

Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation

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***‘If the World Itself is Shaken’*: Roman Responses
to Natural Disasters From the Late Republic to
the Great Famine Under Claudius and Nero
(65BC – AD63)**

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‘For what can seem safe enough if the whole world is shaken and its most substantial parts collapse? If the one thing in the cosmos which is immovable, and fixed so as to support everything that rests upon it, starts to sway, and if the earth loses its characteristic feature of stability, where will our fears eventually subside?’ – Seneca, On Earthquakes, 6. 1. 4.

ABSTRACT

The historical analysis of ancient natural disasters, that is, those occurrences of natural phenomena resulting in loss of life and human injury, and damage or destruction to human property, is a new field of research. Yet despite its relatively recent emergence, engagement with this new field can inestimably help historians better understand how those belonging to ancient civilizations understood the natural world around them. This thesis examines the responses of various Romans to natural disasters – an area that has received little attention. For, although scholarly works on individual natural disasters such as the Campanian earthquake of AD62, the great fire of Rome in AD64, and the eruption of Vesuvius, certainly exist, there are relatively few treatments on Roman responses to natural disasters in the broader sense, especially during the Julio-Claudian period which predates those of the aforementioned individual natural disasters under Nero and the Flavians.

Stringent historical and historiographical investigative approaches are implemented throughout this monograph in order to derive from the Romans themselves, through the writings and other sources of information they left behind – especially in Rome, but also throughout Italy and the empire – how they articulated their understandings of their natural world and its recurring natural disasters. In line with current scholarship I shall illustrate that Roman perceptions were far from homogenous and that their responses over time were anything but uniform. However, in divergence from what has gone before, this thesis will demonstrate that the Romans made individual and communal decisions as to how they understood and responded to nature and natural disasters. Thus, the responses of Romans at individual and collective levels are explored throughout this thesis. Moreover, it will be shown throughout, that Romans responded to natural disasters essentially in one or more of the following four ways: firstly as a means of survival, secondly as means of religious observance, thirdly, as a means of following a philosophical standpoint, and fourthly as part of civic duty, at an individual (e.g. a *princeps*) and/or a communal (e.g. a city or social group) level. Most certainly, cultural trends helped shaped how Romans lived, but so too did their own individual attitudes. In this way, this thesis will benefit future historians seeking to better understand the diversity of the Roman world and, indeed, the ancient Romans themselves.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	3
INTRODUCTION	7
I.1 THE EARTHQUAKE OF AD53: AN HISTORICAL EPISODE SHOWING EXAMPLES OF ROMAN RESPONSES TO SCENES OF NATURAL DISASTERS	10
I.2 PURPOSE OF THIS THESIS	11
I.3 TERMINOLOGY	12
I.4 HUMANS, GODS, AND NATURAL DISASTERS	14
I.5 PRODIGIA, REMEDIA, AND THE PAX DEORUM.....	15
I.6 CURRENT CRITERIA FOR APPROACHING NATURAL DISASTERS	16
I.7 PIONEERING TRENDS IN CONSTITUTING NATURAL DISASTERS AS PART OF HUMAN HISTORY	23
1.7.1 Studies on Tiber Flooding.....	24
1.7.2 Studies on Fires in Rome	26
1.7.3 Studies on Earthquakes around the Roman Empire	28
1.7.4 Studies on Plagues in Roman Times.....	30
1.7.5 Studies on Famines in the Roman Empire.....	31
1.7.6 Building Upon Scholarship in this PhD Dissertation.....	32
I.8 METHODOLOGY	33
I.9 OVERVIEW OF EACH CHAPTER IN THIS PHD THESIS	35
CHAPTER ONE: ROMAN RESPONSES TO NATURAL DISASTERS THROUGHOUT THE MIDDLE AND LATE REPUBLICAN PERIODS.....	38
1.1 REPUBLICAN RESPONSES TO NATURAL DISASTERS I: CIVIC (BENEFACTIO, IMPERIUM).....	38
1.1.1 Introduction	38
1.1.2 Civic Responses to Natural Disasters in the Middle Republican Period	39
1.1.3 Civic Responses to Natural Disasters in the Late Republican Period: Pompey, Antioch, and John Malalas ⁴¹	
1.1.4 Summary.....	44
1.2 REPUBLICAN RESPONSES TO NATURAL DISASTERS II: RELIGIOUS	46
1.2.1 Religious Responses to Natural Disasters in the Middle Republican Period	47
1.2.2 Religious Responses to Natural Disasters in the Late Republican Period	50
1.2.3 Summary.....	52
1.3 REPUBLICAN RESPONSES TO NATURAL DISASTERS III: PHILOSOPHICAL (LUCRETIUS, CICERO).....	53
1.3.1 Lucretius' Impact and Legacy	54
1.3.2 Cicero's Response to Lucretius.....	56
1.3.3 The Influence of Marcus Crassus Upon Cicero	57
1.3.4 Summary.....	58
1.4 CONCLUSIONS	59
CHAPTER TWO: FLOODS AND FIRES IN AUGUSTAN ROME	62
2.1 FLOODING IN ROME UNDER THE PRINCIPATE OF AUGUSTUS.....	62
2.2 THE AEDILESHIP OF MARCUS AGRIPPA.....	68
2.2.1 Findings.....	70
2.3 THE FLOOD OF 27BC: CIVIC, AND POETIC-PHILOSOPHICAL RESPONSES	71
2.3.1 From Octavian to Augustus	71

