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THE BAR KOKHBA REVOLT: THE ROMAN POINT OF VIEW*

By WERNER ECK

When in A.D. 130 Hadrian journeyed to Egypt through Judaea, the latter province seemed altogether peaceful and calm. The imperial coinage pronounced the *adventus* of the Emperor to be a cheerful and blessed event in much the same terms as in other parts of the Empire.¹ Hardly anyone in the company of the Emperor could have guessed that a few years later a revolt would break out in this very province — a revolt which would cast a shadow over Hadrian's later years. The slogans on the Bar Kokhba coins proclaimed the 'Freedom of Israel' and 'For the Freedom of Jerusalem'.² The war which followed the uprising was cruel and heavy in losses for both sides.

The scholarly debate over 'The Bar Kokhba revolt and its consequences' has intensified in recent decades. The papyrological finds in the Judaean Desert, the large-scale archaeological surveys resulting in the discovery of scores of 'hiding places' at different sites, and the evaluation of the coinage and the coin-hoards all extended our knowledge, but failed to create more unanimity regarding different aspects of the revolt — its causes, its course, and finally its result for the history of Judaism and for that of Rome.³ It can hardly come as a surprise to find that the point of view of the 'modern beholder' has played a significant role in the interpretation of events.⁴ Above all it has been maintained that the threat to Roman power constituted by the revolt has been grossly exaggerated. But this critique pays little heed to powerful evidence which comes from Rome itself and expresses its reaction to the revolt. Of course it is quite possible that Rome overestimated the threat posed by the revolt and that the military measures adopted outstripped what was strictly called for. However, even such a false assessment of the situation — if this is what it was — is not without historical significance. This discussion sets out to explore the Roman point of view, which does not imply, however, that the Jewish point of view is of lesser importance.⁵ both views are part of the historical reality.

In seeking to emphasize the Roman perspective the following discussion will raise such questions as: how did Rome itself regard the revolt? What was Hadrian's reaction? What military measures were taken? In what parts of Judaea and the neighbouring provinces were they applied? And finally, how and in what terms was the victory over the defeated Jews assessed and displayed by Rome? The discussion will first and foremost concentrate on the epigraphic evidence. Most of this evidence was published many years ago, but its full implications were not seen, and thus its relevance for the Bar Kokhba revolt went unnoticed. Only one of the inscriptions to be discussed is as yet

* This article is based on a lecture delivered at the Universities of Tel Aviv and Haifa and the Finnish Institute in Rome. I am grateful to Hannah Cotton for translating from the German and for critical comments on earlier versions.

The following works will be cited in abbreviated form:

A. R. Birley, *Hadrian. The Restless Emperor* (1997) = Birley, *Hadrian*;
B. Isaac, *The Near East under Roman Rule. Selected Papers* (1997) = Isaac, *Near East*;
P. Schäfer, *Der Bar Kokhba-Aufstand* (1981) = Schäfer, *Aufstand*;
E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ I* (ed. G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Black) (1973) = Schürer, *History*;
E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule* (1976) = Smallwood, *Jews*.

¹ BMC Emp. III, 493, nos 1655–61; cf. Birley, *Hadrian*, 231–4. The coins were not minted in late Hadrianic times as Smallwood, *Jews*, 463, thinks, but during this journey, as the use of the name Judaea

rather than Syria Palaestina proves (see below, at nn. 97 and 98).

² See L. Mildenberg, *The Coinage of the Bar Kokhba War* (1984), 29–31.

³ See the survey in B. Isaac and A. Oppenheimer, 'The revolt of Bar Kokhba: ideology and modern scholarship', *JJS* 36 (1985), 33–60 = Isaac, *Near East*, 220–56.

⁴ e.g. G. W. Bowersock, 'A Roman perspective on the Bar Kochba war', in W. S. Scott (ed.), *Approaches to Ancient Judaism* 2 (1978), 131–41; S. Applebaum, 'Points of view on the second Jewish revolt', *SCI* 7 (1983/84), 77–87; P. Schäfer, 'Hadrian's policy in Judaea and the Bar Kokhba revolt: a reassessment', in P. R. Davies and R. T. White (eds), *A Tribute to Géza Vermes. Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History* (1990), 281–303.

⁵ In this context see Leo Mildenberg's observation that the Bar Kokhba coins are the only rebel coins minted in the Roman Empire: 'Rebel coinage in the Roman Empire', in A. Kasher et al. (eds), *Greece and Rome in Eretz Israel. Collected Essays* (1990), 62–74.

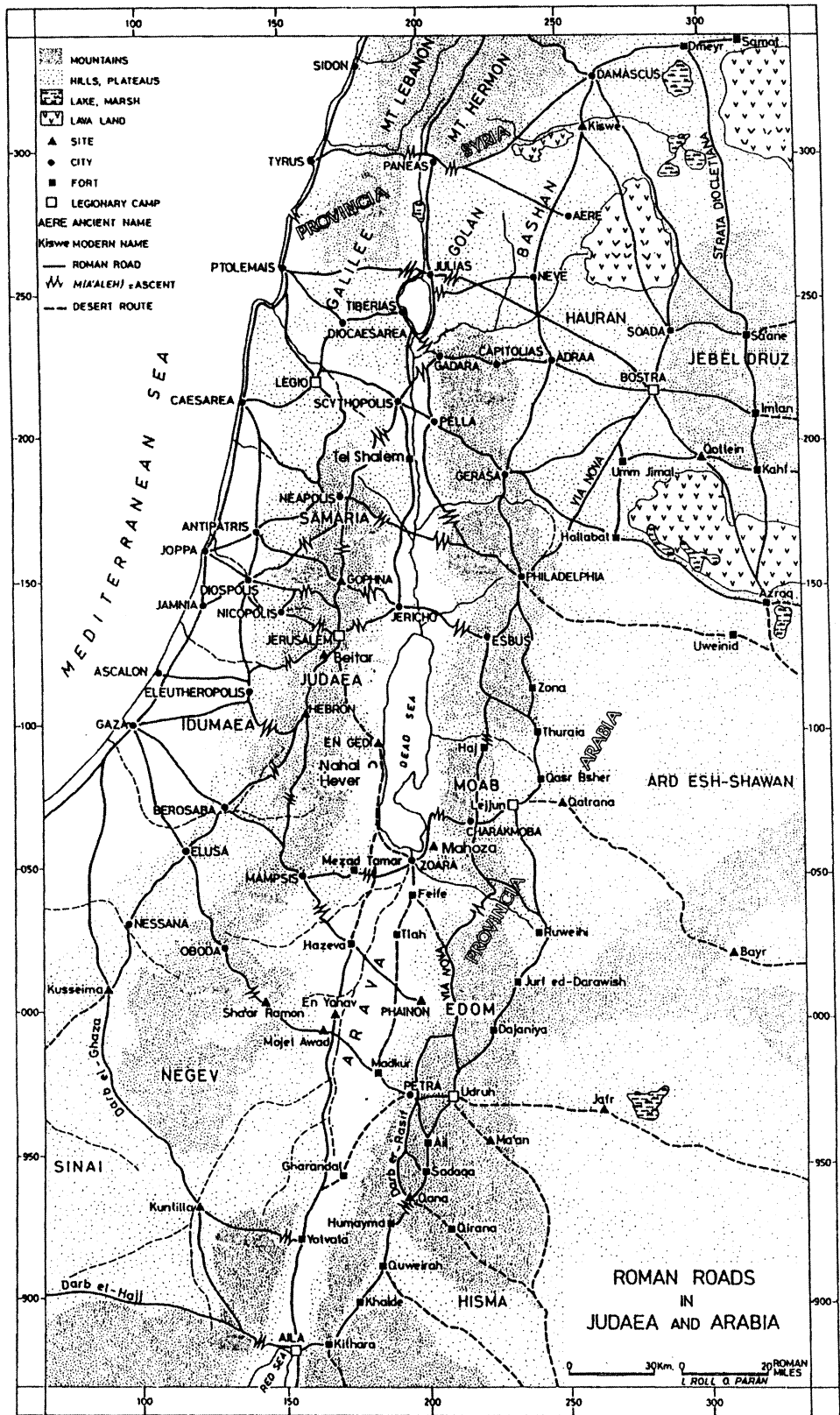


FIG. 1. MAP SHOWING JUDAEA AND NEIGHBOURING PROVINCES.

unpublished.⁶ This new text, or rather, the monument which exhibited it, is to my mind one of the most important to be discovered so far in Israel. All of these epigraphic sources are more or less contemporary with the events; they faithfully reflect the Roman perspective in these years. This is their great advantage over other sources.

