

A MILESTONE OF A.D. 69 FROM JUDAEA: THE ELDER TRAJAN AND VESPASIAN

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(Plate I)

In March 1973, a Roman milestone was discovered in a cultivated field, several hundred metres from the western edge of the town of Afula in the Valley of Jezreel.¹ The stone was found broken into two pieces.² The column was removed by a farmer belonging to the settlement of Balfouria, who transferred it to the garden of his home, where we had the opportunity to examine it.³ The base and lower part of the column remained on the spot. The inscription, incised on the column above the fracture, consists of six lines of irregular lettering.⁴

1. IMP
CAESAR[.]SPA
SIANVSAVGM[.]
PIOTR[.]JAN[.]LEG
5. LEGX̄ FRET
XXXIV

These may be restored as follows:

Imp(erator)/Caesar [Ve]spa/sianus
Aug(ustus) M(arco) [UI]/pio Tṛ[ai]an[o]
leg(ato)/ lēg(ionis) X̄ Fret(ensis)/ XXXIV⁵

The *terminus post quem* for the milestone must be the proclamation of Vespasian as emperor at the beginning of July 69.⁶ The elder Traianus ceased to be *legatus* of X Fretensis by the campaigning season of 70.⁷ A closer *terminus ante quem* is provided by Vespasian's nomenclature. He is described as *Imperator Caesar Augustus*, without any republican titles; these are never otherwise omitted on milestones before Antoninus Pius.⁸ The inscription should therefore be dated in the period when Vespasian was not yet in possession of these titles. Suetonius confirms that Vespasian did not assume the *tribunicia potestas* immediately,⁹ while Tacitus states that the senate endowed Vespasian with the usual imperial titles in December 69.¹⁰ If we allow for an interval of time before the senate's vote was known in Judaea, the milestone can be dated between July 69 and the beginning of 70.

¹ Israel Grid reference number 17564. 22356.

² Measurements of the column: height, 133 cm; diameter at top, 43 cm, at base, 45 cm; base: height, 66 cm; length, 44 cm; width, 42 cm.

³ We wish to thank Mr. M. Kuriss for giving his permission to examine the stone, and for his co-operation. We also wish to thank Professor S. Applebaum of Tel-Aviv University and Mr. P. Porat of the Department of Antiquities for their generous assistance during the decipherment, and Professor S. Applebaum and Miss J. MacVeagh for reading the manuscript of this article. Finally we would like to record the great assistance afforded by Dr. F. G. B. Millar and the Editorial Committee.

⁴ Height of the inscription, 65 cm; width, 65 cm. The height of the letters is not uniform, and varies between 7 and 9.5 cm: line 1 = 9.5 cm, lines 2-6 = 7-9 cm. Average distance between lines, 4 cm. Average depth of letters, 4 mm.

⁵ The emperor appears in the nominative, the legate in the ablative without a verb like *curante*; cf. *CIL* viii 10016; see also 10048; 10114; 10210.

⁶ According to Suetonius, *Vesp.* 6, on 1 July by Tiberius Julius Alexander and the army in Egypt, and 11 July by the army in Judaea. Tacitus, *Hist.* ii, 79 has the same date for Alexander and 3 July for Vespasian's own troops. Josephus, *Bj* iv, 10, 4 (601) ff. provides no exact date, but gives priority to the army in Judaea, followed by Mucianus, and, only after a personal appeal by Vespasian himself, by Alexander.

⁷ See p. 19 below.

⁸ cf. M. Gichon and B. H. Isaac, *IEJ* 24 (1974), 120.

⁹ *Vesp.* 12.