2.3.2	<i>Sextus Pacuvius and Augustus' Flood-Management Reforms of 27BC</i>	74
2.3.3	<i>Beautifying Rome, Enhancing One's Power</i>	76
2.3.4	<i>Summary</i>	77
2.4	THE FLOODS OF 23 AND 22BC	78
2.4.1	<i>The 22BC Flood</i>	78
2.4.2	<i>Summary</i>	79
2.5	THE FLOODS OF 12BC, AD5, AND AD12	80
2.5.1	<i>The Flood of 12BC</i>	80
2.5.2	<i>The Flood of AD5</i>	80
2.5.3	<i>The Flood of AD12</i>	81
2.5.4	<i>Summary</i>	81
2.6	FLOODING: CONCLUSIONS	82
	FIRE IN AUGUSTAN ROME	83
2.7	FIRE IN THE CITY OF ROME UNDER AUGUSTUS	83
2.7.1	<i>The 16, 14, 12BC Fires of Rome</i>	85
2.7.2	<i>Summary</i>	87
2.8	THE FIRE OF 7BC: AUGUSTUS' RECONFIGURATION OF THE CITY OF ROME AND THE FUNCTION OF THE AUGUSTAN FORUM	87
2.8.1	<i>Augustus' Organisational Reforms of the vici in Rome</i>	88
2.8.2	<i>The Augustan Forum and the Fire-Screen Wall</i>	89
2.8.3	<i>Summary</i>	95
2.9	THE AD4 AND AD6 FIRES OF ROME	96
2.9.1	<i>Summary</i>	98
2.10	FIRE: CONCLUSIONS	99
	CHAPTER THREE: EARTHQUAKES, PLAGUES AND FAMINES, IN AUGUSTAN ROME, ITALY, AND THE EMPIRE	102
3.1	EARTHQUAKES THROUGHOUT THE ROMAN EMPIRE	102
3.1.1	<i>Seneca and Earthquakes</i>	102
3.1.2	<i>Augustus and Earthquakes</i>	104
3.1.3	<i>Augustus, Livy, and Julius Obsequens</i>	109
3.1.4	<i>Summary</i>	110
	PLAGUE	110
3.2	THE PLAGUE OF 22BC: ROME AND ITALY	110
3.2.1	<i>The Plague of 22BC: Courses</i>	112
3.2.2	<i>Summary</i>	113
	FAMINE	114
3.3	BREAKDOWN IN THE EMPIRE'S FOOD SUPPLY NETWORK, FAMINE IN ROME	114
3.3.1	<i>Feeding Rome</i>	114
3.3.2	<i>The 22BC Famine: Augustus' Civic Responses</i>	117
3.3.3	<i>Famine in Rome: AD5</i>	119
3.3.4	<i>Summary</i>	121
3.4	CONCLUSIONS	122
	CHAPTER FOUR: TIBERIUS: FLOOD, FIRE, EARTHQUAKE, FAMINE	123
4.1	FLOODS AND FIRES IN ROME UNDER TIBERIUS	123

4.1.1	<i>Flooding of the Tiber Under Tiberius</i>	123
4.1.2	<i>Fires in Rome</i>	125
4.2	THE AD17 EARTHQUAKE IN THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF ASIA	127
4.2.1	<i>Sources</i>	127
4.2.2	<i>Tacitus and the AD17 Earthquake</i>	128
4.2.3	<i>Tiberius' Response to the AD17 Earthquake</i>	134
4.2.4	<i>The Restoration of the Asian Cities: The Roles of Slave Workers and Slave Masters</i>	142
4.2.5	<i>The Role of Rome's Legions in the Restoration of Asia</i>	145
4.2.6	<i>Imperial and Local Overseers</i>	146
4.2.7	<i>Responses in the Province of Asia to Tiberius's Restorations There</i>	147
4.3	AVOIDANCE OF FAMINE UNDER TIBERIUS	151
4.3.1	<i>Summary</i>	153
4.4	CONCLUSIONS	154
	CHAPTER FIVE: EARTHQUAKES IN ASIA, ITALY, GREECE AND THESSALY UNDER TIBERIUS	157
5.1	EARTHQUAKES IN ASIA	157
5.2	THE AD23 EARTHQUAKES IN ASIA AND GREECE	157
5.3	EARTHQUAKES IN ITALY	161
5.4	EARTHQUAKES IN GREECE AND THESSALY	163
5.5	ROMAN ATTITUDES TO EARTHQUAKES UNDER TIBERIUS	164
5.6	CONCLUSIONS	165
	CHAPTER SIX: THE PRINCIPATES OF GAIUS, CLAUDIUS, AND NERO, AND THE GREAT FAMINE	166
	THE PRINCIPATE OF GAIUS	166
6.1	NATURAL DISASTERS UNDER GAIUS (CALIGULA)	166
6.1.1	<i>Fire in Rome, Earthquake in Antioch</i>	166
6.1.2	<i>Gaius and Claudius</i>	169
6.1.3	<i>Summary</i>	173
	THE PRINCIPATE OF CLAUDIUS	173
6.2	EARTHQUAKES UNDER CLAUDIUS	173
6.2.1	<i>Summary</i>	178
6.3	THE GREAT FAMINE UNDER CLAUDIUS AND NERO AD45-63	178
6.3.1	<i>The Great Famine and Its Causes</i>	178
6.3.2	<i>The Response By Claudius</i>	181
6.3.3	<i>The Roman Paul's Responses to the Famine</i>	187
6.3.4	<i>The Jerusalem Donation</i>	190
6.3.5	<i>Paul Takes Charge</i>	194
6.3.6	<i>Conclusions</i>	201
	CONCLUSION	205
	SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	215

INTRODUCTION

No two natural events are exactly the same, and human responses to them are never entirely identical. This was especially true in the case of the Romans, who, this thesis contends, were not always homogenous in their responses to the many and varied natural disasters that struck Rome and its Empire. When Virgil wrote about nature in the *Aeneid*, he imagined the pre-settled natural environs which would one day become the metropolis of Rome, haunted and frequented by Jupiter, waiting to be discovered and worshiped there by future Romans so that by doing so he could, in turn, make them into a world power. As Evander leads Aeneas to a grove which would one day become the future site of Rome, Virgil imaginatively recounts:

From here he led the way to the house of Tarpeia and the Capitol, now all gold, but in those distant days bristling with rough scrub. Even then a powerful sense of divine presence in the place caused great fear among the country people, even then they went in awe of the wood and the rock. ‘This grove’, said Evander, ‘this leafy-topped hill, is the home of some god, we know not which. My Arcadians believe they have often seen Jupiter himself shaking the darkening aegis in his right hand to drive along the storm clouds [here]’.¹