I

Cassius Dio is the only Roman historian whose work dealt with the Bar Kokhba revolt and whose story is at least partly preserved in an epitome written by the Byzantine monk Xiphilinus in the eleventh century.⁷ The text dealing with the revolt covers just over one page in the Loeb Classical Texts edition.⁸ But the message is clear: the revolt constituted a great challenge to Roman military power and a mighty wound to Roman self-esteem and pride; a small province, or rather a small nation, dared revolt for the second (or even the third) time against mighty Rome — a revolt which lasted probably for almost four years:

At first the Romans took no account of them (= of the rebellious Jews). Soon, however, all Judaea had been stirred up, and the Jews everywhere . . . were gathering together, and giving evidence of great hostility to the Romans . . . many outside nations, too, were joining them through eagerness for gain, and the whole earth, one might almost say, was being stirred up over the matter. Then, indeed, Hadrian sent against them his best generals. Foremost among these (πρώτος) was Iulius Severus, who was dispatched from Britain, where he was governor, against the Jews.⁹

Dio goes on to report the conquest of fifty of the most important strongholds of the Jews, and the razing to the ground of 985 villages. 580,000 Jews were slain according to the historian, but also a great many Romans, so that Hadrian in a letter to the Senate failed to use the common opening phrase: 'If you and your children are in good health, it is well; I and the legions are in good health.'¹⁰ Unfortunately, it is not clear whether Hadrian wrote this letter during the war or at its conclusion.

I would like to draw attention to Dio's assertion that 'Hadrian sent against them his best generals. Foremost among these was Iulius Severus, who was dispatched from Britain, where he was governor, against the Jews'. The first part of this statement, so far as I can tell, has never been taken literally and/or seriously.¹¹ The concrete meaning of the plural 'best generals' has been uniformly overlooked — probably due to the fact that Dio goes on immediately to mention Sex. Iulius Severus, who, according to the historian, crushed the revolt and who, as we know from other sources, received the *ornamenta triumphalia* for having done so.¹² Both facts were taken as proof that Iulius Severus was the commander-in-chief, who won the decisive victory. Admittedly, at least in the abbreviated version of Xiphilinus, no other army-commander is mentioned by name. And yet it would be extremely odd, if despite Dio's assertion that Hadrian sent against the Jews 'his best generals', in reality only Iulius Severus was responsible for the final victory (see below).

To return to Iulius Severus. The transfer of Iulius Severus from Britain to Judaea is in itself a sign of an extreme emergency. Such transfers by the emperor were not made arbitrarily or capriciously. By this period a fixed hierarchy of senatorial posts had

⁶ See below, at n. 88.

⁷ See the interesting remarks of Y. Eliav on problems arising from the use of language in Dio's epitome: 'Hadrian's actions in the Jerusalem Temple Mount according to Cassius Dio and Xiphilini Marius', *JSQ* 4 (1997), 125 ff. The passage discussed by Eliav illustrates how later tensions between Jews and Christians could influence the choice of words. This is not the case with the passage discussed here.

⁸ Cassius Dio 69.13–14.3.

⁹ Cassius Dio 69.13.1–2.

¹⁰ Cassius Dio 69.14.3.

¹¹ cf. for example H. Bietenhard, 'Die Freiheitskriege der Juden unter den Kaisern Trajan und Hadrian und der messianische Tempelbau', *Judaica* 4 (1948), 81–108, esp. 84; Schürer, *History*, 547, 548; Isaac and Oppenheimer in Isaac, *Near East*, 248.

¹² *PIR*² J 576. See the following remarks.

evolved, corresponding to a large extent to the size of the army in a province.¹³ Britain was one of the two most important military commands in the Empire, with only Syria to rival it. Three legions and about fifty auxiliary units were under the command of the governor of Britain. Prior to the British command, the governor of Britain had almost always been in charge of another province with a large army. Thus Iulius Severus had been in charge of Moesia Inferior on the lower Danube, from about 128–131 or 132, before moving on to Britain.¹⁴ Judaea, on the other hand, had only two legions and about fifteen or seventeen auxiliary units.¹⁵ In other circumstances, transferring a senator like Severus from Britain to Judaea could be construed only as a demotion. It must have been a desperate situation that made it necessary to send Iulius Severus to Judaea from Britain; and, as to be expected, immediately after his victory he was put in charge of Syria,¹⁶ thereby regaining his previous position in the imperial hierarchy.

Severus' transfer from the British command was sudden and unexpected. This is proved by the way in which his successor was appointed. P. Mummius Sisenna, the *consul ordinarius* of 133, was sent to Britain directly after his consulate. Not only was it unusual for a *consul ordinarius* to be appointed governor of this province, but being appointed to this post immediately after the consulate, with no other governorships intervening, is almost without precedent: 'The fact that a *consul ordinarius* was chosen for Britain, and straight after being consul, in itself suggests an emergency.'¹⁷

It is commonly assumed that Tineius Rufus, who was the governor of Judaea when the revolt broke out,¹⁸ was replaced by Iulius Severus because he failed to put down the revolt. This assumption is not supported by anything in the, admittedly, meagre sources. He could have died 'on duty' or a natural death while still in the province. The foregoing claim for the 'irregularity' of Iulius Severus' sudden transfer from Britain to Judaea, and for the existence of a state of emergency, is not affected thereby. Under normal conditions the choice of a successor to Tineius Rufus would not have fallen on a senior consular such as the governor of Britain, but on a young *consularis*, two or three years after his consulate.

This state of emergency is reflected in yet another striking measure: the sudden transfer under Hadrian of a considerable number of soldiers from the *classis Misenensis* to the *legio X Fretensis* in Judaea.¹⁹ Since the possession of Roman citizenship was a prerequisite for enrolment in the legions (but not for service in other units of the Roman army, such as the two Italian fleets, the *classis Ravennas* and the *classis Misenensis*²⁰), this meant that these marines were given *civitas Romana* on joining the Tenth Legion. The Roman high command would not have authorized such a wholesale transfer of soldiers from the fleet to a citizen-unit, a legion, had the situation not seemed grave. Not even

¹³ W. Eck, 'Beförderungskriterien in der senatorischen Laufbahn, dargestellt an der Zeit von 69 bis 138 n.Chr.', *ANRW* II.1 (1974), 210–14 = idem, *Tra epigrafia, prosopografia e archeologia* (1996), 48–50; A. R. Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain* (1981), 27–32.

¹⁴ On his career most recently *PIR*² J 618; Birley, op. cit. (n. 13), 106–9; E. Dąbrowa, *The Governors of Roman Syria from Augustus to Septimius Severus* (1998), 94–6.

¹⁵ See for example M. M. Roxan, *Roman Military Diplomas 1985–1993* (1994), 173; W. Eck, *Köln Jb.* 26 (1993), 451ff.; J. Russel, *Bj* 195 (1995), 111–32.

¹⁶ This is in any case the common interpretation of the words [*legato pr. pr. [provi]nciae Suriae in CIL III.2850 = ILS 1056* (Burnum, Dalmatia). However, in *AE* 1904.9 (Aequum) — another honorary inscription from his home province of Dalmatia — Sex. Iulius Severus is described as a legate of the province of Syria Palaestina. Since this inscription mentions his *ornamenta triumphalia*, and the name of the province of Judaea has already been changed to Syria Palaestina, it must be inferred that *AE* 1904.9 was written after the conclusion of the war in Judaea, i.e.

in 136. The absence of the governorship of Syria — the highest office in Iulius Severus' career — from the inscription from Aequum casts doubt on the common interpretation of the inscription from Burnum: did Iulius Severus really go to Syria after receiving the *ornamenta triumphalia*? Could it be that *Suria* in *ILS* 1056 stands for *Syria Palaestina*? Whether or not he did does not, however, affect the argument presented above, namely that his transfer from Britannia to Judaea was an emergency measure.

