Reading the Judeans and the Judean War in Martial’s *Liber spectaculorum*

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Abstract

Martial’s *Liber spectaculorum* celebrates spectacles at the Flavian amphitheatre, which was most likely built with money gained from the Judean War. This article contextualizes epigrams from Martial’s *Liber spectaculorum* with evidence from the histories of Josephus and other sources, finding possible references to the Judeans in specific epigrams with anthropomorphized animals. It also takes into consideration an epigram from the *Florilegium Gallicum*, which has been published at the end of the *Liber* since the sixteenth century. In the *Liber spectaculorum*, Martial engages in a strategy of virtually silencing the Judean people—‘de Solymis…perustis’, as the poet says in *Ep. 7.55*—whose pillaged property built the Colosseum. This may, in part, be a result of the blending of epigrams from the reigns of both Titus and Domitian into a revised *Liber* featuring a single ‘Caesar’ who represents both emperors. Since Domitian never fought in the Judean War, Martial avoids—or has removed during revision—overt comments about victory in the Judean War. It is up to the reader, therefore, to find the Judeans quietly and ignominiously metamorphosed into animals to be punished in his text’s arena, and finally, as losers who pay the price for rebellion.

Keywords: Judean/Jewish War, Josephus, Martial, Colosseum, spectacle, Flavian, Titus, Domitian.
Introduction

Martial’s *Liber spectaculorum* (or *Book of Spectacles*) celebrates the Flavian amphitheatre, later known as the Colosseum, and certain spectacles held there, including the magnificent inaugural events of 80 CE hosted by Titus and possibly ones held later by his younger brother and successor, Domitian. Titus had successfully besieged Jerusalem in 70 and became emperor after his father Vespasian’s death in June of 79. Martial, however, is seemingly silent in the *Liber* about the Judean War (66–73) that brought Titus his greatest fame (as the depiction of the Jerusalem temple objects on the extant Arch of Titus makes clear) and that provided Vespasian at least some of the money necessary for rebuilding and improving Rome after the civil war of 69 had taken its toll on the capital.

New light was shed on the connection between the Flavian amphitheatre and the Judean War when Géza Alföldy deciphered a ghost inscription from the Colosseum that firmly links the funding of the Colosseum’s construction with booty (‘*manubls*’) taken by the Romans under Vespasian and Titus in the Judean War. Fergus Millar, spurred by Alföldy’s work, has described the Colosseum as one of the ‘Monuments of the Jewish War’. Keith Hopkins and Mary Beard in 2005, however, cast doubt on Alföldy’s reconstructed inscription, but they also affirm a connection between the Colosseum and the conquest of Jerusalem:

1. Alföldy 1995; his reading of the holes in the marble of *CIL* vi.40454a, into which dowels holding bronze letters were once placed, supplies this possible text: ‘[Im(perator)] Caes(ar) Vespasian(us) Aug(ustus)] amphitheatre[m novum?] [ex] manubls (vac.) [fieri iussit?]’.
4. Millar 2005. Welch (2007: 160) reports in connection with Alföldy’s reconstruction of the inscription: ‘This lends some credence to the popular notion that a labor force of Jewish prisoners of war were involved in the construction of the building, although this would only have been possible with the less skilled aspects of the building works, such as the production and laying of concrete’. I am not certain, however, that her last point is valid, because at least some Judean prisoners could have been quite familiar with construction. It was a well developed trade in their homeland, especially since the time of Herod the Great and his monumental works; see, for instance, Roller (1998: 91) on Herod’s construction of three amphitheatres at Caesarea, Jericho, and Jerusalem, along with his many other monuments, including the Jerusalem temple and palaces. Herod’s descendants also had building programs.
A skeptical reader is likely to feel (as we do) that there is an uncomfortably long distance between the scatter of holes and the suspiciously appropriate solution to ‘joining the dots’. Nonetheless, inscribed text or no inscribed text, the underlying point remains. The Roman Colosseum was the fruit of the Roman victory over the Jews. It was, in effect, the Temple of Jerusalem transformed by Roman culture, rebuilt for popular pleasure and the ostentatious display of imperial power.5

More recently, Kathleen Coleman has published a scholarly edition of Martial’s Liber spectaculorum with an introduction that includes a section on the Flavian amphitheatre based in part on the work of Alföldy and Millar.6 Furthermore, Jodi Magness accepts Alföldy’s reading without hesitation.7 Yet none of these scholars has contextualized a close reading of Martial’s Liber spectaculorum with the Flavian victory in the Judean War, about which the Judean Josephus wrote an account in his Bellum Judaicum from the 70s onward at Rome. We know from a number of his later (and much nastier) epigrams that Martial knew that Jerusalem had burned and that Judean immigrants, including writers like Josephus, had come to Rome.8 Overall, he paints an unflattering portrait of Judeans: Seth Schwartz sharply refers to ‘Martial’s stable of burlesque Jewish and crypto-Jewish actors, poets, and deracinated

5. Hopkins and Beard 2005: 34; one can modify this last comment by observing that the booty from Jerusalem was also transformed into the Flavian Temple of Peace (dedicated in 75) and that some of the Jerusalem temple’s most notable treasures were housed there—see Chapman 2009). Also, see Hopkins and Beard (2005: 44-50) on Martial, but they make no connection to Judeans or the Judean War here.

6. Coleman 2006. On pp. lxv-lxviii Coleman quotes from Alföldy’s restoration of the Colosseum’s inscription (CIL vi.40454a), and on p. lxvii she remarks, ‘The booty from the sack of Jerusalem enabled him [Vespasian] to invest in the most lavish entertainment structure in the Empire’, but she does not apply this knowledge to an analysis of any of the content of the Liber. Also, see Coleman 1998.