However, not all Romans agreed with Virgil’s assessment that the site of Rome alone was the abode of deity. Seneca wrote that any grove, indeed every grove, is the haunt of a god waiting to be discovered there to bestow future greatness as Jupiter did for Rome. In epistle 41, Seneca reflected:

If you have ever come on a grove of dense ancient trees that have risen to an exceptional height shutting out all sight of the sky with one thick screen of branches upon another, the loftiness of the forest, the seclusion of the spot, your sense of wonderment at finding so deep and unbroken a gloom out of doors, will persuade you of the presence of a deity.²

But neither did all Romans ascribe to Seneca’s beliefs. Some Romans, like Lucan, Pomponius Mela, and Pliny the Elder considered forest groves to be merely the removed, secretive, sunless lairs of subversive Druids with their nightmarish rituals.³ But other Romans, like the Apostle Paul, a Roman Christian, when writing to the Christian believers in Rome, made abundantly clear that he believed that it was not only groves, but the entire earth that contains abundant evidence for the presence, not of a nightmarish deity and cult, but of a loving God, and that this earth is filled with that God. But that God was not a pagan god, but the one, single, monotheistic God, Yahweh. In making these claims, Paul exhorted his fellow Roman Christians:

For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so

¹ Virg. A. 8. 348-356; Ailsa Hunt, *Reviving Roman Religion: Sacred Trees in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

² Sen. *Ep.* 41.

³ Lucan. *Phars.* 1. 450-458; Pomp. Mela, *De chron.* 3. 2. 18-19; Pl. *NH.* 16. 249-251.

that people are without excuse.⁴

However, as Paul implies in the last words of the above quotation, there were also many other Romans who excused themselves from believing that the earth is the abode of any divine being. Regarding them, Paul continues:

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened... Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised. Amen.⁵

The presence of those Gentile pagans in the Roman world who exchanged religious piety for the satisfaction of physical, carnal, desires, is apparent in the pagan sources from the period too. This is especially so in the case of Petronius' *Satyricon*, a work wherein natural desire is prioritised above the profound religious thoughts of a Virgil, or a Seneca, or even a Paul.⁶ Yet the desire to satisfy natural urges can also be seen to constitute a popular way of embracing nature itself too, and lewd and explicit graffiti on the walls of the *thermopolium*, the Suburban Baths, a ramp to the beachfront, and even a house, around Herculaeum, and several pieces of graffiti from the walls of brothels and the Marine Gate in Pompeii testify to that common popularity.⁷

But besides these civic, religious, and sensual ways of looking at nature, other Romans viewed nature through philosophical eyes. Having observed and reflected upon the ebbs and flows in nature, one anonymous poet from Pompeii expressed himself through writing graffiti on a city wall with obvious epicurean tones evoking Lucretius' own, thereby making his own public declaration that:

Nothing can last for all time:

When the Sun has shone brightly it returns to Ocean; The Moon wanes, which recently was full.

Even so the fierceness of Venus often becomes a puff of wind.⁸

As a result, we observe in Virgil's *Aeneid* civic and religious attitudes towards nature working together to reinforce the very Roman concept that Rome had been predestined to be an imperial power by the gods themselves from time immemorial. However, that imperial destiny Seneca suggests was to be shared with other equally divinely favoured cities that were once simple groves like Rome, which explains something of Seneca's shared admiration for Greek culture with Nero during the latter's principate. But in other works we

⁴ Rom 1:20.

⁵ Rom 1:21, 24-25.

⁶ See Petronius, *Satyricon*, 23-26.

⁷ Herculaneum: *thermopolium* CIL IV 10568 = Della Corte no.725; House of the Relief of Telephus CIL IV 10628 = Della Corte no.465; Wall near beachfront ramp CIL IV 10694 = Della Corte no.806; Suburban Baths CIL IV 10677 = Della Corte no.828; CIL IV 10678 = Della Corte no.829; CIL IV 10675 = Della Corte no.826. Pompeii: Brothels CIL IV 2175; CIL IV 2185, 2186; CIL IV 2192; Wall near the Marine Gate CIL IV 1751.

⁸ CIL IV 9123, IX. Xiii. 4.

see quite different views. In them we see a certain sense of fear of natural features, while in Paul's writings we find a celebration of nature's destiny under the universal rule of God – nature not ordered by military conquest and structural violence, but with holiness and love. Yet, in juxtaposition, in the *Satyricon*, and in graffiti from Herculaneum and Pompeii, we find evidence for other, and perhaps for many Romans more pleasurable, ways of understanding nature through the meeting of one's natural urges. Nonetheless, it is also clear that in these places and others like them, many Romans also viewed nature through a philosophical lens.

In this thesis we shall examine these and other such vantage points taken by ancient Romans as we look at the five categories of natural disasters that characterised Rome and the Roman world from the Late Republic to the Great Famine under Claudius and Nero: in Rome, those of a) flood, and b) fire; and throughout all of Italy and the empire, those of c) earthquake, d) plague, and e) famine. These disasters are examined in terms of causation, such as: a) rain (for flood), b) combustion (for fire), c) tectonic plate movement (for earthquake), d) viral infection (for plague), and e) crop scarcity (for famine), and their courses. Through an evaluation of the broader findings in current scholarship with a close examination of the primary source material, this thesis analyses the various methods by which Romans could, and did, respond to natural disasters in various ways, especially, but not exclusively, in realms of the civic, the religious, and the philosophical will also be analysed. In doing so, this dissertation shall address what kinds of personal motivations, such as the nobles' desire for *gloria*, existed and how they took on culturally conditioned forms when expressing themselves outwardly. Thus, it will be shown that emperors often dispensed largesse in the aftermath of Tiber floods, and rebuilt parts of Rome in more glorious fashion in those areas damaged by fire. However, it shall be proven that responses such as these were never homogenous, and often underwent alterations in scope and intensity over the course of any individual emperor's lifetime. Thus, this PhD examines the principates of Augustus as well as Tiberius, Gaius, and Claudius to highlight continuity and change from emperor to emperor, over the course of each one's principate, to show that each did not happen in a vacuum, but that these could vary as well as inform one another culturally, and that each could build upon the achievements of their predecessors in new and varied ways.