¹⁷ Birley, *Hadrian*, 273.

¹⁸ Tineius Rufus was attested until recently only in the literary sources in connection with the outbreak of the revolt. However, a new fragmentary inscription from Caesarea suggests that he was already in office at the time of Hadrian's visit (i.e. 130). The text will be published by H. M. Cotton and W. Eck in the report on the new excavations at Caesarea by J. Porath.

¹⁹ *PSI* 1026 = *CIL* XVI App. no. 13. For the difficulty of dating the papyrus see Smallwood, *Jews*, 437 n. 36; Birley, *Hadrian*, 274.

²⁰ See for example D. Kienast, *Untersuchungen zu den Kriegsflootten der römischen Kaiserzeit* (1966), 9–28.

Hadrian, who lavishly bestowed the *civitas Romana* on provincials,²¹ would have gone so far under normal circumstances.

We witness this state of emergency in other sources as well. Conscription by the state, rather than the recruitment of volunteers, though still possible, had become increasingly uncommon during the Early and High Empire, and was certainly most unpopular — especially in Italy.²² But in the first years of the Bar Kokhba revolt several epigraphic sources attest just that.²³ Two young senators, Voconius Saxa and Caesernius Statanus, are attested as recruiting officers in Central Italy, along the Via Valeria Tiburtina, and in the Transpadana;²⁴ similarly the provincial procurator of the Alpes Maritimae was busy conscripting soldiers in his province.²⁵ Neither Italy nor the Alpine provinces were the normal areas for recruiting soldiers. But it looks as if suddenly huge gaps had to be filled not only in the legions serving in Judaea — which as we know from Cassius Dio lost many soldiers²⁶ — but also in those legions serving in other provinces, from where units of experienced soldiers were taken to strengthen the enfeebled forces in Judaea. Great losses in the army under Hadrian are mentioned also in Fronto's description of the Parthian war under Verus.²⁷ The *legio XXII Deiotariana* is attested for the last time in 119 in Egypt. There is no agreement among scholars about the date or causes of its disappearance from the list of legions.²⁸ It has been suggested, *inter alia*, that it was either annihilated or disbanded as a result of riots in Alexandria.²⁹ However, in view of Dio's and Fronto's statements, its annihilation in Judaea in the first stages of the Bar Kokhba revolt is extremely likely.³⁰ But even if this is not accepted, there is no doubt about Rome's overwhelming losses in this war. Hadrian's letter to the Senate which omits the conventional formula about the well-being of the troops³¹ is proof enough: even Hadrian who cared less than the majority of his predecessors for military glory would be reluctant to admit in public that his soldiers in Judaea were not victorious, but in fact in great difficulties.

Great losses were also incurred by the auxiliary forces in Judaea. We do not know which auxiliary units were stationed in the province at the beginning of the revolt. We know only the names of *alae* and *cohortes* present there between 137 and 139.³² Many of those are attested under Trajan as still belonging to the Syrian army.³³ In theory they could have already been part of the army in Judaea in 132 when the revolt broke out. Yet this is unlikely to be the case for all of them. The number of auxiliary units in Judaea was increased at the latest at the beginning of Hadrian's reign when a second legion was stationed there (since it is hard to imagine that a legion was not accompanied by auxiliary units³⁴). It was once believed that this second legion was the *legio VI Ferrata*, attested in

²¹ It would be sufficient to point out the numerous Aelii for example in the provinces of Asia Minor.

²² See P. A. Brunt, 'Conscription and volunteering in the Roman imperial army', *SCI* 1 (1974), 90–115 = *idem*, *Roman Imperial Themes* (1990), 188–214.

²³ cf. Birley, *Hadrian*, 274.

²⁴ *IGR* III.763 = *ILS* 8828; *AE* 1986.686; *CIL* VIII.7063 = *ILS* 1068. Cf. W. Eck, *Die staatliche Organisation Italiens in der Hohen Kaiserzeit* (1979), 67. *AE* 1955.238 (= 1969/70.633) from Nicopolis in Egypt also refers to these recruiting measures; see G. Forni, *ANRW* II.1 (1974), 383f. and Brunt, *op. cit.* (n. 22, 1990), 196f.

²⁵ *ILS* 1341; Birley, *Hadrian*, 274.

²⁶ Cassius Dio 69.14.3.

²⁷ Fronto, *De bello Parthico*, p. 221 (van den Hout, 1988): 'avo vestro obtinente quantum militum a Iudaeis, quantum ab Britannis caesum.'

²⁸ Sh. Applebaum, *Prolegomena to the Study of the Second Jewish Revolt (A.D. 132–135)*, *BAR Suppl. Ser.* 7 (1976), 36–7; M. Mor, 'Two legions — the same fate? (the disappearance of the Legions IX Hispana and XXII Deiotariana)', *ZPE* 62 (1986), 267–78; L. J. F. Keppie, 'The history and disappear-

ance of the Legion XXII Deiotariana', in A. Kasher *et al.* (eds), *Greece and Rome in Eretz Israel: Collected Essays* (1989), 54–61; Birley, *Hadrian*, 268.

²⁹ Mor, *op. cit.* (n. 28), 278, with earlier bibliography; for similar speculations see also K. Strobel, *ZPE* 71 (1988), 268f. There is no other example for disbanding a legion in this form in the history of the Roman legions. To make it credible, one must find some evidence in our sources.

³⁰ See recently Birley, *Hadrian*, 268.

³¹ Cassius Dio 69.14.3, cited above at n. 10.

³² *CIL* XVI.86; Russel, *Bj* 185 (1985), 67–133.

³³ *CIL* XVI.35; Roxan, *op. cit.* (n. 15), I, 4, 5; cf. Russel, *Bj* 185 (1995), 111–32.

³⁴ M. Mor ('The Roman army in Eretz-Israel in the years A.D. 70–132', in P. Freeman and D. Kennedy (eds), *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East II*, *BAR Int. Ser.* 297 (1986), 575) dismisses it as unnecessary. However, Tacitus' remark about the eight Batavian cohorts, 'quartae decumae legionis auxilia, tum discordia temporum a legione digressae' (*Hist.* 1.59), should be taken to imply that a certain number of auxiliary units was attached to each legion.

late Hadrianic times as part of the garrison of Syria/Palaestina.³⁵ Were this true, it would account for the presence of auxiliary units from Syria in the province between 137 and 139. But currently it is believed that the second legion in Judaea in early Hadrianic times was either the *legio II Traiana* or the *XXII Deiotariana*.³⁶ Neither one of these two candidates for the second legion in Judaea would have been accompanied by auxiliaries drawn from the Syrian army, but by other *alae* and *cohortes* whose names escape us. Thus if between 137 and 139 Syrian *alae* and *cohortes* are attested in Syria/Palaestina, they must have replaced others which were annihilated in the first stages of the revolt. That nothing is known of these units is hardly surprising in view of the briefness of their sojourn in Judaea.³⁷

It is impossible to know the precise number of legions employed to put down the revolt.³⁸ Even the 'minimalists' concede that, in addition to the two legions of the Judaeian garrison, at least seven more legions in full force or represented by *vexillationes* took part in the war. There must have been more since Publicius Marcellus, the governor of Syria (see below), brought with him, to put down the revolt in the neighbouring province(s), not only the *legio III Gallica* but also units drawn from the other Syrian legions.³⁹ Furthermore, not only the *legio X Gemina* but also the other Pannonian legions must have sent *vexillationes* to Judaea.⁴⁰ This would bring the number of legions in full force or represented by *vexillationes* in the war against Bar Kokhba to twelve or even thirteen, though of course we have no way of knowing if they were all present at the same time. Given the province's size, this was a huge military force.