8. See Martial 7.55.7: ‘de Solymis venit perustis’ and 11.94. 2, 4, and 6 with ‘verpe poeta’ who ‘Solymis…natus in ipsis’. For a brief historical overview of Judeans at Rome at this time, see Williams 2004.
urban debauchees’. Epigram 7.35, for instance, takes a comic jab at Judean men when Martial’s slave has ‘a true super-mentula, such as is typical of lustful, sexually potent Jews’, according to Dwora Gilula’s interpretation of ‘sed meus, ut de me taceam, Laecania, servos Iudaeum nuda sub cute pondus habet’. In Martial’s epigrams mentioning Judean men, the humor at their expense revolves around their circumcised mentulae (7.30, 7.55, 7.82, and 11.94). In 7.55, the poetic narrator goes so far as to threaten a man named Chrestus that if he plays around with other men, he will end up performing fellatio not on the narrator’s mentula, which is nice and small, but on one from burned down Jerusalem that is condemned now to paying tribute (7.55.6-8: ‘lingues non mihi—nam proba et pusilla est—/sed quae de Solymis venit perustis/damnatam modo mentulam tributis’; we shall return to this issue of financial penalties for Judeans after the war). For Chrestus to end up servicing a defeated Judean would be a true degradation. Meanwhile, in other epigrams, Judean women are said


10. Gilula 1987: 533; the short answer to her title’s question, based on this reading of nuda (instead of nulla, which Shackleton Bailey [1993b: 106] prefers) is ‘no’. Sullivan (1991: 170) remarks on Martial’s presentation of the characteristics of various nationalities: ‘They [Gauls] are alluded to as effeminate and naive (cf. 3.1; 5.1). Greeks also are taunted for their effeminacy (10.65). Jews are derided as circumcised and oversexed (11.94; cf. Tac. Hist. 5.5); Germans are rebuked for their barbarity and tastelessness (11.96; 6.82); and Africans for their sexuality (6.39.6-7).’

11. Mandell (1986: 27) concludes her article on 7.55: ‘Non-Jewish Romans would envision the Jew as a revolutionary of great sexual prowess, and they would be far less likely to feel repelled by any action that Domitian might take against the Jews. Thus, although anti-Semitism in these verses might simply reflect Martial’s personal feelings, it is likely that the sentiment is intended to curry additional favor with Domitian by supporting his political and economic program of the strict exaction of the didrachmon’.

12. Mattingly (2011: 107) explains in general, ‘The point is that oral penetration was not necessarily a consensual act; indeed, it was considered shameful and humiliating to have to submit to it’; Galán Vioque (2002: 331) states, ‘The action of linguere mentulam was considered degrading and improper for free citizens’. Galán Vioque (2002: 332) also observes regarding de Solymis...perustis, ‘After the fall of Jerusalem, the strongest and most handsome men, who can also be assumed to have been bene mentulati, were brought to Rome for the pompa triumphalis and to be sold as slaves’. This assumption is not necessarily supported by Josephus, B.J. 7.138: male
to have bad breath from fasting on the Sabbath (4.4), while Judean children make noise in Rome after being trained by their mothers to beg (12.57).

Though a few of Martial’s epigrams denigrate Judeans, one in particular shows the importance of Judea for Flavian propaganda; 2.2 proclaims:

*Creta dedit magnum, maius dedit Africa nomen,
Scipio quod victor quodque Metellus habet;
nobilius domito tribuit Germania Rheno,
et puer hoc dignus nomine, Caesar, eras.
frater Idumaeos meruit cum patre triumphos,
quae datur ex Chattis laurea, tota tua est.*

Victory over Judea (‘Idumaeos’) earned Vespasian (‘patre’) and Titus (‘frater’) a triumph (in 71 CE), but Domitian (called here both ‘puer’ and ‘Caesar’) gets his glory—not shared with his father or brother—from victory over the Chatti (from which he took the name Germanicus in 83).

Given that Martial’s later epigrams show an awareness of the existence of Judeans and the fate of their homeland at the hands of the Roman army under Vespasian and Titus, it is possible that we can read his earlier *Liber spectaculorum* not only as a highly polished laudatory piece in honor of ‘Caesar’ the benefactor* but also with an eye toward the unnamed Judeans who lost the war. For Martial to have drawn overt negative attention to Judeans in the *Liber spectaculorum*, as he does in his later epigrams, might have been too heavy-handed for a celebratory book of epigrams; the poet had to be more

Judean captives appeared in the parade dressed in beautiful garments, not nude, in such a way that their clothing concealed the ugliness from the ill treatment their bodies had received during captivity.

13. Shackleton Bailey 1993a: 134-35: ‘Crete gave a great name, Africa a greater, borne by victorious Scipio and by Metellus. Germany bestowed a nobler when the Rhine was subjugated; you were worthy of this name, Caesar, even as a boy. Your brother won Idumean triumphs along with your father, but the laurel given for the Chatti is all yours.’

14. Coleman (2006: xlv-lxiv) discusses the possible identities (Titus or Domitian?) of ‘Caesar’ in the *Liber*, see below. All three Flavian emperors had a role in the construction of the Colosseum, according to the Chronographer of 354 (*Chronica minora*, i.146 Mommsen), which Coleman (2006: lviii) quotes. On Martial and Domitian, see Howell 2009: 63-71.
ingenious than that.\textsuperscript{15} In his later books of epigrams, however, Martial had free rein to say whatever he wanted with respect to Judeans since the occasions for those books of epigrams and the situations described were entirely different.

Another factor, connected to the title ‘Caesar’ used throughout the \textit{Liber spectaculorum}, may account for a lack of direct reference to Judeans or the Judean War in the book: its date. It is quite possible that the \textit{Liber spectaculorum} came together or underwent revision with additions—and subtractions?\textsuperscript{16}—made during the reign of Domitian (81–96 CE). The case of Josephus’s \textit{Bellum Judaicum} might provide a parallel for this kind of publication history: it was originally presented to both Vespasian and Titus; the latter, ‘after he had inscribed the volumes with his own hand, ordered them to be made public’ (Josephus, \textit{Vita} 361-63, therefore, by 79 CE for Vespasian and by 81 for Titus).