Much light will be thrown primarily upon how the Roman upper classes outwardly and externally responded to natural disasters, with civic, religious, and philosophical action; but the many and varied collective and individual responses of Romans from lower classes will also be set forth. In doing so, we shall see that these actions never took place in internal vacuums within each person, but that rather they were the direct result of the ways Roman individuals and social groups perceived and understood the natural world around them. Thus, it shall be shown how perceptions and understandings informed Roman responses to natural disasters. This approach will clearly demonstrate, to paraphrase Stuart Piggin and Henry Lee, that any 'true history of a disaster... must set the context and begin further back', for 'if a disaster is a disruption of a functioning social system, the social system must first be understood.'⁹

⁹ Stuart Piggin and Henry Lee, *The Mt Kembla Disaster* (Oxford University Press, 1992), 3.

The historical methodology used in this thesis is simple and twofold: firstly, to analyse all the extant ancient material relating to natural disasters in the designated period to detect and interpret how Romans understood those disasters; and secondly, to contextualise this material in its historical and cultural setting by examining the sources through an appraisal of scholarship, both past and present. This thesis is primarily a literary-based thesis, however that is no way disadvantageous, for the writings and inscriptions left behind by the elite levels of Roman society are numerous and illuminate many points of view on natural disasters and the Romans' responses to them. Hence, the nature poetry of Lucretius and Virgil shed light upon how Romans like them understood the natural world for a time, while the historical prose works of Livy, Tacitus and Cassius Dio pinpoint natural events and synthesise a plethora of historical sources contemporary to those events themselves. In addition, writings such as the *Geography* of Strabo, the *Natural Questions* of Seneca, and the *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder, stand as crystallisations on how different Romans perceived, understood, and thereby responded to natural behaviours throughout the principates of Augustus, Tiberius and later emperors. Thus, although this thesis is largely based on written works, the variety of established genres, and the independence in thinking apparent in each one in itself demonstrate the degree to which such texts provide invaluable windows into individual and collective Roman mindsets. However, this thesis is not a reproduction of the ancient sources, but rather constitutes a detailed analysis of each with helpful clarification through the lens of modern scholarship.

Among other ancient sources that this thesis shall examine are inscriptions from Rome, Italy, Asia Minor, papyri from Egypt, and the writings of many educated Romans living in Rome and the provinces as well, including the epistles of Cicero, the apostle Paul, and Pliny the Younger. Analysed and synthesised, these sources illuminate the various types of responses by various Romans living throughout the empire, at both individual and communal levels, to numerous natural disasters examined in this thesis.

The present study is designed to inform the scholarly world of an important aspect from Roman history. It is a popular topic, but one in which only a handful of natural disasters are actually treated entirely thoroughly, among them the Campanian earthquake in AD62, the Great Fire of Rome in AD64, and the Mount Vesuvius eruption in AD79. This thesis, then, will assess a variety of natural disasters prior to AD63, aiming to provide a window to the intellectual, political, and socio-cultural history prior to those more famous historical events and to enrich our understandings of responses to them. This research project is also aimed at teaching future generations useful examples of coping behaviours from the distant past, that existed in the midst of periodic times of turmoil and upheaval. This is most clearly illustrated by the following historical 'episode'.

I.1 The Earthquake of AD53: An Historical Episode Showing Examples of Roman Responses to Scenes of Natural Disasters

In AD53, an earthquake hit the eastern Mediterranean, shaking Crete and Rhodes,¹⁰ that

¹⁰ For evidence this earthquake affected Rhodes, as well as Crete, see *GDI* 3753; Nicholas Ambraseys,

exposed a large dinosaur fossil embedded in the ground on the island of Crete, that took on intense mythological importance among the locals of that island who believed it to be the bodily remains of either Orion or Otus. News of this fossil and the theories and stories that the Cretans had attached to it soon spread throughout the empire stimulating much interest as it spread, including the interest of the emperor Claudius himself. According to Pliny the Elder:

A mountain in Crete was cleft by an earthquake [and] a body 69 feet in length was found, which some people thought must be that of Orion and others of Otus.¹¹

This dinosaur's designation by locals to be that of Orion or Otus reflects the existence of an acute and intense religiosity imbued in events and physical objects, irrespective of whether they appear factual to us or not, associated with seismic events believed by all Romans to be portents sent by the gods themselves. Malalas records that the emperor Claudius responded with great benevolence towards the inhabitants of Crete and Rhodes in both the aftermath of this earthquake and beyond, providing generous funding, a large workforce, and much support 'to Crete for reconstruction'. However this heightened sense of religiosity that swept the empire in the aftermath of this earthquake upon the discovery of this exposed fossil was heightened much further when, as Malalas recorded, the tomb of Dictys, an epic poet from ancient times who famously composed an epic of the Trojan War which by that time was thought lost forever, was discovered as it lay partly exposed among rubble upheaved by the violence of the earthquake, and upon inspection of the various inscribed signifiers, was identified to be the tomb of none other than Dictys' for the first time in centuries. When it was discovered inside this tomb a tin chest containing a copy of the Trojan War epic Dictys had written that had up to this point been considered lost to history, Crete erupted in excitement as did many throughout the empire when they heard the news. Representatives from Crete, escorted the epic book by sea vessel to Rome and presented it with in the midst of fanfare throughout the city and pomp inside the imperial palace to Claudius who, after having it inspected, scrutinised and accepted as wholly authentic and priceless by his antiquarian advisers, had copies made of the book by his palace scribes and placed in Rome's main public library for public viewing and study.¹²

I.2 Purpose of This Thesis

During episodic natural disasters, Romans were often exposed to much suffering and death, and consequently, many Romans responded to such disasters on the basis of their deepest fears and ingrained belief systems. Through the study of the Roman responses to natural disasters, historians gain a better understanding regarding precisely what these Romans thought about themselves, the gods, the state, and the natural world, at the deepest levels. Understanding these responses allows historians to better comprehend just how Romans were disposed to acting under precise conditions, thus providing an invaluable

Earthquakes, 115.