¹⁰ *Hist.* iv, 3. Evidence from coins confirms that Vespasian in 69 did not use the republican titles which he could not yet claim. See *BMC Emp.* ii, p. lxiii: mint of Asia, soon after 1 July 69, *Imp. Caes. Vespas. Aug.*; p. lxii: mint of Illyricum, August 69 onwards, *Imp. Caesar Vespasianus Aug.*; p. liv: Tarraco, about October, *Imp. Caesar Vespasianus*; p. xxviii: Rome, December onwards, *Imp. Caesar Vespasianus Aug.*

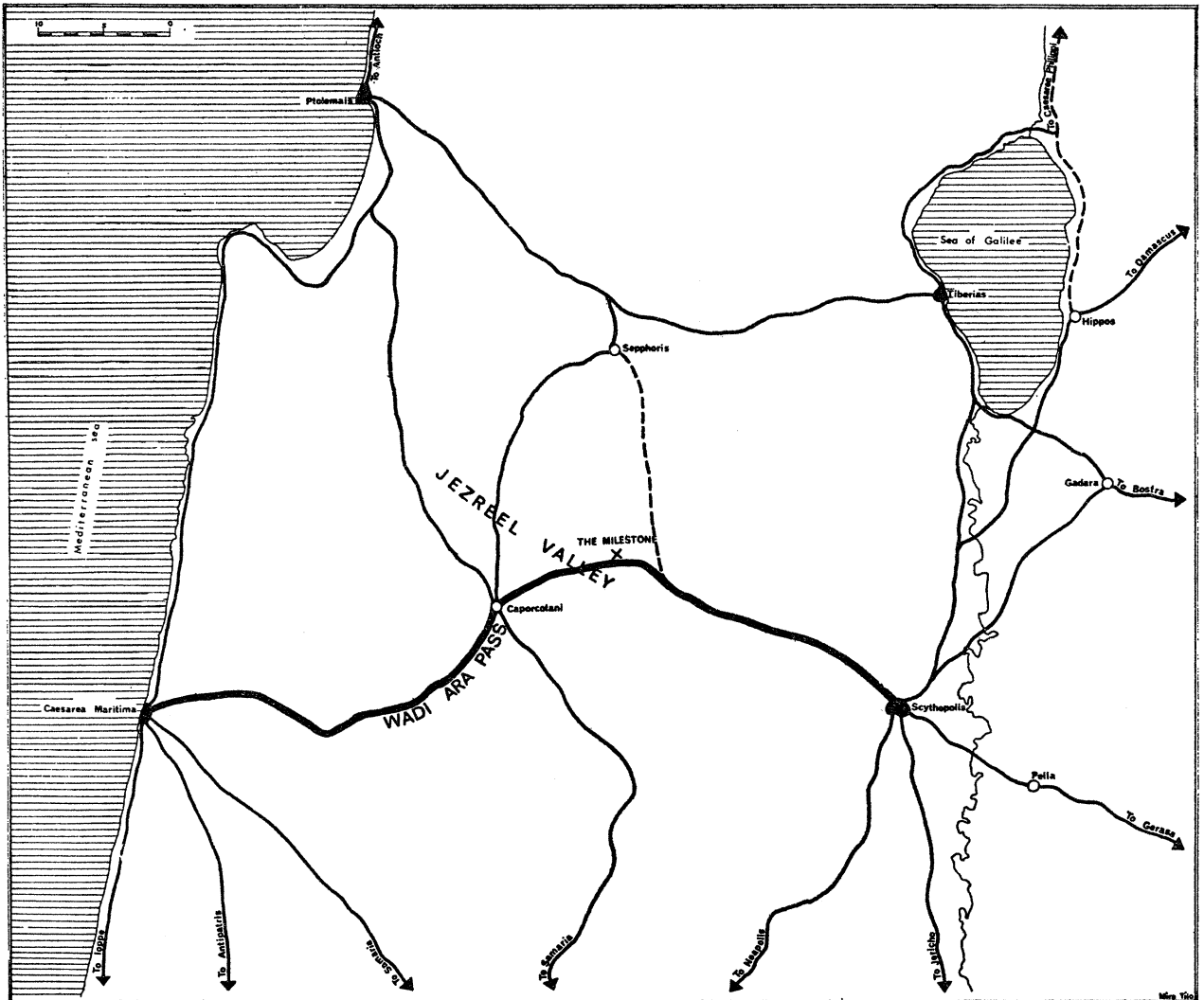


FIG. 1. ROMAN ROADS IN N. JUDAEA AND THE FIND-SPOT OF THE MILESTONE OF A.D. 69
 Drawn by M. Tilo. Copyright B. H. Isaac and I. Roll.