Though Domitian played no role in the Judean War, Josephus mentions him at \textit{B.J.} 4.646-55 (on the civil war at Rome), 7.37 (games held on his birthday), 7.75-88 (on the German and Gallic revolt), and 7.152 (riding in the triumph), thus the younger brother shares at least some of the family glory. Josephus’s text probably underwent revisions well into the 90s, according to Seth Schwartz.\textsuperscript{17}

When Coleman attempts to pin down which Caesar is being addressed in Martial’s \textit{Liber spectaculorum}, she builds on Buttrey’s observations concerning Domitian’s coinage and states:

\begin{quote}
We seem to have reached an impasse: the opening trio of epigrams (1-3), the pair celebrating a parade of \textit{delatores} in the amphitheatre (4-5), and the poem celebrating a \textit{naumachia} at Augustus’ \textit{stagnum} (34) point to the inauguration of the Flavian amphitheatre under Titus, and general similarities with the recorded spectacles on that occasion are discernible elsewhere in the collection too; yet the pair of epigrams about the exploits of a rhinoceros (11 and 26) point to a date under Domitian.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{15} In a different genre, Josephus, \textit{B.J.} 1.7-8 remarks about the historiography of the war and the irrationality of other authors who diminish the Judeans and the war in their histories, which only diminishes the Romans in turn.

\textsuperscript{16} Perhaps some epigrams, including ones with direct references to the Judean War, were removed during this revision; see below.

\textsuperscript{17} Schwartz 1986.

\textsuperscript{18} Coleman 2006: lix-lx; the rhinoceros quadrans (‘a coin whose low denomination guaranteed virtually universal dissemination’) of 83–85 CE appears on p. lv, and on pp. lvii-viii Coleman outlines three possible publication theories that support a Domitianic date. On the Domitianic dating, which is based partially on this coinage
If we accept that the collection does date ultimately to the time of Domitian (perhaps before late 85), it could then be that the blending of the two Caesars who hosted spectacles at the amphitheatre, Titus and Domitian, into one ‘Caesar’ addressed in these epigrams can account for Martial not mentioning Judeans or the Judean War in the version of the Liber spectaculorum that we have. Only in the poem not found in the Liber spectaculorum, 2.2, which we just examined, where the Flavian ‘brother’ (Titus) and ‘father’ (Vespasian) are clearly marked in line 5, does Martial make open reference to their victory in Judea as a counterpart to Domitian’s own victory. In the Liber spectaculorum, however, with epigrams from two different reigns coming together and the two brothers’ identities coalescing into a single ‘Caesar’, overt reference to the Judean War would have made little sense, since Domitian did not participate in this war. In any case, these epigrams are not historical accounts, and their artistry is what matters most to poet and audience.

Nonetheless, the Judeans and their war can be discerned in Martial’s Liber spectaculorum. If we accept that the Roman public, including Martial, was aware that the Flavian amphitheatre was funded at least partially out of the liquidation of Judean assets taken during the war (an assumption that would make sense even if we did not have Alföldy’s reconstruction of the inscription proclaiming this to the public at the amphitheatre), and we add to this the fact that Judeans had served as arena victims after the war, as Josephus attests, then we can look in the Liber spectaculorum for some traces of the vanquished Judeans through the plights of the creatures perishing in the amphitheatre, showing a rhinoceros, see most recently Buttrey 2007. Howell (2009: 15) accepts Buttrey’s argument.

19. For a chart dating the books of Martial’s epigrams, see Coleman 2006: xxvii; she dates the Liber before the appearance of Book 1 of Martial’s epigrams, which may have come out in late 85/early 86. In Spect. 9, the ‘Caledonian bear’ (line 3: ‘Caledonio…urso’) could be a nod to either Vespasian’s success in Britain under Claudius or Agricola’s under Domitian (see Coleman 2006: 87-90); Domitian has a real connection to the military campaign into Caledonia, unlike the Judean War.


theatre, especially particular animals that receive anthropomorphic treatment in certain epigrams.\textsuperscript{22} When Titus was in power (79–81 CE), the Judean War was still featured in imperial propaganda such as coins and the (no longer extant) arch of Titus erected in the Circus Maximus.\textsuperscript{23} Certain epigrams in the \textit{Liber spectaculorum}, composed during Titus’s reign in honor of the inaugural games, may reflect this attention to the Judean War as well, albeit in a subtle way, since overt references in any epigrams composed under Titus would have been removed during later revision under Domitian, when the two Caesars became one in the epigrams.

\textbf{Judeans Anthropomorphized}

It is hardly a surprise that Judeans are silenced by name in the text, since silence plays a role in the \textit{Liber spectaculorum} both at the beginning and towards the end of the collection.\textsuperscript{24} Martial opens by commanding: ‘\textit{Barbara pyramidum sileat miracula Memphis}’, ‘Let barbarous Memphis keep silent about the wonders of the pyramids’.\textsuperscript{25} As home of the oldest and previously most magnificent wonders in the world, Egypt comes first, but a first-century reader might have realized that this was also the place where Vespasian was first declared emperor aloud by the Roman legions in 69 during the Judean War, which coincided with the Roman civil war.\textsuperscript{26} Through \textit{inclusio} Martial

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\textsuperscript{22} Gunderson (2003: 651) encourages us to read these epigrams for the ‘figure of metonymy, and the notion of substitution’, but he does not read for allusions to the Judeans.
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\textsuperscript{23} For the coins, see Cody 2003. The arch in the Circus Maximus was dedicated when Titus held the title of consul for the eighth time (80/81), and it is best known from its provocative inscription, \textit{CIL} 6. 944, which is readily available in Millar 2005: 120; it includes, ‘on the instructions and advice of his father, and under his auspices, he subdued the race of the Jews and destroyed the city of Jerusalem, which by all generals, kings, or races previous to himself had either been attacked in vain or not even attempted at all’ (Millar’s trans.).
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\textsuperscript{24} On the problematic nature of the contents of the \textit{Liber spectaculorum}, see Coleman 2006: xxi-xlv.
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\textsuperscript{25} I follow Coleman’s (2006) numbering and text of the epigrams.
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\textsuperscript{26} Josephus, \textit{B.J.} 4.592-621. The epigram lists other international wonders surpassed, and concludes that no others can hold a candle to Caesar’s new amphitheatre: ‘\textit{omnis Caesareo cedit labor Amphitheatro:/ unum pro cunctis Fama loquetur opus}’ (‘All labor yields to Caesar’s Amphitheatre: Fame will tell of one work in lieu of all’). See Curran (2007) for discussion of the role of Egypt in the ‘Flavian usurpation’.\end{flushright}
rounds out this theme of silence in *Spect.* 34, possibly the last epigram in the original collection, by having the Fucine Lake and the lake of Nero (of his Domus Aurea on top of which the Colosseum was built) also silenced (34.11: ‘Fucinus et Teucri taceantur stagna Neronis’). Rhetorical silencing, therefore, shapes the text, and perhaps the reader is being invited to consider more covert silencing as well, which may also help explain why the Judeans (the elephant in the room, so to speak) are never mentioned by name.