¹¹ Pl. *NH.* 7. 16.

¹² Malalas, *Chron.* 250/381; B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt, *Tebtunis Papyri* (University of California Press, 1907), 2, 9-12.

instrument for understanding the Romans and the Roman world better. A dissertation such as this thus helps us proceed to the core of Roman vulnerability and resilience to natural disasters, especially those that destroyed or damaged urban centres like Rome and Syrian Antioch, providing modern natural disaster management specialists with another tool for further determining how people can and do respond to such disasters throughout time. It is hoped that this may contribute to disaster management research around the world. This thesis shall focus primarily upon how Romans acted towards occurrences of natural disasters. In achieving this end, this thesis will show that the responses of Romans to natural disasters arose as a result of particular motivations:

- (a) The need for self-survival and the preservation of one's loved ones;
- (b) Ingrained sets of religious beliefs about the spirit-world and the afterlife;
- (c) Philosophical understandings of nature as a whole; or
- (d) A desire to help build up one's own standing, or that of communities, in the eyes of others;
- (e) Class status within Roman society.

In each case, responses to natural disasters belong to two main types, these being:

- (1) Nuanced, incorporating personal beliefs and relationships in determining the kind of response, and
- (2) Communal reactions by a community, city, or state decides to respond in a particular manner as a single community and entity.

At its most basic level this thesis examines what made Romans unique, yet also culturally aware, when confronted with natural disasters. Given the that 'typical' Roman responses to natural disasters involved personal responses to cultural norms as well as the natural disaster itself, this involvement will be explored using this primary evidence drawn from Graeco-Roman literature, epigraphy, architecture, numismatics, and other ancient sources filtered through a full spectrum of modern scholarship that support the principle that variation was inescapable in the cultural setting within which Romans lived and moved.

Of course, social and political groups within Roman society, such as the Senate, acted as a collective body, not as a single individual. And yet, within bodies such as these, there were indeed individuals who not always agreed. Hence as we shall see in Chapter Three, under Tiberius, many senators opposed the emperor while others were happily recruited to his Tiber flood level monitoring and regulating boards. Similarly, in those parts of Rome, Italy and the empire that were hit by natural disasters, variations in human responses to such disasters could and did exist; and we see this most clearly at work in relation to how people responded to the harsh conditions in Jerusalem during the Great Famine in Chapter Six, which constitutes the final chapter of this thesis.

I.3 Terminology

Although this thesis examines 'natural' disasters, it also discusses human agency in their

causation, as well as their responses to these events. For, the Romans saw the natural world, the human world, and divine world, all as intertwined, so too we also consider the interrelationships between the Romans and nature in this dissertation. This, in turn, allows us to better comprehend how Romans thought and behaved, too, and will prove useful to those seeking first-hand experience of the human overlap in responsive reactions to natural disasters between ancient Romans and modern humans. This thesis demonstrates that there was most certainly a consensus among the Romans that the world is not a separate entity to human history. Rather, the Romans believed that humanity, divinity, and nature are intertwined through a shared relationship, and that distinguishing between natural, human, and divine realms was atypical. Consequently, the Romans' own words for natural disasters could also be applied to describe other disasters brought on by the actions of human beings. The Latin word for military defeat and slaughter, *clades*, for instance, can also mean physical ruin; while the Latin word for military disaster, *calamitas*, can also be used to describe crop failure, blight, or disease. In addition, *casus* is interchangeable for both a political disaster and violent death; and *pestis* covers plague, pestilence, and physical destruction, as well as the fall or collapse of a civilization or political institution. Of course, the Romans had various descriptive words for the natural disasters themselves. Inscriptions and literary sources classify earthquakes and earth-tremors as *terrae motus*,¹³ although throughout most of the literary sources Romans usually identified them under the terms *terrae movit*,¹⁴ or *terrae tremor*.¹⁵ In addition, from the late republic to early and high empire periods, the Romans labelled flooding was generally referred to as *inundation*.¹⁶

These historical facts allow us to better approach the topic of ancient natural disasters and Roman responses to them. For, up until recent times, the field of historical natural disaster research has been partly based upon the German language and its use of the word 'Katastrophe'. This word denotes a sudden occurrence harmful to humans, animals and property, but does not suggest human causation. Much of the German corpus on ancient natural disasters does not take into account that disasters can have some human origin. Thus, drought and famine are seldom included within it.¹⁷ In the Romantic languages, moreover, natural disasters also take on an astrological aspect and are signs of ill- fortune and bad luck determined by the arrangement of the constellations and the planets, sun, and moon.¹⁸

¹³ See Sen. *NQ.* 6. 17. 2-3; Suet. *Cl.* 22; Aulus Gellius, 4. 6; *CIL* III 7096; *AE* (1912) Number 216; *CIL* X 1406=*ILS* 250; *CIL* X 1481; *AE* (1994) Number 413; *AE* (1994) Number 404; *CIL* X 846=*ILS* 6367; *AE* (1902) Number 40.

¹⁴ See Livy, 35. 40. 7; Plin. *Nat.* 2. 220, 2. 193-195; *HA.* 'Gallienus'. 5. 4.

¹⁵ Virg. *G.* 1. 475; Sen. *NQ.* 6. 30. 4, 6. 31. 1; Sen, *Ep.* 14. 91. 9; Plin. *Nat.* 2. 194; Tac. *Ann.* 14. 27. 1; Suet. *Nero*, 48. 2; *Gal.* 18. 1; Flor. *Epit.* 1. 22. 14. For an overview of the classifications made by Romans in this period concerning earthquakes and earth-tremors generally, see Stephano Conti, 'Lateinische Termini für Erdbeben in literarischen und epigraphischen Quellen der Römischen Zeit', in *Historical Social Research*, 32 (3) (2007) 57- 74.