In an attempt to reduce significantly the number of legions presumably participating in putting down the revolt, it has been argued that given the limited territorial extent of the revolt,⁴¹ a large army was not needed.⁴² This argument falls short of being convincing: the forces mobilized by Hadrian were calculated to meet the enemy's strength and its military potential, rather than determined by the size of its territory. Furthermore, it is simply not true that the uprising, i.e. the hostile actions of the rebels, was restricted to Judaea proper, that is to say to a small part of the province; it is very likely to have spread much further than has so far been assumed.⁴³ The erection of an arch for Hadrian at the end of the revolt near Tel Shalem, twelve kilometres south of Scythopolis,⁴⁴ as well as the involvement of the governors of Arabia and Syria (see below), makes it very likely that the revolt spread beyond the limits of Judaea proper. At any rate 'Judaea' in Cassius Dio 69.13.1 refers to the whole province and not to that part designated Judaea in an earlier division of the land (i.e. Judaea proper).

To conclude this part; no further proof is needed to show that the Roman high command realized that it was facing a situation fraught with danger, a situation which

³⁵ See brief summary in H. M. Cotton, 'The Legio Sexta Ferrata between 106 and 136', in the proceedings of the *Deuxième Congrès de Lyon sur l'armée romaine. Les légions de Rome sous le Haut-Empire, Lyon, 17-19 septembre 1998* (forthcoming).

³⁶ Summary in Isaac and Oppenheimer in Isaac, *Near East*, 247f.; Keppie, op. cit. (n. 28), 59ff.; Cotton, op. cit. (n. 35).

³⁷ For detailed discussion see Russel, *Bj* 195 (1995), 88-100.

³⁸ On the legionary strength in Hadrian's *bellum Iudaicum* see most recently M. Mor, 'The Roman legions and the Bar-Kokhba revolt (132-135 A.D.)', in H. Vetter and M. Kandler (eds), *Akten des 14. Internationalen Limeskongresses 1986 in Carnuntum 1* (1990), 163-75.

³⁹ Birley, *Hadrian*, 268.

⁴⁰ This is at any rate the implication of the restoration in *CIL* VI.3505: 'missus a divo Hadriano in expeditione Iudaica ad vexillationes ducendas . . .'; the restored plural is generally accepted. A coin of Bar Kokhba was found in Brigetio, see K. Biro-Sey, 'Coins from identified sites of Brigetio and the question of local currency', *Regeszetű Fűzetek* II.18

(1977), 47, no. 226 (I am grateful to B. Lörincz for the information). This implies that the *legio II Adiutrix* is likely to have taken part in the war.

⁴¹ This argument is buttressed by the evidence of the coins: hardly any Bar Kokhba coins were found north of Jerusalem — above all not in Galilee. This argument in itself is clearly fallacious since it makes no distinction between territories directly held and occupied for a long time by the rebels, where the rebels' coins were used (and likely to be lost) and those territories, inside and outside the province of Judaea, over which Bar Kokhba never exercised direct control, but where battles did, or could, take place between Jews and Romans, e.g. in parts of Arabia or at Tel Shalem near Scythopolis; see text at nn. 44; 88-9. For the coins see D. Barag, 'A note on the geographical distribution of Bar-Kokhba coins', *Isr. Num. Jour.* 4 (1980), 30-3.

⁴² Mor, op. cit. (n. 38), 173.

⁴³ For an outline of opinions on the subject see Isaac and Oppenheimer in Isaac, *Near East*, 243f.; further Schäfer, op. cit. (n. 4), 296f.

⁴⁴ See below, at n. 88.

called for tapping all possible resources and the new deployment of its military forces; it justified taking extraordinary measures to prevent the crisis from getting out of hand. The atmosphere in Rome recalls that which followed the outbreak of the Pannonian revolt in A.D. 6 and again the Roman disaster in the *saltus Teutoburgiensis* against the Germans in A.D. 9; Hadrian could himself recall the revolt in the years 115–17, which he had personally experienced in Syria.

II

In view of the initial success of the rebels, their control of Judaea proper, and the threat to Roman domination in the rest of the province, it should not come as a surprise that Hadrian decided to introduce some changes into the high command.⁴⁵ More military experience was needed at the top. Cassius Dio informs us that Hadrian sent his best generals against the Jews, that is to say, in addition to Iulius Severus, others were entrusted with the task.⁴⁶ Dio's phrasing seems to imply that these generals were not subordinate to Iulius Severus; they were not legionary legates like Q. Lollius Urbicus, who probably commanded *vexillationes* of the Pannonian legions sent to Judaea.⁴⁷ It is far more likely that these generals were on a par with Iulius Severus, i.e. there were other supreme generals fighting in the *bellum Iudaicum*. This information is contained in inscriptions known for many decades, even centuries, but so far not taken into account, or whose implication was not properly understood. The bestowal of the *ornamenta triumphalia* on a senator is common to all these inscriptions.

The *ornamenta triumphalia* were a substitute for the triumph of Republican times — the ultimate wish of every provincial governor and the greatest reward for commanding a field army. From the early years of Augustus' reign it was no longer possible for anyone except for the Princeps to be hailed as *imperator* and be voted a triumph. The emperor's legates who commanded armies in the provinces under the emperor's auspices were compensated with the lesser *ornamenta triumphalia*. However, these in turn were eagerly sought after. A great number of senators were distinguished in this way in the period from Augustus to the last years of Hadrian's reign (not of Antoninus Pius').⁴⁸ The bestowal of the *ornamenta triumphalia* became less common from Domitian onwards. Under the last Flavian emperor only Iulius Agricola is known to have received this distinction. Trajan decorated some of his generals after the two Dacian Wars with the *ornamenta*, but not after the Parthian War of 114–17, which ended in what amounted to a disaster, thus making it inappropriate to decorate victorious generals with the highest military award. The deified Trajan none the less got a triumph after his death — for ideological reasons.

There was a great deal of fighting in Britain, Mauretania, on the lower Danube, and in Dacia in the early years of Hadrian's reign.⁴⁹ But no one — so far as we know — received the *ornamenta*. This changed drastically at the end of the Bar Kokhba revolt.

We have two inscriptions from two cities in the Roman province of Dalmatia honouring Sex. Iulius Severus. Both texts mention the *ornamenta triumphalia* given to him by the Senate at Hadrian's initiative. One of the inscriptions states the reason for bestowing the award: 'ob res in [Iu]dea prospere gestas'.⁵⁰ This corresponds to what we know from Cassius Dio about his part in putting down the revolt. No one but Iulius Severus is mentioned in the sources as directly responsible for the final victory. The

⁴⁵ cf. above at nn. 17–19.

⁴⁶ Cassius Dio 69.13.2f.

⁴⁷ CIL VIII.6706 = ILS 1065, if taken together with CIL VI.3505.

⁴⁸ For an almost complete list of senators receiving the *ornamenta triumphalia* see A. E. Gordon, 'Quintus Veranius consul A.D. 49. A study upon his recently

identified sepulchral inscription', *University of California Publications in Class. Arch.* 2, 5 (1952), 231ff.; App. II, 305ff. on 'Triumphal honors and statues'; V. Maxfield, *The Military Decorations of the Roman Army* (1981), 101ff.

⁴⁹ For all that cf. Birley, *Hadrian*, 75, 79, 80, 90, 101.

⁵⁰ ILS 1056 (Burnum); AE 1904.9 (Aequum).

reality was different, as Cassius Dio's statement about 'Hadrian's best generals' has already suggested.⁵¹ Who were these other generals on a par with Sex. Iulius Severus?

Q. Tineius Rufus could not be one of 'the best generals' mentioned by Dio. True, he was governor in Judaea when the rebellion broke out in 132, and, as it happens, he is the only one to be mentioned in the Jewish sources, where, under the name of Turranius Rufus, he is 'presented as the arch-enemy of the Jews at this time'.⁵² But there is no question of his being sent to crush the revolt; he was already there.