The milestone belonged to the road which led from Caesarea eastward along the narrow pass of Wadi Ara and through the valley of Jezreel to Scythopolis (Fig. 1). From there it led to Pella and Gerasa, cities of the Decapolis. It had been in use long before the Roman conquest.¹¹ It was an important route during Roman imperial rule, a fact which is attested by the numerous milestones discovered along it.¹² In the summer and autumn of 67 Vespasian quartered the 5th and 10th legions in Caesarea, and the 15th legion in Scythopolis.¹³ After the campaign in Gaulanitis, towards the end of 67, the 10th legion stayed at Scythopolis, and the 5th and 15th were sent to Caesarea.¹⁴ The route must have been used

¹¹ See Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible* (1967), 41 ff.

¹² (a) West of the pass: see n. 21 below. (b) The Wadi Ara pass: G. Schumacher, *Mitt. u. Nachr. des D. P.-V.* (1903), 4 ff., claimed to have seen several milestones. Since then, however, no one else has seen any of them, including the present authors who undertook a thorough search in the area. See also P. Thomsen, *ZDPV* 40 (1917), 69-70. (c) The section of the northern exit of the Wadi Ara pass to Scytho-

polis: M. Avi-Yonah, *QDAP* 12 (1946), 98-102. A complete account of this part of the road and its milestones is in preparation. (d) The section Scythopolis-Pella-Gerasa: Thomsen, *op. cit.* (n. 12), 65-7, and S. Mittmann, *Beiträge zur Siedlungsgeschichte des nördlichen Ostjordanlandes* (1970), 157-8. The authors wish to thank the Israel Milestone Committee for permission to use material in its possession.

¹³ *Bj* iii, 9, 1 (412).

¹⁴ *Bj* iv, 2, 1 (87-8).

again during the operations against Peraea, first by Vespasian, who set off from Caesarea early in 68,¹⁵ then possibly by Placidus and Traianus.¹⁶ It is clear how important it was to the Romans to possess a good road between the cities of Scythopolis and Caesarea Maritima. The new milestone furnishes proof that the Roman command took the necessary steps to construct and maintain such a road.¹⁷ From Hadrian's time onward the legion VI Ferrata had its fort at Caparcotna near the road, not far from the northern entry of the Wadi Ara pass. The road thus formed the connection between the fort and Caesarea, the provincial capital, to the west, and provincia Arabia to the east.¹⁸

The presence of the name of the *legatus* of X Fretensis on the milestone suggests that the road was constructed by units of this legion. Josephus mentions that the Roman army in Judaea included special units of ὁδοποιοί whose task it was to straighten, to level and to broaden existing roads.¹⁹ The date of the milestone from Afula indicates that at least one new road was constructed during the Jewish War. This must have been a project undertaken during the suspension of hostilities from July 69 till the spring of 70. The inscription shows an aspect of Roman activity in those parts of Judaea already subdued by the army.²⁰ Of course it should not be forgotten that road-building was a useful employment for soldiers, kept idle in the midst of a civil war. This phase came to an end with the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem in 70.

The last line of the inscription indicates a distance of 34 miles. This number corresponds to the actual distance from the find-spot to Caesarea.²¹ Moreover, it corresponds exactly to the distances given by the Tabula Peutingeriana for the Scythopolis-Caesarea road²²: the section Scythopolis-Caparcotani as 24 miles and the section Caparcotani-Caesarea as 28 miles.²³ The milestone from Afula was discovered on the section Scythopolis-Caparcotani at the distances corresponding to 6 Roman miles from Caparcotani and 18 Roman miles from Scythopolis.²⁴ In other words the distance given by the milestone corresponds exactly to those of the Tabula and to actual distances as they appear on modern maps.