*Spect.* 3 surveys the spectators who come from the far reaches of the empire and beyond in order to see the games and who with ‘*uox diversa*’ becoming ‘*una*’ (line 11) proclaim Caesar ‘*patriae…pater*’ (line 12). Included among these are the Arab and the Sabaei, who ‘have hastened’ to the show (line 7: ‘*festinauit Arabs, festinauere Sabaei*’). Coleman explains that this echoes the appearance of these peoples on Aeneas’s shield (*Aeneid* 8.706) and reflects the importance of the Arabs and Sabaei in trade and their geographic location. One can, however, add that these spectators may also recall the Arabs who were allied with the Romans during the Judean War. Arabs fought, for instance, as auxiliary archers, javelin-men, and slingers with Vespasian at Jotapata, where Josephus was taken prisoner. Furthermore, the Arabs, according to Josephus, committed war crimes against Judean refugees at Jerusalem during the siege in 70, for which Titus sternly reprimanded them for having implicated the Roman legionaries in their ‘savagery’ and their ‘hatred towards the Judeans’. No wonder, then, that the Arab ‘hastened’ to the show, perhaps even hoping to see

27. See Schneider 2003. *Spect.* 34 recalls the naval battles staged by Augustus long ago but declares Titus the winner in the battle of the staged naval battles, since his have wonders never seen before (34.3-4). Welch (2007: 318 n. 66) questions whether a *naumachia* would have been held in the Colosseum and proposes the *Naumachia Augusti* as the host venue instead.

28. Roman (2010: 94) remarks, ‘The ethnically diverse populace recalls Ovid’s multi-ethnic crowd of elegiac *puellae*, yet Martial replaces Ovid’s antinomian *Amor*-saturated *Roma* with an ideologically normative Flavian city’. Roman here is referring to Martial’s transformation of the [boys and] girls as spectators from *Ars Amatoria* 1.173-74, but does not mention the missing Judeans.


31. Josephus, *B.J.* 5.551-61 (556 for the hatred): specifically, in one night’s killing spree the Arabs slit open the bellies of 2000 fleeing Judeans in order to find the gold they were rumored to have swallowed.
his wartime enemy further punished in the arena. Martial, however, never names Judeans among the criminals in the amphitheatre at Rome, even though Josephus describes Judeans dying in the arenas of the Middle East after the war as part of the Roman victory celebrations. It would be real poetic justice, however, if one of the delatores in the ‘turba’ destined for exile in Spect. 4 included one of the several people who supposedly brought false charges against Josephus at Rome.

Also, absent from this crowd of spectators in Spect. 3 are the Judeans themselves, but Martial’s list of nine different peoples is hardly exhaustive (nor should we expect every detail of the spectacles to be explained in a set of poems, despite its deceptively ‘microcosmic dynamic’). We should remember, in any case, that, according to Josephus, Judeans considered blood sport to be ‘a clear departure from their honored customs’ and thought it was ‘impious to throw humans

32. Josephus, B.J. 7.24 (at Caesarea Philippi—‘many of the captives’), 7.38-39 (at Caesarea Maritima—over ‘2500’), and 7.96 (Syria—no number of killed Judeans given).

33. Josephus, B.J. 7.447-50 describes how Vespasian punished one of Josephus’s Judean accusers, Jonathes, with death by torture and fire. In his later Vita 425 and 42-49, Josephus speaks of others who brought charges against him during the reigns of all three Flavian emperors, but does not name these delatores or their punishments.

34. Roman (2010: 94) explains how this principle of ‘metonymic selection, condensation, and representative embodiment of the vaster whole’ connects the Liber to Martial’s other two early collections, the Xenia of 83/84 CE and Apophoreta of 84/85.

35. Josephus, Ant. 15.274; see also Ant. 15.268. Note, however, that among privileges granted by Julius Caesar to the Judean Hyrcanus at Ant. 14.210 is the right for the king, his children, and his envoys to sit in the senatorial seating section for the gladiator and wild beast matches; whether the king or the rest took advantage of the offer is another matter. Feldman (1993: 26) argues: ‘Likewise, the presence of theatres and amphitheatres in such cities as Jerusalem and Jericho is hardly evidence that sizable numbers of Jews attended them, because Josephus (Ant. 15.268) describes theatres and amphitheatres as ‘alien to Jewish custom’. Schürer (1979–87: 55) had argued to the contrary: ‘Despite this theoretical objection, Judaism was nevertheless unable to prevent the pageantry of the pagan games from developing in the Holy Land itself from the Herodian period onwards and it should not be assumed that the mass of the Jewish population did not frequent them. In Jerusalem, Herod built a theatre and amphitheatre, and introduced, as in Caesarea, four-yearly games in honour of Caesar. The implication must have been that a stadium and a hippodrome existed there as well, and in fact the latter is once explicitly mentioned’. Barclay (1996: 250) observes that Herod’s construction of Caesarea, a Greek city complete with amphitheatre, gymnasia, statues, and temples, must have aroused anger among those who
to wild beasts for the pleasure of spectators’. Judeans at Rome may have been curious about the amphitheatre built with Judean money and perhaps even by enslaved Judean men, but their presence at these inaugural games as spectators might have been considered gauche or even illegal under Judean law, as the Mishnah later explains, by someone as fastidious as Josephus, who lived in Rome at this time. This does not, however, preclude Judeans attending as spectators.