¹⁶ Liv. 24. 9. 6; 30. 38. 10-12; 35. 9. 2-3; 35. 21. 5-6; 38. 28. 4; Tac. *Hist.* 1. 86; Sextus Aurelius Victor, *Epitome*, 13; *De Caesars*, 32; *HA.* 'Hadrian'. 21. 6; 'Antoninus Pius', 9. 3; 'Marcus Aurelius', 8.

¹⁷ Gerrit Jasper Schenk, 'Historical Disaster Research: State of Research, Concepts, Methods and Case Studies', *Historische Katastrophenforschung. Begriffe, Konzepte und Fallbeispiele*, 32, 2 (2007) 12.

¹⁸ In French: *désaster*; in Italian: *disastro*; in Spanish: *desastre*. Gerrit Jasper Schenk, 'Historical Disaster Research', 12.

However, in English the category of ‘natural disasters’ is more scientific in its definition, for it is more sympathetic in its comprehensiveness to more natural events, including those which are, at least partly, caused by humans - such as Roman urban planning on flood- plains, and the construction of buildings in the Roman suburbs using combustible materials. However, such use of English can steer us away from the ‘nature’ element in natural disasters. However, as Schott has observed, the advantage of this English categorization is in its embrace of more than merely the purely naturally caused disasters – most useful if we are to better understand what makes each case unique and preventable in the future.

I.4 Humans, Gods, and Natural Disasters

To the vast majority of Romans, humanity, nature, and the divine were in many ways indistinguishable. Numerous gods and goddesses inhabited the earth, together with lesser deities, and these divinities often had very human and natural attributes, and often associated themselves with nature and humankind alike, too. This explains why natural disasters often took on religious importance to those Romans who turned to the divine when faced with natural disasters. For, these were often seen to be expressions of divine disfavour, sent by gods to punish humans to prompt a return to traditional religion and conformity to traditional Roman institutions. Thus, when Apollonius of Tyana passed through Syrian Antioch and an earthquake occurred there, many locals there cowered and prayed in the belief that it had been sent by the gods in displeasure at the lack of respect they had shown Apollonius.¹⁹ On a separate occasion, at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, it was only after an earthquake occurred that the centurion and his guard, felt it imperative to declare concerning Jesus, “Truly, this was the Son of God!”²⁰

Much is made in modern scholarship of *prodigia* and the *pax deorum*, and indeed, a comprehension of these concepts is critical to understanding this thesis. However, many Romans responded to natural disasters with varying regard. For, although the state’s function was to maintain its public appearance before the gods, and its relationship with them - called the *pax deorum* - through the proper address of *prodigia* by state endorsed rituals and prayers called *remedia*, at a more basic level responses to natural disasters could vary between groups, between individuals, and between a single person’s types of responses from one time to the next. Hence, Augustus’ responses to natural disasters, took on different forms to Tiberius’ responses; and, over time, Augustus’ own responses underwent revision and alteration, as did Tiberius’.

As a result, this monograph demonstrates that Roman responses to natural disasters were the domain of each individual and were never homogenous or unified. But notwithstanding this, Romans could be, and were, influenced by symbolic words and actions of the upper echelons of Roman social groups, including the emperor’s prescriptions of *remedia* to

¹⁹ Philostr. VA. 6. 38. Jerry Toner, *Roman Disasters* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013) 42.

²⁰ Matthew, 27:45-54; R. T. France, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985) 402; Ivor H. Jones, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Werrington: Epworth Press, 1994) 169; Barbara E. Reid, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005) 142.

prodigious breaches in the *pax deorum*, and in other acts and decrees, such as the reconstruction of buildings, cities, entire provinces, or even just the simple fixing of flood-damaged bridges.

Therefore, unlike many other treatments on natural disasters in Roman times, this thesis looks beyond the parameters of the *pax deorum* in its purest sense – which only provides one backdrop (albeit an ever-present and all-pervasive one in Rome) - to the individual and communal responses to natural disasters carried out by different Roman individuals.

I.5 Prodigia, Remedia, and the Pax Deorum

If what we would today term natural disasters took on religious importance for the Romans, so too did many other natural phenomena – which the Romans considered equally disastrous. All extraordinary and unusual natural phenomena the Romans called *signa*. These were all regarded as divine communications by the gods to the Roman state. *Signa* were divided into two main categories: *auspicia*, through which Jupiter expressed his opinion on impending public actions, and *prodigia*, unsolicited signs sent by the gods to inform the Roman state about the status of the *pax deorum*.²¹ *Prodigia* covered many geological, meteorological, and other natural phenomena such as lightning strikes.²² Thus, Livy's list of prodigies before the battle at Lake Trasimene includes weapons suddenly catching fire, inauspicious lightning strikes, heavenly signs such as the sun looking smaller than usual, and the 'sweating' of various statues, all served as examples of what Livy, as well as Augustus and many other Romans, believed constituted *prodigia*.²³ Pliny the Elder also included the behaviour of birds as especially important *prodigia* in his *Natural History*.²⁴ But unlike other *prodigia*, this thesis focusses primarily upon those *prodigia* that constitute natural disasters, as opposed to those examples of *prodigia* which did not in themselves threaten life and property - even if most Romans did not distinguish between these two categories.

Roman politico-religious convention stipulated that it was the Senate's duty to interpret all *signa* with the help of the *haruspices*, or diviners, and the *augurs* – the takers of the auspices to establish the will of the gods.²⁵ If such *signa* were accounted to be *prodigia*, rather than *auspicia*, the Senate would then seek to interpret them through the *decemviri* priesthood (in republican times), or the *quindecimviri* priesthood (under the Principate); or, if necessary, the Senate would commission the *sacris faciundis* to consult the Sibylline Books.²⁶ Once interpreted, the Senate would thereupon set apart a period of solemnity, usually two to five days, called *supplicationes*, during which time Rome's temples would be opened, and statues

²¹ Adam Ziolkowski, 'Civic Rituals and Political Spaces in Republican and Imperial Rome', in Paul Erdkamp (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 394.

²² Mary Beard, John North, Simon Price, *Religions of Rome: Volume 1. A History* (Cambridge University Press, 1998) 19.

²³ Liv. 22. 1. 8-20.

²⁴ Plin. *NH*. 10. 32-34.