There was no other independent general in the province itself at the time on a par with Iulius Severus. The legates of the *legio X Fretensis* and the *legio VI Ferrata* were his subordinates. Detachments of other legions, *vexillationes*, sent as reinforcements to Judaea and commanded by senatorial legates, would also be under the supreme command of the provincial governor. However, the case of governors of other provinces sent to help with crushing the revolt would be different. It is to the latter that we must now turn.

Two inscriptions found in Ancyra in Galatia, and known at least since the nineteenth century, attest a senatorial legate of the *legio IV Scythica* in Syria, acting at the same time as the governor of Syria. The reason given in the inscriptions for this abnormal situation is that Publicius Marcellus, the governor of Syria, had left his province because of the Jewish rebellion⁵³ — a fact noticed for example in the new Schürer.⁵⁴ From these epigraphic texts no more can be inferred than that Publicius Marcellus and part of the Syrian army participated in the war in Judaea. However, the editors of the new Schürer missed altogether⁵⁵ the relevance of yet another inscription found on a huge statue base in Aquileia (northern Italy), which was published in 1934.⁵⁶ It informs the reader that C. Quinctius Certus Publicius Marcellus was not only *consul*, *augur* and *legatus divi Hadriani provinciae Syriae et Germaniae superioris* but also that he received triumphal rewards, *ornamenta triumphalia*. The text does not give any hint as to how he earned the *ornamenta*. No wonder, therefore, that scholars occupied exclusively with the Bar Kokhba revolt, missed its relevance for their subject. On the face of it Marcellus could have received the *ornamenta* not as consular governor of Syria,⁵⁷ but rather in his capacity as governor of Germania Superior between 121 and 129.⁵⁸ However, nothing is known about military tensions or engagements at this time on the Rhine frontier. But, as we have seen, the two inscriptions from Ancyra tell us that Marcellus left Syria to fight against the Jews across the border.⁵⁹ It is patently clear that not only did he participate in the war there, but that he contributed considerably to its successful outcome; this was the reason for his getting the *ornamenta triumphalia* — a reward for participation in the final victory over Rome's enemies — when the war was concluded.⁶⁰ Furthermore, Marcellus' contribution to the final victory was decisive, or he would have had to be content with the more modest *dona militaria*, normal military rewards, which included *coronae*, *vexilla*, and *hastae*. It was his provincial governorship of Syria which, by rendering his command independent of that of Iulius Severus, made it possible for him to win the *ornamenta triumphalia*. All that makes it highly likely that Marcellus is to be counted among the 'best generals' sent by Hadrian against the Jews.

This and more. If the rebellion, as Cassius Dio reports, swept beyond the borders of the province so that 'ultimately the whole world, as it were, was in turmoil',⁶¹ Marcellus may have fought the rebels not only in Judaea, but also in his own province,

⁵¹ Cassius Dio 69.13.2.

⁵² Schürer, *History*, 549.

⁵³ *IGR* III 174, 175 (= E. Bosch, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Ankara im Altertum* (1967), nos 156–7); Publicius Marcellus was not ex-governor of Syria as Mor, op. cit. (n. 38), 166, makes him. He took part in the fighting as governor of Syria.

⁵⁴ Schürer, *History*, 547–9.

⁵⁵ And so did for example Smallwood, *Jews*, 457, and Appelbaum, op. cit. (n. 28), 45.

⁵⁶ G. Brusin, *Gli scavi di Aquileia (1929–1932)* (1934), 76 = AE 1934.231 = G. Alföldy, *Römische Statuen in Venetia et Histria* (1984), 99f. = J. B. Brusin, *Inscriptiones Aquileiae* (1991), I, 236, no. 499.

⁵⁷ So for example Gordon, op. cit. (n. 48), 324 (who adds: 'posthumously?' — for which there is no reason at all).

⁵⁸ W. Eck, *Die Statthalter der germanischen Provinzen vom 1.–3. Jh.* (1985), 52.

⁵⁹ The formulation in the inscription: 'he left Syria because of the Jewish *kinesis*', does not mean that Publicius Marcellus entered the province of Judaea; he could have taken part in the fighting in Arabia.

⁶⁰ For the first time the correct context was given in three works published in 1997 and 1998, all of which are prosopographically orientated: Birley, *Hadrian*, 275; Dąbrowa, op. cit. (n. 14), 93; *PIR*² P 1042.

⁶¹ Cassius Dio 69.13.2; Schürer, *History*, 547.

or in Arabia, where only one legion was stationed; for the province of Arabia to the east of Judaea was without any doubt involved in the revolt.

The discovery of the Babatha archive has already alerted scholars to the possibility that Arabia was in some way affected by the Bar Kokhba revolt. This is inferred from Babatha's departure from Arabia and arrival in Judaea.⁶² The presence of another archive from Mahoza in the Cave of Letters in Nahal Hever, that of Salome Komaïse, strengthens this impression.⁶³ Further it is known that (at least part of) the single legion stationed in Arabia, the *legio III Cyrenaica*, was actively engaged in the fighting.⁶⁴ One of the legion's *tribuni militum*, Popillius Carus Peto, was honoured by Hadrian *donis militaribus . . . ob Iudaicam expeditionem*,⁶⁵ and a certain C. Nummius Constans, who was *centurio* of the legion, received from Hadrian (presumably when serving in this rank) a *corona aurea*, *torques*, *armillae*, and *phalerae ob bellum Iudeicum*.⁶⁶ These facts alone would incline us to believe that the governor of Arabia took part in the fighting and the suppression of the revolt.⁶⁷

Who was the governor? T. Haterius Nepos, as we know from the Babatha archive, was governor of Arabia close to the outbreak of the Bar Kokhba revolt: *P. Yadin* 23 and *P. Yadin* 26 attest his presence in Arabia on 17 November 130 and on 9 July 131 respectively. It is unknown, though, how long he stayed in the province. However, his suffect consulship in spring 134 supplies the clue.⁶⁸ In normal circumstances a governor of a praetorian province like Arabia was designated for the consulate while still serving in the province; very often he became *consul in absentia*, i.e. he held the *fascies* in the province,⁶⁹ as we see in the case of C. Claudius Severus, the governor of Arabia from 106 to 115, who was made *consul suffectus* in 112.⁷⁰ For this reason alone Haterius Nepos is likely to have stayed in Arabia at least till spring 134; but he probably stayed even longer. The *legio III Cyrenaica*, as we have just seen, was engaged in the war, and a governor in a war zone is not likely to be replaced, unless known to be a failure — which Haterius Nepos was not, as we shall see. These considerations, while making it very likely that Haterius Nepos was personally involved in the fighting in the neighbouring province, are not conclusive. We can go further.

Even before the discovery of the Babatha archive in the 1960s acquainted us with Haterius Nepos' governorship in Arabia in 130 and 131,⁷¹ we had known something about the *cursus honorum* of this senator — admittedly not very much; we did not know that he was praetorian governor of Arabia in these years.⁷² We knew of two priesthoods (*frater Arvalis* and *pontifex*), the consulate, and the consular governorship of Pannonia Superior in A.D. 138.⁷³ These posts were partly attested in a fragmentary inscription from Fulginiae, his home-town.⁷⁴ The very last word of this fragmentary text is crucial

⁶² cf. Smallwood, *Jews*, 442; G. W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (1983), 108; Mor, op. cit. (n. 38), 168; Birley, *Hadrian*, 272.

⁶³ H. M. Cotton in H. M. Cotton and A. Yardeni, *Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek Documentary Texts from Nahal Hever and Other Sites. Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XXVII* (1997), 166ff.

⁶⁴ Birley, *Hadrian*, 280.

⁶⁵ *CIL* XIV.3610 = *ILS* 1071.

⁶⁶ *CIL* XI.3733 = *ILS* 2083. It is possible that he received the decorations as *primuspilus* of the *legio II Traiana*; cf. Mor, op. cit. (n. 38), 168.