Though Martial makes no explicit reference to Judea or its people in the *Liber spectaculorum*, we might instead look for a metonymic reference and propose that some of the animals in the arena that are described in an anthropomorphic fashion could very well represent not only the actual animals that appeared in the spectacles but also the defeated Judeans. Coleman has detected three cases of anthropomorphism in the collection: one in an epigram about a lion and two in epigrams about a sow. We shall now look at these instances more closely.

The first blatant anthropomorphism that Coleman detects in the collection occurs in epigram 12.1, where ‘*Laeserat ingrato leo perfidus ore magistrum*’ (‘a treacherous lion had wounded its keeper with its ungrateful maw’). Coleman explains that interpreting ‘*ingrato*’ hinges on understanding the rules of *amicitia* that have been violated by the lion, and with regard to the epigram as a whole, she suggests: ‘Martial draws the moral that the emperor’s subjects are bound to co-operate with a ruler who can impose his will even upon wild

considered this territory part of the ‘holy land’’, but he does not discuss the venues in Jerusalem; Barclay’s chart on p. 93, showing ‘Assimilation (Social Integration)’, places ‘attendance at Greek athletics/theatre’ in the middle of the spectrum, but considering this passage in Josephus we might place it closer to the ‘abandonment of key Jewish social distinctions’.

36. Josephus, *Ant.* 15.275. Mishnah, *Abodah Zarah* 1.7 (Danby 1993: 438), states in a section on which transactions a Judean may make with Gentiles, ‘None may sell them bears or lions or aught that can do harm to the people’.

37. See n. 4 above. Also, Mishnah, *Abodah Zarah* 1.7 (Danby 1993: 438), continues from the quote above, ‘None may help them build a basilica, scaffold, stadium, or judge’s tribunal; but one may help them to build public baths or bathhouses; yet when they have reached the vaulting where they set up the idol it is forbidden [to help them] to build’. These are choices made most easily by free men, but perhaps a Judean slave could not refuse to help with the construction of the amphitheatre.

38. Coleman 2006: 112; on p. 113, she explains, ‘Hovering behind this epigram is the fable of the grateful lion (the ‘Androcles syndrome’, one might call it), which is here completely subverted’.

animals’. If, as Coleman states, ‘the paradigmatic value of animal behavior is often adduced in popular philosophy’, then one can perhaps read from the Roman perspective that the lion of Judah has recently bitten the Roman hand that fed it (i.e. the Judeans, who were Roman provincials, had rebelled, even though, from the Roman perspective, they were enjoying the benefits of Roman peace), and that the Judean people (and all other Roman subjects) should learn how to behave themselves under an emperor (12.6: ‘quos decet esse hominum tali sub principe mores’). Also, Martial’s description of the lion as ‘perfidus’ in line 1 finds its echo in the later Christian label of ‘perfidus Iudaeus’ (‘perfidious Jew’), which was used in a Good Friday prayer in Roman Catholicism until Pope John XXIII ordered it to be removed in 1959. It is entirely possible that this Roman labeling of Judeans as ‘treacherous’ in the political sense, since they had raised a rebellion (and would do so again sixty years after the first one was stamped out), helped inspire later Christian liturgical rhetoric about the ‘perfidious’ Judeans supposedly being responsible for the death of Christ.

Soon quite literally to burst onto the scene in the book’s arena two epigrams later is a pregnant sow, whose death coinciding with the

42. On Judah as a ‘young lion’ in his father Jacob’s blessing, see Gen. 49.9; this imagery persisted into the first century CE in (Judean-)Christian literature, as Rev. 5.5 (ίδον ἐνίκησεν ὁ λέων ὁ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Ιουδα) attests; the situation described here with the lion who has been victorious is the opposite of Martial’s. It is conceivable that Martial was aware of this connection between lions and Judah/Judea. Centuries later, gold glass disks from catacombs at Rome show lions flanking the Temple or Torah shrine: Goodenough 1953, vol. III: Figures 964-67, and for discussion, see vol. II: 109-10.
43. The prayer began, ‘Oremus et pro perfidis Iudaeis’.
44. To claim that the meaning of the word perfidus had changed to mean simply ‘unfaithful’ by the time the prayer was formulated in late antiquity seems to dodge the larger question of how Christians, who themselves were Romans, drew their own attitudes and parlance from the larger cultural milieu.
45. Coleman (2006: 126) remarks, ‘This trio of epigrams is different from the other “cycles” in Martial in that the poems are placed consecutively instead of being interspersed with large blocks of miscellaneous material’. Also, two of these epigrams (15 and 16) are the only epigrams of the Liber excerpted in the Florilegium Gallicum along with 35 and 36, which are attested in no other manuscripts; see below for discussion.
birth of one of her offspring repeats itself in a triptych of poems that
grow more telegraphic in their successive retellings of the strange
event.46 These three epigrams interrupt a train of epigrams (11-13)
featuring a rhinoceros, a bull, the ungrateful lion just examined, and a
bear; a boar (a male pig) is the first victim of the famous bestiarius
Carpophorus in 17.2, which serves as the thematic bridge from the
sow in three epigrams (14-16) back to the other animals in the collec-
tion.