²⁵ On *haruspices*, see Mary Beard, John North, Simon Price, *Religions of Rome: Volume 1*, pages 19-20. On *augurs* see pages 21-23.

²⁶ Ov. *Fast*. 4. 247-248; 4. 257-60; A. J. Boyle, R. D. Woodard, 'Introduction', *Ovid: Fasti* (Penguin, 2004), xxx.

of the gods placed on couches there, and all Romans were expected to offer prayers and sacrifices to them – ceremonial practices called *lectisternia*.²⁷ These priestly and senatorial interpretations of *prodigia*, and the resulting prescribed days and rituals for all Romans to observe, were together collectively called *remedia* – for they were a cure for the breakdown and resulting *stasis* concerning the *pax deorum*.²⁸

The predominant understanding of such divine, prodigious, messages was that the gods were angered by the state bankruptcy in Rome and its institutions, and that they were consequently sending *prodigia* in order to warn Romans to err no longer, lest a far greater natural warning and disaster be required to correct their behaviour. By performing prescribed state religious rituals the Romans hoped, on their part, to succour and appease the gods for any breach of the *pax deorum*, and that *remedia* might signal to those gods a return to the traditions of the Roman state, its ceremonial routines, and to the gods. These *remedia* maintained, so it was believed, the gods' divine favour and protection from any far more harmful future disaster that might befall Rome and its people, although portents could also be perceived to require much more than just state ritual. In the period examined in this thesis, it is apparent that natural disasters could also indicate that the gods required reordering of the state at its most fundamental structural levels too – a useful tool for emperors who sought to consolidate their own powers, and their critics wishing to see their departure from the position of such power.²⁹

I.6 Current Criteria for Approaching Natural Disasters

Today, there are three schools of thought in approaching natural disasters. The first, the Agent- Specific View, championed by E. L. Quarantelli and Ronald W. Perry, approaches natural disasters from a sociological viewpoint, and defines natural disasters as such only if they impact human populations in a destructive manner. According to this approach, the individual human can, and does, define natural disasters differently from person to person. Thus, natural events are agents for disaster, but not necessarily a direct cause of the human suffering it is seen to cause – that involves human agency.³⁰ Furthermore, Quarantelli adds, such human agency implies inherent social aspects at work in defining what constitutes a real natural disaster which one needs to address in order to truly understand the effects of such disasters.³¹ Perry took this perspective another step further, and after consultation with many

²⁷ On supplicationes see Liv. 3. 7; 31. 9; 37. 3. On lectisternia see Liv. 5. 13; Val. Max. 2. 1; Suet. *Jul.* 76; Corn. Nep. *Timoth.* 2.

²⁸ Mary Beard, John North, Simon Price, *Religions of Rome: Volume 1*, 19, 22-23, 27, 37.

²⁹ Mary Beard, John North, Simon Price, *Religions of Rome: Volume 1*, 19, 37.

³⁰ E. L. Quarantelli, *What is a Disaster? An Agent Specific or an All Disaster Spectrum Approach to Socio-Behavioural Aspects of Earthquakes?* (University of Delaware Disaster Research Centre Paper number 69, 1981) 1-24; E. L. Quarantelli, 'Disaster Crisis Management: A Summary of Research Findings', in *The Journal of Management Studies*, 25, 4 (1988) 373-385; E. L. Quarantelli, 'Disaster Response: Generic or Agent-Specific?', in A. Kreimer and M. Mujnasinghe (eds.) *Managing Natural Disasters and the Environment* (Washington DC: World Bank, 1991) 97-105; E. L. Quarantelli, 'The Case for a Generic Rather than Agent Specific Agent Approach to Disasters', in *Disaster Management*, 2 (1992) 191-196; E. L. Quarantelli, 'What is a Disaster?', in *The International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, 13, 3 (1995) 221-229.

³¹ C. Lomnitz, 'What Is A Disaster?', in *Natural Hazards*, 18, 1 (1998) 88.

sociologists and researchers, argued that since variations in human socialisation exist just as Quarantelli suggested, this means a ‘natural disaster’ ought to be seen as an elusive concept, for ‘a social science definition can also reasonably differ from a mandated or policy definition.’³² Nonetheless, this pessimism has practical uses subscribers to this view observe, for by taking Perry’s statement as a prompt, and in bringing together differing classification systems, one can help define natural disasters more accurately, which can be of great benefit to professional disaster management practitioners and governmental policy makers.³³

Although the Agent-Specific approach can run a risk of over-humanising events irrespective of the natural damage they cause, it is relevant when approaching the Romans themselves as this thesis does. Furthermore, as this thesis demonstrates, just as disagreement within the Agent-Specific school of thought is an example of how social scientists, sociologists, and other groups, can struggle to find consensus upon a single definition of natural disasters, so too the ancient Romans themselves socialised their own responses to natural disasters with variations often as a direct result of how they understood, and defined, them as well.

The second set of criteria for approaching natural disasters is that relating to the Expression of Social Vulnerabilities. This approach broadens the analytical scope of the agent-specific view by approaching natural disasters from the perspective of societies affected by naturally disastrous events. Thereby, a natural event is only a disaster if a particular society’s coping mechanisms break down as a direct consequence of it. This approach was pioneered by geographer Robert W. Kates in the 1970s, utilising geographical and national data as tools to offer suggestions to modern national governments on how they can better produce more effective policies concerning national coping mechanisms and strategies.³⁴ Although invested with intrinsically helpful intentions, Kates’ work is often criticised for its lack of consideration for the individual, and their kinship relations, ideology, value systems, and how they relate to the natural disasters as well.³⁵ To address this apparent weakness in Kates’ approach, in the 1990s the United Nations declared that decade to be the International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) in the express effort to explore solutions to loss of life and property on the national and international levels. As a result, the Social Vulnerability approach gained popularity as governmental bodies at national levels searched for solutions to their society’s vulnerabilities to natural hazards, and throughout the 1990s numerous monographs were produced by geographers in that quest. The most influential of these efforts were those of Piers Blaikie, Terry Cannon, Ian Davis, and Ben Wisner, who drew attention to broad human trends, such as population growth, urbanisation, economic factors, land degradation, environmental change, and war, which place human

³² Ronald W. Perry, ‘Disasters, Definitions and Theory Construction’, in Ronald W. Perry and E. L. Quarantelli (eds.) *What is a Disaster? New Answers to Old Questions* (Xlibris, 2005) 319.