⁶⁷ M. Sartre, *Trois études sur l'Arabie romaine et byzantine* (1982), 54 and 82, suggested that Haterius Nepos' name was erased in three inscriptions from Gerasa (Kraehling, *Gerasa* (1938), nos 58 and 143f.). Bowersock, op. cit. (n. 62), 108 and Mor, op. cit. (n. 38), 168f. concur. Sartre's hypothesis is untenable; see Addendum, p. 89.

⁶⁸ Attested on 2 April, see A. Degraffi, *I fasti consolari dell'impero Romano* (1952), 39.

⁶⁹ See R. Syme, 'Consulates in absence', *JRS* 48 (1958), 1–9, reprinted in his *Roman Papers* I (1979), 378–92. See Addendum, p. 89.

⁷⁰ H. Halfmann, *Die Senatoren aus dem östlichen Teil des Imperium Romanum bis zum Ende des 2. Jh. n. Chr.* (1979), 135f.

⁷¹ H. J. Polotsky, *IEJ* 12 (1962), 259; idem, *JVEG* 17 (1963), 240f. See now, N. Lewis, *The Documents from the Bar-Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters. Greek Papyri* (1989).

⁷² To this very day there is no evidence for Haterius Nepos' governorship of Arabia outside the papyri. For his alleged appearance on inscriptions from Gerasa, see above, n. 67. But see now Addendum, p. 89.

⁷³ *PIR*² H 30; J. Scheid, *Le collège des frères Arvales* (1990), 54; A. Dobó, *Die Verwaltung der römischen Provinz Pannonien von Augustus bis Diocletianus* (1968), 107f.; J. Fitz, *Die Verwaltung Pannoniens in der Römerzeit* (1993) II, 478f.

⁷⁴ *CIL* XI.5212 = *ILS* 1058. The fragment probably belonged to the base of an equestrian statue. This would be an appropriate acknowledgement by his fellow-citizens of a senator's achievements in the Jewish war, see below.

for the present argument. It reads *triumphalib*., which is rightly restored as *triumphalib[us ornamentis honoratus]*: ‘decorated with the *ornamenta triumphalia*’. Those who discussed the inscription assumed that Haterius Nepos was honoured either by Hadrian or by Antoninus Pius for military victories won on the Danubian frontier, while governor of Pannonia.⁷⁵ This seemed all the more likely due to the mistaken belief that this frontier saw some fighting when Aelius Caesar, Hadrian’s adopted son, was sent to Pannonia in 136 to prove his *virtus imperatoria*.⁷⁶ However, aside from the *triumphalib[us ornamentis honoratus]* of the inscription in honour of Haterius Nepos there is not a shred of evidence that either Aelius Caesar or Haterius Nepos were involved in any kind of fighting, or that there was any fighting in Pannonia at the time for that matter. The whole structure collapses once it is realized that, in the absence of date and place in *CIL* XI.5212 = *ILS* 1058, there is no reason to associate the *ornamenta* with fighting in Pannonia. To this one may add the observation that Hadrian was extremely parsimonious in bestowing these distinctions throughout his reign. There was plenty of fighting especially in the early years of Hadrian’s reign on several fronts: in Britain, Mauretania, the middle Danube, and Dacia — all of which were successfully concluded. And yet Hadrian did not bestow the *ornamenta triumphalia* on any of his successful legates — not even on Pompeius Falco or Platorius Nepos, both governors in Britain in trying years, and his personal friends.⁷⁷ The only exception to this ‘parsimonious’ use of the *ornamenta* was the conclusion of the Bar Kokhba revolt. Then and only then did Hadrian reward both Iulius Severus and Publicius Marcellus with the *ornamenta triumphalia*.

Before the Bar Kokhba revolt Hadrian exercised restraint not only in the matter of bestowing the *ornamenta triumphalia* on his generals; he himself, unlike many of his predecessors, did not advertise his *virtus imperatoria* by accepting the title *imperator* from his victorious soldiers. Although there were several opportunities to do so in the course of his reign, Hadrian did not allow himself to be acclaimed *imperator*. The exception was the conclusion of the Bar Kokhba revolt: only then did his titulature start displaying between the *tribunicia potestas* and *cos. III* the phrase *imperator iterum*.

The concurrence of *imperator II* in Hadrian’s titulature and *ornamenta triumphalia* for Iulius Severus and Publicius Marcellus is not accidental, as has been generally assumed. It can be demonstrated — with a few exceptions under Tiberius and perhaps also under Claudius and Nero — that the assumption of the imperial acclamation by an emperor was a precondition, the political-ideological setting, which made it possible, so to speak, to bestow the *ornamenta triumphalia* on the victorious senatorial generals.⁷⁸ It is precisely because Hadrian accepted *imperator II* after the Bar Kokhba revolt, thereby making it clear that this victory was worthy of a triumph, that he could honour his generals in this war with *ornamenta triumphalia*. The Emperor was legally and politically the victor, and his generals could participate in his glory.

The foregoing arguments should make it clear that Haterius Nepos could not have received *ornamenta triumphalia* during his governorship of Pannonia in 138, anymore than he could have received them from Antoninus Pius in the years between 138 and 140, as some have assumed.⁷⁹ Antoninus Pius, like his adoptive father, accepted an imperial acclamation only once: he added *imperator II* to his titulature in 142, for a victory in that year in Britain, but not on the middle Danube.⁸⁰ He thus would not (and could not) have given the *ornamenta triumphalia* to Haterius Nepos while the latter was governor of Pannonia Superior.

If these considerations are accepted, then the conclusion that Haterius Nepos could have been distinguished in this way only by Hadrian, and only after the conclusion of the Bar Kokhba revolt, is inescapable. The objection could be raised that only a senator

⁷⁵ See n. 73; further Gordon, op. cit. (n. 48), 324; Dobó, op. cit. (n. 73), 107f.; A. Mócsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia* (1974), 102f.; Fitz, op. cit. (n. 73), 479.

⁷⁶ So for example Dobó, op. cit. (n. 73), 52; Fitz, op. cit. (n. 73), 477, 479. See also Addendum, p. 89.

⁷⁷ For both men see Birley, op. cit. (n. 13), 95ff., 100ff.; *PIR*² P 449, 602.

⁷⁸ See W. Eck, ‘Kaiserliche Imperatorenakklamation und *ornamenta triumphalia*’, *ZPE* 124 (1998), 223ff.

⁷⁹ See n. 75, above.

⁸⁰ D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle. Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie* (1996²), 135.

of consular rank 'was qualified' to receive the *ornamenta triumphalia*, whereas Haterius Nepos as the governor of the praetorian province of Arabia lacked this 'qualification'.⁸¹ This objection can easily be met: it is true, of course, that Haterius Nepos started his tenure of Arabia as a praetorian; however, as pointed out above (nn. 68–70), he may well have held the *fascēs* as *consul suffectus* after April 134 in his province. At the end of the war, when Hadrian gave the *ornamenta triumphalia* to his victorious generals, Haterius Nepos was in possession of consular rank for a while.

Haterius Nepos' direct involvement in the revolt goes a long way to explain the flight of the Jews from Arabia. As late as 19 August 132 (*P. Yadin* 27) the Jewish people we know from the Babatha and Salome Komaiše archives were living peacefully in Maḥoza on the southern shore of the Dead Sea in the province of Arabia. However, since their documents were discovered in the cave where the Bar Kokhba documents were found,⁸² it is evident that they too were caught up in the war. Different reasons can be offered for their having fled Arabia. They may have shared Bar Kokhba's political and religious ideals; consequently they left Arabia to join the rebels in Judaea.⁸³ However, knowing as we do now that the governor and the army of Arabia were actively involved in the Bar Kokhba revolt, it is possible that at least part of the fighting took place in Arabia itself. Part of the Jewish population there may have sympathized with Bar Kokhba and may have risen against the Roman authorities in Arabia. This will explain Cassius Dio's remark that 'the Jews everywhere . . . were gathering together, and giving evidence of great hostility to the Romans'. The result would have been that other Jewish families, who did not take sides, became suspect to the Roman authorities. Thus the Jews whose documents were found in Nahal Ḥever were either those rebels who had left after the revolt in Arabia was crushed, or even innocent refugees afraid of reprisals.