The first of these three on the sow, Spect. 14, reads:

Inter Caesareae discrimina saeua Dianae
fixisset gruidam cum leuis hasta suem,
exiluit partus miserae de uulnere matris.
O Lucina ferox, hoc peperisse fuit?
pluribus illa mori uoluisset saucia telis,
onmibus ut natis triste pateret iter.
quis negat esse satum materno finere Bacchum?
sic genitum numen credite: nata fera est.47

It is very possible that Martial (and his Roman audience) would be
cruel enough to make a mockery48 of the suffering of the Judeans
by equating it with the slaying of the mother sow yielding a little
piglet leaping out, still alive (line 3)—a diaspora (line 6: ‘triste…iter’)
catalyzed by death, with one surviving while the rest of the anthropo-
morphically labeled ‘natis’ (line 6) perish.49 If this sow had been a

46. See Rimell (2008: Chapter 3), ‘Poetic economies: figuring out Martial’s
maths’, especially pp. 112-14 on the sow epigrams.
47. Coleman (2006: 126) translates: ‘When, amid the cruel engagements of
Caesar’s hunt, a light spear had speared a pregnant sow, one of her progeny leapt out
of its wretched mother’s wound. O merciless Lucina, was this a delivery? She would
have been ready to die wounded by more weapons so that a sad path should open up
for all her young. Who denies that Bacchus was brought forth by his mother’s death?
A deity was delivered by that means, you must believe it: so was born a beast.’
48. In concluding his analysis of the Roman attitude to Judeans in Rome after the
of the Jews provided a source for amusement, even amazement. But they did not lead
to bile, and they did not provoke hostilities. The preserved comments, even in the
aftermath of the Revolt, convey mockery rather than malignancy’. One finds these
reactions to the Judeans—amusement, amazement, and mockery—here in the Liber
spectaculorum if one reads the sow epigrams for metonymy.
49. Coleman (2006: 130) calls the wild pig giving birth ‘a piquant addition’,
provides a reference on ‘ancient porcines’, but makes no connection to Judeans.
Centuries later, Judeans appear as pigs in the writings of church fathers such as
pregnant woman, the Romans would have tried to avoid such a Caesarean-section spectacle (line 1), as the account of the martyrdom of Felicity in early third-century Carthage makes clear,50 but with the sow being a ‘beast’, the show can go on, and Martial describes the scene in such a way that a Roman reader could see the sow (who becomes a ‘mater’ in epigram 15) and her anthropomorphized offspring as human beings. Among the many criminals who died in spectacles, Judeans certainly suffered arena deaths after the war: Josephus has the Judean rebel leader Eleazar bemoan at Masada that, ‘others [i.e. Judeans], half-eaten by wild beasts, have been kept alive to be a second meal for them, after providing laughter and sport for their enemies [i.e. the Romans]’.51 How better for Martial to represent the Judeans who had rebelled unsuccessfully against the Romans than to make them the pigs that everyone knew they abhorred by law?52 Just as the Judeans provided ‘laughter and sport’ for the Romans in the arenas of the empire after the Judean War, so Martial provides more humor for Romans, again at the expense of Judeans, in the arena of his epigrams.53

Sows, however, were not automatically equated with Judeans in the symbols of the Flavian age. The Flavians did associate themselves with the image of a sow and piglets on their coinage, and Kondratieff has argued that the denarii of both Vespasian and Titus that were Ephraem, John Chrysostom, and Jerome. From the thirteenth century onwards, as art for their churches, Germans sculpted Jews playing the role of piglets with the ‘Judensau’ suckling them; see Schreckenberg (1996: 20, 331-37) for discussion and illustrations.

50. Passio Sanctorum Perpetuae et Felicitatis 15: ‘circa Felicitatem uero et illi gratia domini eiusmodi contigit. cum octo iam mensium uentrem haberet (nam praegnans fuerat adprehensa), instante spectaculi die in magno erat luctu ne propter uentrem differretur (quia non licet praegnantes poenae repraesentari) et ne inter alios postea sceleratos sanctum et innocentem sanguinem funderet’. Carter (2006) uses this martyrdom text when discussing the palm branch in Martial; see below.


52. On Judean law, see Lev. 11:7: ‘And the pig, though it has a split hoof completely divided, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you’. See also Josephus, Apion 2.137. For various Roman interpretations of this, Stern (1974–84: 444) provides Petronius, Fragmenta 37 and n. 1 with references to Plutarch, Quaestiones Convivales 4.5 and Juvenal 14.98-99. Most memorably, Macrobius 2.4.11 reports that Augustus quipped ‘melius est Herodis porcum esse quam filium’.

53. On humor in Martial, see Plass 1982; he does not discuss these epigrams.
issued in 77 and 78 with a sow and piglets were part of ‘a narrative group recalling the legends of Rome’s first foundation’.54 Here in the arena of the Liber spectaculorum, however, Martial’s sow is hardly the fat and happy one suckling thirty white piglets at the future site of Aeneas’ Lavinium (Vergil, Aeneid 8.43-45).55 Instead, she is hunted prey, something that the spectators and now readers presumably enjoy seeing suffer in the arena since they are there to watch, and her surviving offspring has been downgraded from one of the anthropomorphized ‘natis’ to a ‘beast’ two lines later (14.8: ‘fera’).

What is especially striking in this first epigram on the sow is the comparison of this birth-in-death to the birth of Bacchus56 (14.7: ‘quis negat esse satum materno funere Bacchum?’, ‘Who denies that Bacchus was brought forth by his mother’s death?’). Besides the obvious mythological parallel to the birth of Dionysus, at this time, we should note that some Romans thought the Judeans had worshipped Bacchus in their temple at Jerusalem before it burned in 70, a misunderstanding that, as Tacitus explains, probably stemmed in part from ‘uitisque aurea templo reperta’;57 Josephus corroborates this when he describes a huge golden vine with grape clusters ‘the height of a man’ that decorated the temple’s gilded front gate.58 Tacitus knows of this grapevine at the temple, but rejects the idea of Judeans

54. Kondratieff 1992: 16; n. 31 on 26 provides the citations for these denarii. Kondratieff downplays the idea of the use of pigs on Flavian coinage as a deliberate insult to Judeans.
55. Coleman (2006: 132 n. 6) compares the use of ‘natis’ in 14.6 to the ‘nati’ in the Aeneid 8.45 but does not remark upon the different tone that it imparts; see below.
56. Fitzgerald (2007: 48-49) observes ‘the dialectic between glorification and banalization that we found in the final couplet of the slain sow sequence recurs with respect to myth… In becoming a credible event, the birth of Bacchus has been removed from the realm of belief altogether, and so deprived of its aura. What happens in the arena, far from acquiring status by association with divine myth, dissolves the special status of that myth.’ This ‘dissolution of aura’ allows even more so the possibility of association with the Judeans.
57. Tacitus, Histories 5.5.
58. Josephus, B.J. 5.210; the vine is plural here and singular at Ant. 15.395. A grape cluster—probably referring to the temple, and not just agriculture—decorated coinage of Herod Archelaus (4 BCE–6 CE), the Roman prefect Valerius Gratus (15–26 CE) and Bar Kokhba (132–5 CE) in ancient Judea (and appeared on the first Israeli coin in 1948); a grape leaf appeared on coinage of Valerius Gratus, the first Judean revolt (66–70) and Bar Kokhba (and Israel, 1949).
worshipping Father Liber ‘quippe Liber festos laetosque ritus posuit, Iudaeorum mos absurdus sordidusque’.