As has been mentioned above, because of the early date of the milestone, Vespasian appears without the republican titles which invariably follow the emperor's names on milestones of the first century. The present authors have found no epigraphical material dating to 69, which might furnish any parallel. The milestone seems to be not only the earliest record of Roman road-building in Judaea, but also the earliest official document relating to the Flavians.

¹⁵ *Bj* iv, 7, 3-4 (413-19).

¹⁶ *Bj* iv, 8, 2 (450).

¹⁷ It is very likely that the road constructed in 69 included the sections Scythopolis-Pella-Gerasa. Milestones of A.D. 112 discovered between Pella and Gerasa mention restoration of the road; cf. Thomsen, *ZDPV* 40 (1917), nos. 215, 216, 218a, 220; Mittmann, loc. cit. (n. 12). The emperor Trajan thus restored a road—possibly built by his father—in order to ensure communications between Caesarea and the Via Nova Traiana.

¹⁸ Caparcotna = Caparcotani of the Tabula Peutingeriana (n. 22 below) = Kefar Otnay of the Jewish sources. Several inscriptions identify Caparcotna as the fort of VI Ferrata: *CIL* iii 6814-16; W. M. Ramsay, *JRS* 6 (1916), 129-31; B. Levick, *JRS* 48 (1958), 75-6. A roof-tile-stamp of VI Ferrata, discovered on the site, was recorded by G. Schumacher, *Tell el-Mutesellim* i (1908), 175, fig. 261. See M. Avi-Yonah in P-W, Suppl. xiii (1973), s.v. 'Palæstina', cols. 400 and 419-20.

¹⁹ *Jos.*, *Bj* iii, 7, 3 (141-2); 6, 2 (118); see also v, 2, 1 (47).

²⁰ For a discussion of the development of the

Roman road-system in Israel see I. Roll, 'Routes romaines en Israël', *Actes du IXe Congrès International d'Études sur les Frontières Romaines (Mamaia, 6-13 Septembre 1972)* (1974), 505-6.

²¹ One Roman mile = 1,482 m, so this gives 50 km. Four other known milestones indicate the distance from Caesarea: (a) a milestone of Marcus Aurelius, as yet unpublished, seems to have indicated the 7th mile from Caesarea on the road to Caparcotna; (b) a milestone of Septimius Severus, as yet unpublished, indicates the 2nd mile on the road to Ptolemais; (c) *AE* 1971, 471, of Pertinax, seems to have indicated the 5th mile on the same road; (d) S. Dar and S. Applebaum, *PEQ* (1973), 93 seems to have indicated a distance of 10 miles on the road to Antipatris.

²² A facsimile of segment X can be found in *Atlas of Israel* (1970), map I/2. For a good copy, see G. A. Smith, *Historical Atlas of the Holy Land*² (1936), map on p. 27.

²³ cf. n. 18.

²⁴ 24-6 = 18, i.e. the distance from the milestone to Scythopolis; and 28 + 6 = 34, i.e. the distance from the milestone to Caesarea.