From the Roman point of view, which is the subject of the present discussion, the involvement of the governors of Syria and Arabia has unforeseen and far-reaching implications. Until now it was assumed that the war against Bar Kokhba was restricted to Judaea proper, a small part of the province of Judaea, and that it was conducted first by Tineius Rufus and later by Iulius Severus.⁸⁴ With the admission of Publicius Marcellus, the governor of Syria, and, even more importantly, Haterius Nepos, the governor of Arabia, the revolt acquires far greater dimensions; it had obviously swept along the whole region around Judaea, waking up in Hadrian's mind memories of the 115–17 uprising. The Romans, alarmed by the form and shape the revolt had taken, had to invest much more energy and manpower than had hitherto been realized; the armies of provinces neighbouring to Judaea were mobilized in an attempt to encircle, besiege, and crush the revolt in Judaea. True, nothing is known about the movements of the prefect of Egypt at the time, but his involvement cannot be ruled out.⁸⁵ The final victory, when it did come, was not, as we shall soon see, to be taken for granted.

Hadrian now abandoned his former attitude towards the display of military glory. He accepted an acclamation as *imperator* by the Roman troops and inserted *imperator II* into his titulature. As an acclaimed *imperator* he could now bestow the *ornamenta triumphalia* on three of his victorious generals, not only on Sex. Iulius Severus.⁸⁶ These

⁸¹ There were a few exceptions during Claudius' British wars in 43 and in connection with the Pisonian conspiracy under Nero in 65, when praetorians too received the *ornamenta triumphalia*; see Maxfield, *op. cit.* (n. 48), 106f.; W. Eck, 'Nero's Freigelassener Epaphroditus und die Aufdeckung der pisonischen Verschwörung', *Historia* 25 (1976), 381ff.

⁸² See introduction in *DJD XXVII*, *op. cit.* (n. 63), 1–4.

⁸³ Two of these may well have been Alma son of Judah and Tahana son of Shim'on attested in the as-yet unpublished *P. Yadin* 44 from November 134 to have come 'from the Luḥit in Maḥoz 'Aglatain, both residing in Ein Gedi'. Both are found subleasing land from Bar Kokhba, probably part of the imperial estate in Ein Gedi, now taken over by the rebels; see Y. Yadin, 'Expedition D', *IEJ* 11 (1961), 40–50, and

H. M. Cotton, 'Ein Gedi between the two revolts', in R. Katzoff (ed.), *Proceedings of the Judaeian Documents Workshop held in Bar Ilan University, 3–5 June 1998* (forthcoming).

⁸⁴ See Schürer, *History*, 547–9; Schäfer, *Aufstand*, 103ff.; Isaac and Oppenheimer in Isaac, *Near East*, 243ff.

⁸⁵ One could fit in here the *legio XXII Deiotariana*, see above, at n. 28.

⁸⁶ For the so-called *dona militaria*, which Hadrian conferred after the Bar Kokhba revolt — far more than after the war in Britain — see G. Stehlik, *Die epigraphischen Zeugnisse für die Kriege Roms von Augustus (27 v.) bis Commodus (192 n.)* (unpub. diss., Vienna, 1969), no. 134ff.; cf. also V. Rosenberger, *Bella et expeditiones. Die antike Terminologie der Kriege Roms* (1992), 97–9; Birley, *Hadrian*, 275.

were the first *ornamenta* given to Roman generals since Trajan's Dacian wars, when three of Trajan's generals received the *ornamenta*; on no other occasion, so far as we know, were these *ornamenta* bestowed under Trajan.⁸⁷ Whereas no conclusions can be drawn from the all too frequent acceptance of the title *imperator* by emperors like Claudius or Domitian who had taken great credit for every single victory, be it important or not, the acceptance of the imperial acclamation by Hadrian and the bestowal of *ornamenta* on three of his generals is pregnant with significance. It unequivocally demonstrates that from the Roman perspective the challenge to Roman power constituted by the second Jewish Revolt was much greater than has hitherto been assumed.

III

A new monument whose remains were found in Tel Shalem, about 12 kilometres to the south of Scythopolis, corroborates and intensifies the picture drawn so far.⁸⁸ Numerous marble fragments, all belonging to the same inscription, were found here. The unique nature of the inscription strikes one immediately: first, the use of the Latin language in a region in which Greek was the dominant language in the second century — at least in the public sphere (almost all inscriptions in Scythopolis are written in Greek); secondly, the monumentality of the inscription. The reconstruction shows that the inscription was originally about 10–11 m wide. Even more striking is the size of the letters:⁸⁹ in the first line 41 cm high, in the second 24 cm, and in the third 18–19 cm. The size is unusual. With the exception of the building inscriptions of the Pantheon, the Temple of Castor and Pollux, and the Arch of Titus, the letter-size on all other inscriptions in the city of Rome itself does not match that of the inscription from Tel Shalem.⁹⁰

No more than one fifth or one quarter of the original text has been preserved, but the formulaic nature of the text makes the reconstruction quite certain.⁹¹ The inscription is dedicated to Hadrian whose name and titulature appear in the dative. The presumed width of the inscription (10–11 m), combined with other reasons, proves that the inscription belonged to a monumental arch similar, for example, to the Arch of Titus in Rome, which was erected after his death to commemorate his conquest of Jerusalem.

When was the arch constructed? Who was the dedicator? And why was an arch of such monumental size raised 12 kilometres from the city of Scythopolis?

The reconstructed titulature of the emperor dates the inscription precisely. By the time the arch was erected, Hadrian had already accepted his second acclamation as *imperator*. [*Imp. I*] stood without any doubt between the [*trib. potest. XX?*] and *cos. [III]*. It dates, therefore, to after the final Roman victory in the Jewish war.

So far the *communis opinio* has been that Hadrian became *imperator iterum* in the second half of 135. In fact there is no proof of that. As shown elsewhere in some detail, none of the inscriptions which allegedly attest this title in 135 prove this.⁹² On the other hand, there are some official inscriptions from 136 in which the title *imp. II* is missing.⁹³

⁸⁷ Gordon, *op. cit.* (n. 48), 322f.

⁸⁸ First mentioned in G. Foerster, 'A cuirassed bronze statue of Hadrian', *Atiqot* (English series) 17 (1985), 139–57.

⁸⁹ See W. Eck and G. Foerster, 'A triumphal arch for Hadrian near Tel Shalem in the Beth Shean Valley', *JRA* (forthcoming).

⁹⁰ *CIL* VI.40339; p. 4303 ad no. 896; M. Pfanner, *Der Titusbogen* (1983), 16.

⁹¹ I am grateful to Gideon Foerster for allowing me to refer to our joint study here (above, n. 89).

⁹² Schäfer, *Aufstand*, 14f. n. 25, collected the evidence; cf. Russell, *Bj* 195 (1995), 75f. with n. 20. *CIL* II.478 cannot be adduced as proof; the text is an erroneous joining together of fragments which belonged to disparate inscriptions, see L. Garcia

Iglesias, *La hipotética inscripción del teatro de Mérida reconstruida por Hübner* (1975), 5ff. (I am grateful to Armin Stylow for this information). The only secure *terminus post quem* until now was a military diploma from 14 April 135, in which Hadrian does not have yet the *imp. II*. Nor is *imp. II* displayed in a new (unpublished) diploma dated to 18 May 135 (I am grateful to M. Roxan for this information).

⁹³ A milestone from Spain, *AE* 1976.282a; further, boundary stones from Moesia, *AE* 1985.729, 730, 733. A dedication to Iuno Sospita in Lanuvium, initiated by Hadrian himself in 136 does not show the *imp. II* in his titulature: *CIL* XIV.2088 = *ILS* 316. Those in charge of making the dedication would have been acquainted with his titulature at the time. This evidence cannot be simply set aside.