Furthermore, Josephus in his *Bellum Judaicum* also supports a connection between Bacchus and the Judeans, since he makes literary allusions to Euripides’ *Bacchae* when depicting a mother’s cannibalism of her infant during the siege of Jerusalem (*B.J.* 6.199-219), a key episode that provokes Titus’s verbal denunciation of the Judeans (*B.J.* 6.215-19) and ushers in the subsequent destruction of the temple (*B.J.* 6.249ff.).

Given that Josephus claims to have written his *Bellum Judaicum* at least in part for a Roman audience (*B.J.* 1.16), a Roman reader could be expected to accept a literary association being made between the behavior of a Judean mother and Euripides’ description of the power of Bacchus (and not just tales of a grapevine and Bacchic worship at the temple in Jerusalem). One can, therefore, at least consider that a literary allusion to the Judeans and their fate at the hands of the victorious Titus (14.1: ‘*Inter Caesareae discrimina saeva Dianae*’) could exist in this epigram on the hunted sow.

Coleman explains anthropomorphism in the *Liber spectaculorum* twice with regard to two of the three epigrams on the sow: ‘*natis*’ at 14.6 for the sow’s litter and ‘*mater*’ at 15.1 for the sow itself. Unlike the mother in Book 6 of Josephus’s *Bellum Judaicum*, however, this ‘mother’ dies, while ‘her progeny’ (16.3: ‘*partus*’), the piglet, survives through ‘*ingenium*’ (16.4). This strange birth-in-death surely could have happened in the arena during the inaugural games, but the prominence of these three epigrams with their anthropomorphized animals at the center of the *Liber* also invites reflection on how creatures,

59. Tacitus, *Histories* 5.5. Furthermore, Plutarch, *Quaestiones Convivales* IV.6 addresses parallels between Judean festivals/the Sabbath and Dionysiac worship.

60. This scene of a mother’s plight woven with Euripidean echoes is later picked up by Christian writers, who tend to combine the crucifixion of Jesus with Josephus’s description of the destruction of Jerusalem. The author of the *Christus Patiens*, for instance, seems to quote straight from lost lines of the *Bacchae*, and Pseudo-Hegesippus’s *De Excidio*, a loose Latin rendition of Josephus’s *Bellum Judaicum*, appears to understand that Josephus was borrowing from the *Bacchae*, and then builds an even more dramatic scene with the cannibal mother by referring in more depth to Agave’s *compositio membrae*; see Chapman 2005.

61. Coleman 2006: 132, 135-36. Feminine, possibly maternal, symbolism for Judea also occurs when the region is personified as a captive woman (bereft of her children?) on the reverse side of the ‘*IVDAEA CAPTA*’ coins of Vespasian’s reign; see Cody (2003: 107-9) with figures of coins on p. 108.
including humans (such as the Judeans), can survive against great odds. As Eric Gunderson observes, ‘But the broader point is that, yes, the arena is a factory of meaning, that the shows are a collection of clever circumstances, and that the job is to apply our ingenium to read and respond to the ingenium that is already there’.62 The very invocation of ingenium tips the audience to Martial’s play with Ovid’s poetry, and as Stephen Hinds aptly remarks, ‘Make no mistake about it: this upstart epigrammist has the capacity, if he is so inclined, to reinscribe the Metamorphoses as nothing more (or less) than quindecim libri spectaculorum’.63 What I am asking here is that we allow Martial full range to explore Ovid’s theme of metamorphosis in the arena of his epigrams, with animal-human transformations operating in multiple forms, as the rules of ingenium allow.64

**The Aftermath of the War**

Veiled reference to the outcome of the war in Judea may also occur at the very end of the Liber spectaculorum in epigram 36, which along with 35 is only found in the Florilegium Gallicum, ‘straight after two epigrams [15 and 16] that do indubitably come from the Liber spectaculorum’.65 Whether the twelfth-century compiler of the Florilegium saw a deeper thematic connection between the selected sow epigrams (15 and 16) and these last two (35 and 36) is impossible to say, but the

62. Gunderson 2003: 651; Gunderson continues, without explaining quite what the metaphors and metonymies might mean, ‘If the sow poems argue that the arena’s is a spontaneous rhetoric and that Martial is merely re-offering to the emperor the explicit and verbal expression of the various metaphors and metonymies of the shows themselves, these same notions form the core of two other poems about nature and the arena that more specifically concern Caesar himself’. Fitzgerald (2007: 47) explains that ‘ingenium, whose root is gigno, “bring to birth”, is also a pun, or rather two’ because it also refers to the poet’s talent.


64. Though not a case of anthropomorphism in connection with Judeans, one should also note that the bulls in Spect. 18 and 19 ascend to heaven, like Titus’s apotheosis depicted on Domitian’s extant Arch of Titus on the Velian Hill. These bulls are directly related to Caesar, who, in turn, is directly compared with Jupiter in Spect. 19. Animal becomes human while human becomes god at this fulcrum of the text.