M. Ulpius Traianus, father of the emperor Trajan, has been the subject of a number of studies.²⁵ Josephus describes some of his activities as commander of X Fretensis, the latest of which date to June 68.²⁶ R. Syme has suggested that Traianus may have accompanied Vespasian from Judaea to Egypt after his proclamation as emperor in July 69,²⁷ while Hanslik assumed that he will have governed an additional minor province in 68/9.²⁸ But the milestone of 69 from Judaea shows that he remained there as *legatus* of X Fretensis at least until the second half of 69. As a consequence, his term as governor of Baetica must be dated before the Jewish War.²⁹ If so, he held his first provincial governorship in his country of origin. After the proconsulate of Baetica, he served as one of Vespasian's three legionary commanders. The other two were Titus, commanding the XV Apollinaris, and Sex. Vettulenus Cerealis the V Macedonica.³⁰ It should be noted that the two legates, Traianus and Cerealis, were in charge of the two legions which Josephus describes as τὰ ἐπισιμώτατα.³¹ Vespasian was sole commander of the army, and neither Titus nor anybody else served as chief of staff. The three legionary commanders either acted under Vespasian's orders, or fulfilled independent missions: Cerealis marched against the Samaritans and Idumaeans,³² Traianus subjugated Peraea.³³ Titus did not have sole command of any large-scale military operations before the siege of Jerusalem.³⁴ It has already been mentioned that the sources do not agree as to whether Vespasian was first proclaimed emperor by his own troops or by the army in Egypt.³⁵ It is clear, however, that Vespasian could not possibly have aspired to the throne without being sure of the support of his own troops, whose commanders were Traianus, Cerealis and his own son. Among other things, he would have to be certain that these troops would remain loyal after he himself and Titus had left Judaea for Egypt. It is now apparent that the two legates remaining in Judaea were Traianus and Cerealis.³⁶ The construction of a road, attested by the milestone, shows that Traianus was not idle during Vespasian's absence. In setting up milestones naming Vespasian as emperor, Traianus showed himself as one of the earliest supporters of the new reign. There is an additional point of interest: Traianus added his own name on the milestone. This means that, apart from Vespasian, he had no superior in Judaea who might have claimed that honour. Between July 69 and the return of Titus, Traianus had a colleague in the area, Cerealis, commander of the V Macedonica, but no superior.³⁷ In 70

²⁵ For a full bibliography: P-W, Suppl. X (1965), cols. 1032 ff., s.v. 'M. Ulpius Traianus (*pater*)' (R. Hanslik). See also F. Grosso, *Rend. Ac. Lomb.* 91 (1957), 318-42, and M. Durry, *Les Empereurs romains d'Espagne* (1965), 45-54. The most recent treatment is G. W. Bowersock, *JRS* 63 (1973), 133 ff.

²⁶ Jos., *B⁷* iii, 7, 31 (289 ff.); 9, 8 (458); 10, 3 (485); iv, 8, 1 (450).

²⁷ R. Syme, *Tacitus* (1958), 30.

²⁸ P-W, Suppl. x, col. 1033.

²⁹ cf. W. Eck, *Senatoren von Vespasian bis Hadrian* (1970), 237.

³⁰ For Cerealis see Jos., *B⁷* iii, 7, 32 (310 ff.). He retained his legionary command when Titus was in command of the whole army, see Jos., *B⁷* vi, 2, 5 (131) and 4, 3 (237); after the latter's departure Cerealis was in charge of the army of occupation till the arrival of Lucilius Bassus: see Jos., *B⁷* vii, 6, 1 (163). His full name appears in *CIL* x 4862. For his consulate, probably around 73/4, see R. Syme *Athenaeum* 35 (1957), 312-13. For Titus' command of XV Apollinaris, see Jos., *B⁷* iii, 1, 3 (8) and 4, 2 (65); Suetonius, *Titus* 4: 'legioni praepositus'. See also E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* i, ed. G. Vermes and F. Millar (1973), 492, n. 31.

³¹ Jos., *B⁷* iii, 4, 2 (65).

³² Jos., *B⁷* iii, 7, 32 (310 ff.) and iv, 9, 9 (552 ff.).

³³ Jos., *B⁷* iv, 8, 1, (450).

³⁴ Titus did not take any town as sole commander: at Japha (in Galilee) Traianus was in command of the right wing, Jos., *B⁷* iii, 7, 31 (298), at Jotapata Vespasian was in charge, 7, 33 (322). At Tarichaea

Titus had to ask for support and, when Traianus joined him with 400 cavalry, Titus' men were vexed because their victory would be diminished because of this partnership, 10, 3 (485). At Gamala, finally, Vespasian joined his son in the course of the battle, iv, 1, 10 (70). Maybe as compensation for this lack of independent action, Josephus tends to mention Titus on every possible occasion, for example when he takes a legion from one place to another: e.g. *B⁷* iii, 1, 3, (8); 4, 2 (64); 9, 7 (446).

