts, presents, and tributes’ (53:1). But, in an image of the incessant and never-satisfied greed of the ruling elite, ‘this deep valley shall not

become full'. The discussion above has identified the imperializer's dependence on the colonized through the means of taxes, tributes, tithes, and 'gifts' to seize peasant production and transfer it to the ruling elite, from the provinces to the center. Enoch also sees (ironically) chains being prepared 'for the kings and potentates of this earth in order that they may be destroyed thereby... and the righteous ones shall have rest from the oppression of sinners' (53:5-7). In a reversal motivated by hate, chapter 54 describes those kings and potentates, who had put numerous subject people in chains, themselves being fettered and punished.

The third parable (58-69) continues this concern with the punishment of the oppressive rulers but increasingly emphasizes the deliverance of the righteous who have suffered under their rule but remained faithful to the Lord of the Spirits. Chapters 62-63 present God's condemnation of 'the kings, the governors, the high officials, and the landlords... all the oppressors shall be eliminated from before his face' (62:1-3). When 'the governors and the kings who possess the land' (63:1) see the Lord of the Spirits and the Son of Man, the rulers beg for mercy but it is denied (62:9). God, the Lord of the Spirits, is blessed as 'the Lord of kings, the Lord of rulers and the Master of the rich... who rules over all kings' (63:2, 4). This power is displayed and these titles vindicated in the judgment on kings, rulers, and the wealthy. Along with these rulers, the 'fallen angels' are punished also (64-69).

The parables present various dimensions of the imperial structure of Judea/Israel as sinful and thereby contrary to the divine will: the elite's self-interested rule over the people, its control of land, its exploitative and insatiable use of taxes, tributes, gifts, and tithes, its amassing of wealth, its use of military power, and its neglect of the Lord of the Spirits and honoring of idols and other gods that sanction its rule. The parables bravely resist the paralyzing terror of this imperial world, and refuse to accept its divinely sanctioned normalcy. In the midst of such an overwhelming vision of power, *I Enoch* 37-71 decolonizes the mind by daring to imagine a very different world, one not ruled by the alliances of local and Roman elites and one not marked by these oppressive structures. The scenes of judgment and torture express the accumulated experiences of humiliation, depravation, powerlessness, shame, terror, and envy of the oppressed for the world of the oppressors. Fuelled by the protracted experience of such indignities, *I Enoch* 37-71 presents the fantasies of the powerless for the demise of their oppressors. Such acts of imagination de-colonize the minds of subjugated people, affirming their dignity and vindication by God, and conceiving of a very different world.

Fourth Ezra

Fourth Ezra emerges in the post-70 CE era, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (10:19-24). Central to it is a wrestling with the justice of God in relation to God's action in history and the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and temple in 70 CE in particular. The initial three dialogues between Ezra and the angel Uriel (3:1–9:25) engage the theodicistic questions of Israel's ambivalence and location: elected by God yet 'abused' by the nations (3:31; 4:22-24; 6:55-56), gifted with God's law but unable to abide by it except for a few exceptional humans (3:21, 35-36), a few who are saved while the majority are damned (7:45-61), and salvation by individual merit yet membership of a covenant people, the relationship between God's mercy and God's justice (8:6-19). The angel repeats several refrains—that God's purposes are mysterious and difficult to understand yet sovereign, that God's purposes span two ages (7:50), and that Ezra should consider 'what is to come, rather than what is now present' (7:16, 26-44; 6:6, 33-34; 8:46).

In chapter 9, Ezra's stance changes. Confronted in a vision with a woman mourning her dead son, he advises her to accept 'the decree of God to be just...[and]...you will receive your son back in due time' (10:16-17). His advice to accept the providence of God and turn to the future is consonant with the angel's instruction to him in the previous chapters in terms of making meaning of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 CE. Two further visions or dreams (11:1; 13:1) reinforce the point and outline the nature of that future, at least in general terms.

The first of the two dream visions in chapters 11–12 will be our focus here. The unit divides into three sections, the vision of the eagle (11:1-35), a judgment scene (11:36-12:3), and an interpretation (12:4-39).¹²⁹ In the vision and judgment, an eagle appears that rules the world. It has 'twelve wings and the two little wings' and three heads appear (11:22-23). A lion-like creature who speaks for the Most High condemns the eagle and destroys it. The eagle represents Roman power.

Not surprisingly, the description emphasizes the worldwide rule of the eagle/Rome. Stone interprets the eagle 'spreading his wings over all the earth' (11:2) as an expression of rule.¹³⁰ Verse 5 confirms the interpretation ('to reign over the earth and over those who dwell in it'), as does verse 6a ('all things under heaven were subjected to him'). The intimidating and fearful nature of that reign that coerces all before it is

129. Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 346-47, where Stone divides the vision into fifteen sections or stages.

130. Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 349.

suggested by the statement that ‘no one spoke against him, not even one creature...’ (11:6). It is a rule that silences all alternative voices of protest and dissent. Subsequently, its eight wings ‘reign over all the earth’ for a period of time; individually, ‘they wielded power’ one after another (11:12-21). Then the middle head of its three heads ‘gained control of the whole earth, and with much oppression dominated its inhabitants and it had greater power over the world than all the wings...’ (11:32). When it disappears, the remaining two heads ‘also ruled over the world and its inhabitants’ (11:34) before the right head devoured the left. Again the intimidating nature of its rule is emphasized, and its oppressive impact is named explicitly.