65. Coleman 2006: xxv; for a chart showing the ‘Distribution of epigrams in the manuscripts’, see p. xxiv, and on the date of the Florilegium, see p. xxiii.
juxtaposition of these pieces in the *Florilegium* is suggestive.\textsuperscript{66} Also, we might note that this *Spect.* 36 shares the sow triptych’s use of words with the stem *grau*:\textsuperscript{67} in the first couplets of *Spect.* 14, 15, and 16, we find *grauidam* (‘for the sow’), *grau* (‘for the weapon that kills her’), and *grauior* (‘for the sow again being quite heavy with piglets before she dies’).\textsuperscript{67} In any case, the *Florilegium* provides two pithy couplets that we would not have known otherwise from manuscripts of the *Liber spectaculorum*, and the latter may point to the aftermath of the Judean war.\textsuperscript{68}

In *Spect.* 36, we may find double meanings and commentary on the *uitrus* of those living under Roman *imperium*, and not just *uitrus* in the arena:

\begin{quote}
Cedere maiori uirtutis fama secunda est:
illa grauis palma est, quam minor hostis habet.\textsuperscript{69}
\end{quote}

This epigram’s opening words, ‘*cedere maiori*’\textsuperscript{70}, provide the flip-side of Anchises’ formula for Roman success in *Aeneid* 6: ‘*parcer subiectis et debellare superbos*’. The epigram mentions the winner but focuses even more on the yielding of the loser, the ‘*minor hostis*’. If we read the Judeans here for ‘*minor hostis*’, which is possible since *hostis* has a militaristic ring usually referring to an enemy in battle,\textsuperscript{71}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{66} On *florilegia*, see Rigg 1996.
\item \textsuperscript{67} The word *grauis* also appears prominently in the first line of *Spect.* 4—‘*Turba grauis paci placidaeque inimical quieti*’—though there is no direct indication that the informants who are being punished here are Judean.
\item \textsuperscript{68} Since editors such as Coleman choose to publish these ‘stray’ epigrams from the *Florilegium* with the rest of the epigrams in *Liber spectaculorum*, I see no reason not to analyze one of them for possible meanings. Coleman (2006: 260) remarks: ‘This couplet [35] and the next one were added from the *Florilegium Gallicum* by Junius [in his edition of 1568] (see General Introduction, Section 2). While there is no certainty that they belong in the *Liber spectaculorum*, it is a plausible context for both of them, since this one is about the need for haste in offering a tribute to the emperor, and the next one is about combat.’
\item \textsuperscript{69} ‘To yield to a superior is valor’s second-place reputation, but that palm is heavy, which the lesser enemy holds.’
\item \textsuperscript{70} ‘*Cedere*’ forms an *inclusio* with the ‘*cedit*’ of epigram 1.7; see Coleman (2006: 11-12) on how this verb functions in panegyric.
\item \textsuperscript{71} Coleman (2006: 265) comments on *hostis* but makes no connection between this militaristic word choice and the war in Judea. She does, however, cite as an example of the poetic use of *hostis* Horace, *Epist.* 2.2.97-98, where ‘reciting poets [are] likened to dueling gladiators’.
\end{itemize}
we can then consider another meaning for the ‘grauis palma’. Since the palm-branch normally only went to the winner (or, in an unusual moment, to two gladiators who have tied—see *Spect.* 31.9-12),72 and certainly not to the loser (‘minor’) who has yielded, the ‘grauis palma’ could very well point to the palm tree, which was the symbol of downtrodden Judea depicted on the reverse of some the heavier Flavian coinage advertising ‘IVDAEA CAPTA’.73 (A sestertius was worth one quarter of a denarius but was about eight times heavier, thus it was on the ‘gravis’ end of the spectrum for the weight of Roman coins.) If this connection to the Roman coinage minted to celebrate victory in Judea is apt, then we might even see in this epigram a commentary on the shameful Judean obligation in the Flavian period to pay two denarii (or eight sesterces) into the fiscus Judaicus,74 which Martial crudely refers to later in 7.55 with ‘damnatam modo mentulam tributis’. This possible reference in *Spect.* 36.2 to money paid after the war by the losing Judeans stings even more if one remembers that ‘monetary rewards were typically forthcoming’ for victorious gladiators, along with ‘a palm branch and perhaps a crown’.75 Martial has managed to encapsulate tremendous Judean losses, both military and fiscal, in just two economical lines. Here less is more,76 and always for the benefit of the Romans and Caesar.

73. Cody (2003: 107-10, explains that ‘the type with palm’ appeared in 71-73, 77-78, and early in Titus’s reign. Also, Goodman (2005: 176) concurs on the palm type: ‘As Hannah Cotton has pointed out to me, the motif of the palm tree was used explicitly to denote Judaea on Roman coinage’. Martial 10.50.1 refers to ‘Idumaeas… palmas’, which Stern (1974–84: 316) explains was first used in Latin poetry by Virgil at *Georgics* 3.12 in reference to Judean palms. For a later Judean self-valorization and transformation of the palm of victory into the palm waved on the Feast of Tabernacles, see Weiss (1996: 449), quoting R. Avin, who states, ‘The children of Israel were proclaimed victorious’.
74. See Josephus, *B.J.* 7.218. In *Domitian* 12.2, Suetonius reports that as a youth he saw a 90-year-old man inspected in court to determine whether he had been circumcised, and therefore had to pay the tax; Suetonius does not reveal whether the man was, in fact, circumcised.
76. Rimell (2008: 112), ‘In Martial, small is the new big’.
Conclusion

In the Liber spectaculorum, Martial engages in a strategy of virtually silencing the Judean people ‘de Solymis…perustis’ (‘from Jerusalem burned down’, as the poet says in 7.55), whose pillaged property built the Colosseum. This may, in part, be a result of the blending of epigrams from the reigns of both Titus and Domitian into a revised Liber spectaculorum featuring a single ‘Caesar’ who represents both emperors. Since Domitian never fought in the Judean War, Martial avoids—or has removed during revision—overt comments about victory in the Judean War. It is up to the reader, therefore, to find the Judeans quietly and ignominiously metamorphosed into animals to be punished in his text’s arena, and ultimately, as losers who pay the price for rebellion. Given that Martial composed the Liber spectaculorum to celebrate the amphitheatre built by all three Flavian emperors, the first two of whom had subdued the rebellion of the Judeans, looted the Jerusalem temple, and then used the booty from the war to aggrandize Rome and their own dynasty with monuments, it seems sensible to read these epigrams for allusions to these circumstances.

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