³⁵ cf. n. 6 above.

³⁶ Cerealis was still there during the siege of Jerusalem, Jos., *B⁷* vi 4, 3, (237).

³⁷ As R. Syme has noted, it happened more than once that *legati* took charge of the province when a governor died or departed: Cn. Pompeius Collega, a *legatus* in Syria, was apparently in charge there until the arrival of the consular legate L. Caesennius Paetus, late in 70, Jos., *B⁷* vii, 3, 4 (58-60); see P-W xxi 2, cols. 2269-70. For a *legatus leg. IIII Scythicae, pro legato consulari provinc. Syriae* in 97/8, see *AE* 1908, 237, *CIL* viii 17801 = *ILS* 1055, cf. R. Syme, *JRS* 48 (1958), 6-7, and *Tacitus* (1958), App. 3. Later C. Julius Severus took over the administration of Syria as praetorian *legatus* while at the same time retaining command of his legion, when the governor, Publicius Marcellus, had to leave his province for Judaea at the time of the revolt of Bar Kochba (132-5), cf. *IGR* iii 174-5; see also Schürer, op. cit. (n. 30), 518-19, and 549, n. 151. For the significance of names of officials on milestones, see Th. Pekáry, *Untersuchungen zu den römischen Reichsstrassen* (1968), 77 ff.

military operations in Judaea were resumed. Titus returned to Judaea with four legions for the siege of Jerusalem, where he arrived before Passover.³⁸ The structure of command was changed; it was apparently felt that Titus lacked the experience to be in sole command of his army. He was therefore assisted by Tiberius Julius Alexander, who had been among the first to proclaim Vespasian emperor, and now became chief of staff.³⁹ Traianus was superseded as legate of X Fretensis by (A.) Larcus Lepidus,⁴⁰ who came to his command straight from the quaestorship of Crete and Cyrenaica, and belonged to a group of officers who obtained promotion quickly under Vespasian.⁴¹ Sex. Vettulenus Cerealis remained legate of V Macedonica, while M. Tittius Frugi took over the XV Apollinaris from Titus.⁴² The commander of the 12th legion is not mentioned by name.⁴³ Traianus, as a veteran commander and early supporter of the new emperor, was apparently needed elsewhere in the empire. His suffect consulate early in the reign probably followed the command in Judaea.⁴⁴ As R. Syme has suggested, Traianus may have been *legatus* of Galatia-Cappadocia before 73.⁴⁵ He certainly governed the major province of Syria in 73/4-76/7, gaining *triumphalia ornamenta*, and was probably responsible for the ordering of the eastern frontier and its defences.⁴⁶ Finally, he came to the supreme provincial command, the proconsulate of Asia, in 79/80. He was also the first of his *gens* to be adlected into the patriciate.⁴⁷

It seems legitimate to conclude that the milestone has done much to clarify the important role of Traianus in Judaea under Vespasian as general and afterwards as emperor.⁴⁸ The years 68 and 69 decided the ultimate success of Traianus, and thus saw the real *incunabula et rudimenta* of his son's career as well.⁴⁹

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³⁸ For Titus' march see Jos., *Bḥ* iv, 11, 5 (658); v, 1, 6 (41). He encamped before the walls of Jerusalem at Passover, on the 14th of the month Xanthicus, *Bḥ* v, 3, 1 (98-9) and 13, 7 (567).

³⁹ See Jos., *Bḥ* v, 1, 6 (46) and vi, 4, 3 (237); cf. Schürer, op. cit. (n. 30), 502, n. 85.

⁴⁰ Jos., *Bḥ* vi, 4, 3 (237); *CIL* x 6659 = *ILS* 987; see *PIR*² L 94.