Given these facts, one can say no more than that there is no proof that Hadrian took *imp. II* before 136, and it seems likely that he accepted the title only in that year. This in turn would suggest that serious fighting against Bar Kokhba did not end in 135, but only in 136, for Hadrian would not have accepted his second acclamation before the crushing and final defeat of the rebels.

Even more intriguing is the question of who dedicated the arch. Unfortunately, the end of the third line, where the dedicator was mentioned, is not preserved. However, a reconstruction on the correct scale clearly shows that only a few letters (four to six) are missing after *cos. [III p. p.]*. The choice seems quite clear: *SPQR* i.e. *Senatus Populusque Romanus*. The Senate and the Roman People is several times attested as having honoured emperors by erecting an arch or some other large monument in the provinces to commemorate a great achievement, especially an important victory. Augustus and Tiberius were honoured in Pannonia with two arches after the victory over the rebellious Pannonian tribes, and Augustus alone received the *tropaeum Alpium*, La Turbie, for his successful battles beyond the Alps in Raetia.⁹⁴ Several arches were raised to celebrate Germanicus' (Tiberius' adopted son and his destined successor) *res gestae* in Germany and in the Eastern provinces: in Rome, on the bank of the River Rhine near Mainz, and on Mount Amanus in Syria.⁹⁵ In 43 the Senate voted for Claudius an arch on the sea-shore at Gesoriacum from where he embarked for Britain in 43.⁹⁶

As far as we know, after Claudius no more arches were voted by the Senate in the provinces. The dedication of an arch to Hadrian in Judaea was the recognition by Senate and People in far away Rome of the seriousness of the challenge Rome had just faced, of the greatness of the efforts required to suppress an enemy, so small and yet so fierce. The arch can be taken as a sign and symbol of the relief felt at Rome, at the centre of the Roman Empire, no less than by Hadrian and his generals, when the danger was over. The final triumph over the rebels was thus advertised and documented in the rebellious province now once more under Roman control.

And finally: why raise a monumental arch as a document of Hadrian's victory near Tel Shalem — a place by no means remarkable? Why not near Beithar, the centre of the Jewish uprising? The answer surely must be that Galilee felt the revolt more than has hitherto been conceded. A decisive battle may have been won here, not far from Caparcotna, the camp of the Second Legion in Judaea.

IV

One more measure following in the wake of the revolt discloses in no uncertain terms the Roman response. At the end of the war, a drastic decision was made, probably by Hadrian himself, to change the name of the province from Judaea to Syria Palaestina.⁹⁷ Our familiarity with the new name may have jaded us to the significance of the change. True, the Romans changed names of provinces quite often: Hispania Ulterior came to be called *provincia Baetica*; Moesia was split in 86 into Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior; after the wars in the northern part of the province of Dacia in 117/18 Hadrian divided the province into Dacia Superior, Dacia Porolissensis, and Dacia Inferior. The Alpes Graiae became the province of Alpes Atrectianae et Vallis Poenina when the borders were adjusted. But never before (or after) was the old name of a

⁹⁴ Cassius Dio 56.17.1; *CIL* V.7817; Plin., *NH* 3.136ff.

⁹⁵ Tac., *Ann.* 2.83; *Tabula Siarensis* frg. A, ll. 9–34 = M. Crawford, *Roman Statutes* (1996) I, 515.

⁹⁶ Cassius Dio 60.22.1.

⁹⁷ The point of time at which the change took place is not explicitly stated anywhere. The first evidence for it would be the fragmentary inscription for Sex. Julius Severus from Aequum in Dalmatia: *AE* 1904.9. M. Sartre (*L' Orient romain* (1991), 388 and idem in C. Leppéley, *Rome et l'intégration de l'empire*, 44 av.

J.-C.–260 ap. J.-C., vol. 2 (1998), 430) infers from this that the year was 134. There is no reason to accept this. The first city coins displaying *Syria Palaestina* come from Neapolis Sebaste, and were minted under Antoninus Pius; see A. Kindler, 'Die palästinensischen Städttemünzen im 2. Jh. n. Chr. und der Bar Kochba-Krieg', in H.-C. Noeske and H. Schubert (eds), *Die Münze. Bild — Botschaft — Bedeutung. Festschrift für Maria R. Alföldi* (1991), 283–312, esp. 290f.

province changed as a corollary of a revolt. Not that revolts were not frequent in other provinces as well: the Germani in Germania, the Pannonii in Pannonia, and the Brittones in Britannia all revolted against Rome at one time or another. Yet none of these provinces lost its original name derived from the name of its people. But Judaea, derived from Iudaei, ceased to exist for the Roman government after the Bar Kokhba revolt. It was not because the Jewish population was much reduced as a result of losses suffered during the war that the name of the province was changed; the same was true, for example, of Pannonia, and yet the old name was kept. The change of name was part of the punishment inflicted on the Jews; they were punished with the loss of a name. This is the clear message of this exceptional measure, the one and only example of such a measure in the history of the Empire.⁹⁸

V

The Bar Kokhba revolt, with its initial heavy losses in manpower, must have dealt a heavy blow to Roman power, pride, and sense of security — all the more so since the war was not restricted to Judaea itself, but spilled over the borders into Arabia and perhaps also into Syria. The extraordinary measures taken by Hadrian to put down the revolt — to which the first part of this paper is devoted — vindicate the truthfulness of this claim. The second part seeks further vindication in the way in which final victory was celebrated: Hadrian accepted for the first time an imperatorial acclamation for a military victory; and no less than three senatorial generals who had contributed to this final victory, and thereby to the restoration of Roman pride and self-confidence, received exceptional distinctions — the *ornamenta triumphalia*. A huge arch was erected near Tel Shalem, in the defeated province itself,⁹⁹ probably by order of *senatus populusque Romanus*, to commemorate the victory.

From the Roman perspective, the launching point of this discussion, the extraordinary measures and the exceptional distinctions bestowed on three senatorial generals prove more than anything else the gravity of the Bar Kokhba revolt and the reality of the threat.

ADDENDUM

The new inscription from Gerasa attesting Haterius Nepos as ὑπατικός came to my notice too late to be taken into account in this article (see P.-L. Gatier, 'Gouverneurs et procurateurs à Gerasa', *Syria* 73 (1996), 48f.). This text confirms the conjecture that Haterius Nepos remained in the province after his consulate, see above n. 69. Against the hypothesis that Haterius Nepos' name was erased in four inscriptions from Gerasa (above n. 67) see now W. Eck, 'Der angebliche Krieg des Aelius Caesar in Pannonien und die *ornamenta triumphalia* des Haterius Nepos', in L. Borhy (ed.), *Von der Entstehung Roms bis zur Auflösung des Römischen Reiches*, Dissertationes Pannonicae Ser. III, Vol. 4 (1999), 28–31.

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⁹⁸ The choice of this specific name, Syria Palaestina, may not have been Hadrian's, but rather a suggestion of the non-Jewish population of the province who must have resented the association with Judaea. The inhabitants of Scythopolis, for example, advertised on coins minted under Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius (A. Spijkerman, *The Coins of the Decapolis* (1978), 187; A. Stein, *Studies in Greek and Latin Inscriptions on the Palestinian Coinage under the Principate* (unpub. PhD diss., Tel Aviv University, 1990), 286) as well as on an inscription which probably belonged to a statue of Marcus Aurelius (*SEG* XXXVII.1531), their allegiance to the amorphous

entity known as Syria Coele. Hadrian's desire to punish the Jews harmonized with the wishes of the non-Jewish element in the province.

⁹⁹ In Rome too a monument celebrating Hadrian's victory in the remote province was erected: *CIL* VI.974 = 40524. For a reconstruction of Hadrian's titulature in this inscription see Eck and Foerster, op. cit. (n. 89). In contrast to Vespasian in 70, Hadrian chose not to advertise the victory on the imperial coinage. Conditions, however, were hardly the same in 136. Thus no cause for surprise: cf. L. Mildenberg, *The Coinage of the Bar Kokhba War* (1984), 96f.