A lion-like creature appears and speaks the words of the ‘Most High’ to the eagle. In the context of Rome’s recent destruction of Jerusalem, this nomenclature of the ‘Most High’ for God, employing the superlative, and the use of the imperial, masculine animal, the lion, mimic and exceed the claims of power. They frame the triumphant eagle’s power as lesser and subject to greater divine power. The Most High is imagined to have power over the eagle, granting it ‘to reign in my world’, the fourth of four empires that lead to ‘the end of my times’. The possessive pronoun ‘my’ underlines the Most High’s control of the world and of time, setting up a significant juxtaposition with the ‘reigning’ language attributed to the eagle. The eagle’s powerful reign is described in terms of the impact of its force (‘conquered’) and its extent (‘over the world/earth’). It is evaluated negatively in terms of its terrifying impact on subjugated peoples, ruling ‘with much terror’, ‘with grievous oppression’ and

with deceit. And you have judged the earth, but not with truth, for you have afflicted the meek and injured the peaceable; you have hated those who tell the truth, and have loved liars; you have destroyed the dwellings of those who brought forth fruit, and have laid low the walls of those who did you no harm. And so your insolence has come up before the Most High. (11:40-43)

The catalogue of its evil concerns the corruption of social interaction and justice with terror, injustice, violence, falsehood, and pride. Taking ‘meek’ to mean the powerless and humiliated who are vulnerable to the wicked powerful (so Psalm 37), the eagle’s rule has ‘afflicted’ many. And such rule that damages social well-being is deemed to be offensive to the Most High. Accordingly, the powerful lion-like figure announces the Most High’s verdict: ‘you will surely disappear...so that the whole earth, freed from your violence, may be refreshed and relieved’ (11:45-46). The Most High’s word is efficacious and judgment on the eagle/Rome is accomplished (12:1-3). This audacious vision, spoken out of a

hybrid situation in which Roman power has been asserted in the defeat of Jerusalem, mimics Roman power yet attributes it in greater measure to God.

Its mimicry, though, is not quite the same.¹³¹ Ezra asks for an interpretation from the 'sovereign Lord', the Most High who appoints kings and kingdoms (12:7-9; 11:39-40). Evoking the past figure of Daniel, the Most High reveals the interpretation of the eagle as Rome. Daniel 2 and 7 speak of four kingdoms or empires, the last of which was Greece, but here the kingdom which is 'more terrifying than all' is identified with Rome. The twelve kings (12:14) are the emperors,¹³² and the three kings (12:23) the Flavian emperors from 69–96 CE, Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian. They bring the oppressive rule to its climax since they 'rule the earth and its inhabitants more oppressively than all' (12:23-24). Their end is brought about by the lion-like creature who is the Messiah from the line of David (12:32). This Messiah 'will denounce them for their ungodliness and for their wickedness and...their contemptuous dealings' and then 'he will destroy them' (12:32-33). That is, the Messiah performs not a military role but a legal one of indicting (or rebuking) and condemning. He is also a deliverer; he will 'deliver in mercy the remnant of my people' (12:34). The vision of deliverance from Roman rule serves in decolonizing minds that regard Rome's rule as normative.

Several features of the ambivalence of Roman power emerge in this presentation. Its worldwide power is emphasized, though not elaborated specifically in terms of political, military, economic, or ideological power. Also emphasized is its terrifying impact on subjugated people. Likewise, the oppressive nature of the rule is stated several times from the perspective of the subjugated. This oppression involves at least corrupt social interaction and injustice. It is afflicting and damaging power. And by the religious traditions of the defeated, it is offensive rule, offensive to the purposes of the Most High. Hence it is constructed as accountable and contained power that is, finally, brought to an end by the will of the Most High. The writing seeks the decolonizing of colonized minds through the fantasy of subjugated peoples subjected to countless indignities imagining the end of oppressive Roman imperial power through mimicking and out-menacing it with a vision of the triumph of the God 'Most High'.

131. Bhabha, *Location*, 86.

132. For discussion, see Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 363-65.

IX. Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter that the Roman imperial system as it was experienced in Judea/Israel exerted ideological domination with its metanarrative of divine choice to sanction its political, military, economic, social, and cultural religious control over Judea/Israel. It also exerted material domination through the same means to exact taxation, services, and labor from the province. Further, by these means it constantly exercised status domination to inflict indignities, humiliations, and terror on subject people.

A postcolonial perspective has identified the hybrid and ambivalent situation that results from the reciprocal interaction between imperializer and colonized. The assertion of Roman power dominated Judea/Israel even as it depended on Judea/Israel for authenticating its own metanarrative and on tribute and taxes levied from the province. Judeans/Israelites negotiated this exertion of power in diverse and simultaneous ways. The absence of violence toward Rome at times throughout the two hundred years under discussion does not signify either ready acquiescence or the absence of conflict and dissent. Factional conflict and horizontal violence attests not to local conflicts unrelated to Roman presence, as some have argued, but intimidating and terrifying power exerted by Rome and its local elite allies. A picture of ambivalence emerges comprising complex and wide-ranging, multi-layered and simultaneous negotiation by provincial elites and non-elites across the two-hundred-year period from Pompey's assertion of control in 63 BCE to the humiliating defeat of the revolt of 132–135 CE sparked by the construction of the colony of Aelia Capitolina and its temple dedicated to Jupiter Capitolinus on the site of Jerusalem.