⁴¹ See D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (1950), 1441, n. 33, and J. Morris, *JRS* 43 (1953), 79-80. Lepidus was decorated in the Jewish War and was afterwards governor of Bithynia-Pontus. It should be noted that the *terminus post quem* of the milestone proves the presence of Traianus in Judaea after 1 July 69. It furnishes no proof that he actually stayed there until the supreme command of Titus. This is, however, more than likely as Lepidus, a relatively inexperienced officer—cf. the rout of his legion described by Josephus, *Bḥ* v 2, 4 (75 ff.)—would hardly have been left in charge of X Fretensis without a senior officer responsible for the army as a whole.

⁴² Jos., *Bḥ* vi, 4, 3 (237). For Tittius Frugi, see *PIR*¹ T 208.

⁴³ Professor S. Applebaum notes that the legate of XII Fulminata is almost certainly not mentioned because the legion had disgraced itself at Beth Horon under Cestius Gallus, Jos., *Bḥ* vii, 1, 3 (18).

⁴⁴ Traianus may have held a consulate in absence, cf. R. Syme, *JRS* 48 (1958), 6-7. The date of the suffect consulate is not quite certain. June/July 70 was proposed by J. Morris, *JRS* 43 (1953), 79-80. The relevant fragment of the *Fasti Ostienses* has been re-discovered by F. Zevi, *Akten des VI. Internationalen Kongresses für griechische und lateinische Epigraphik, München 1972*, (1973), 438-9, and thence by L. Vidman in *Listy Filologické* 98 (1975), 66 ff.

⁴⁵ R. Syme, *Tacitus*, p. 31, n. 1.

⁴⁶ Syme, op. cit., p. 31, supported by G. W. Bowersock, *JRS* 63 (1973), 133 ff.

⁴⁷ Pliny, *Pan.* 9, 2.

⁴⁸ Bowersock, op. cit. (n. 25), 134-5, proposed a restoration of the inscription from Miletus, containing Traianus' *cursus honorum*, which would make him a *legatus* of Titus, as well as of Vespasian, in the Jewish War (cf. Th. Wiegand, *Milet* i. 5 (1919), 53, a corrected version of *ILS* 8970; see also Syme, loc. cit. (n. 35); G. Alföldy, *Fasti Hispanienses* (1969), 157, with n. 49). The following should be observed: (1) In 69, as argued above, Titus certainly was not higher in rank than Traianus. Accordingly, Titus is not named on the milestone of that year. (2) There is no reason to assume that Traianus remained in Judaea after Titus took over command of the army. (3) Other inscriptions relating to the Jewish War name only Vespasian as commander, e.g. *ILS* 2544 = *CIL* v 7007; *ILS* 987 = *CIL* x 6659, describing someone who is probably Lepidus as legate of Vespasian only. On official inscriptions in general Vespasian and Titus do not appear as colleagues before 73 (*AE* 1903, 256). (4) In 70 Titus was indeed hailed as Imperator, gained a triumph which he celebrated in 71, and was awarded decorations (*ILS* 988; *CIL* iii 2917; *AE* 1903, 386). Significantly, there is no record of Traianus ever having received such decorations.

⁴⁹ The emperor Trajan later deified his natural father at the same time as his father by adoption, which did not, however, lead to his enrolment among the established *divi*, see *BMC* iii, 498-508; Pliny, *Pan.* 89. The honours of *Divus Pater Traianus* may have stressed the fact that he, as much as *Divus Nerva*, was responsible for the present fortune of the emperor Trajan. In a similar vein Pliny insists that Nerva's sole claim to deification was based on his adoption of Trajan, cf. *Pan.* 6-10, esp. 10, 5. See also J. H. Oliver, *Harv. Theol. Rev.* 42 (1949), 36-7.



AFULA, ISRAEL: MILESTONE OF A.D. 69: (a) THE STONE, (b) THE LETTERING

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