³³ Peter Arnold, ‘What Is A Disaster? New Answers to Old Questions’, in *The Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, 21, 1 (2006) 53.

³⁴ For Kates’ approach, see Robert W. Kates, ‘Natural Hazard in Human Ecological Perspectives: Hypotheses and Models’, in *Economic Geography*, 47, 3 (1971) 438-451; Ian Burton, Robert W. Kates, Gilbert F. White, *The Environment as Hazard* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

³⁵ William I. Torry, ‘General and Theoretical: The Environment as Hazard. Ian Burton, Robert W. Kates, and Gilbert F. White’, in *American Anthropologist*, 81, 3 (1979) 698-699.

societies at risk of mortality, suffering, and economic losses. These researchers formed the principle that these human factors endanger human beings more than the natural events themselves.³⁶

This principle held sway throughout the 1990s and is still the view held by Social-Vulnerability approach adherents.³⁷ However, due to political concerns on the international level and on national levels globally, from the turn of the century those adherents split into two camps: firstly, those of the Human-Environmental Vulnerability Research position, who trace large-scale global environmental processes and their effect on the international community generally;³⁸ and secondly, those in the area of Natural-Hazards and Disasters Research, who specialise in emergency management and hazard mitigation on a national scale.³⁹ Nonetheless, both camps continued to hold the principle that nation-wide policy-making can be utilised to minimise human mortality and suffering within those nations well into the 2000s.⁴⁰ However, headway was yet to be made by subscribers to this approach with regarding more nuanced, sub-cultural, and personalised variables and differences that exist within any given nation. As a result, in 2008 Susan L. Cutter and Christina Finch began to consider ways that race-ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, age, housing tenure, and geographical location, could make various groupings within society more vulnerable to destructive natural events than others. With such considerations in mind, they concluded that the concepts of vulnerability and resilience are more complex and problematic than mere

³⁶ P. Blaikie, T. Cannon, I. Davis, B. Wisner, *At Risk: Natural Hazards, People's Vulnerability, and Disasters* (London: Routledge, 1994); D. K. Chester, 'Blaikie, Piers, Cannon, Terry, Davis, Ian and Wisner, Ben, 'At Risk: Natural Hazards, People's Vulnerability and Disasters', in *Third World Planning Review*, 17, 3 (1995) 364.

³⁷ This is still the view endorsed throughout the considerable Social-Vulnerability Approach scholarship, and is set forth, following the lead of Blaikie, et al., throughout the following literature of the 1990s: Susan L. Cutter, 'Vulnerability to Environmental Hazards', in *Progress in Human Geography*, 20, 4 (1996) 529-539; W. G. Peacock, A. K. Ragsdale, 'Social Systems, Ecological Networks and Disasters', in W. G. Peacock, B. H. Morrow, J. Gladwin (eds.) *Hurricane Andrew: Ethnicity, Gender and the Sociology of Disasters* (New York: Routledge, 1997); M. B. Anderson, P. J. Woodrow, *Rising From the Ashes: Development Strategies in Times of Disaster* (London: IT Publications, 1998).

³⁸ B. L. Turner, P. A. Matson, J. J. McCarthy, R. W. Corell, L. Christensen, N. Eckley, et al., *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 100 (2003) 8080-8085; R. E. Kasperson, K. Dow, E. Archer, D. Caceres, T. Downing, T. Elmqvist, in R. Hassan, R. Scholes, N. Ash (eds.) *Ecosystems and Human Well-Being: Current State and Trends, Volume 1* (Washington: Island Press, 2005) 143-164.

³⁹ G. Bankoff, G. Frerks, D. Hilhorst (eds.) *Mapping Vulnerability: Disasters, Development and People* (London: Earthscan, 2004); M. Pelling, *The Vulnerability of Cities* (London: Earthscan, 2003); L. J. Vale, T. J. Campanella, *The Resilient City: How Modern Cities Recover From Disaster* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁴⁰ See, J. Weichselgartner, 'Disaster Mitigation: The Concept of Vulnerability Revisited', in *Disaster Prevention and Management*, 10, 2 (2001) 85-94; G. Bankoff, *Cultures of Disaster: Society and Natural Hazards in the Philippines* (London: Routledge, 2003); Susan L. Cutter, B. J. Boruff, W. L. Shirley, 'Social Vulnerability to Environmental Hazards', in *Social Science Quarterly*, 8, 4 (2003) 242-261; A. Oliver-Smith, 'Theorizing Vulnerability in a Globalized World: A Political Ecological Perspective', in *Mapping Vulnerability: Disasters, Development and People* (London: Earthscan, 2003); A. Dwyer, C. Zoppou, O. Nielson, S. Day, S. Roberts, *Quantifying Social Vulnerability: A Methodology for Identifying Those at Risk to Natural Hazards* (Geoscience Australia, 2004); T. Cannon, J. Twigg, et al., *Social Vulnerability, Sustainable Livelihoods and Disasters* (Report to DFID Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance Department (CHAD) and Sustainable Livelihoods Support Office. London: DFID, 63, 2005); W. Neil Adger, 'Vulnerability', in *Global Environmental Change*, 16, 3 (2006) 268-281; Gilberto C. Gallopín, 'Linkages Between Vulnerability, Resilience, and Adaptive Capacity', in *Global Environmental Change*, 16, 3 (2006) 293-303.

overarching generalisations often account for.⁴¹

This is where the research contained within this thesis comes into sharper focus in its application on two counts. For, firstly, regardless of its glaring shortcomings, the Social-Vulnerability approach has a clear strength in the detection of common trends in thinking among whole societies of peoples, in order to draw general lessons and apply them to broader, cultural, policy making. One can apply this method of detection to Roman society's own general vulnerabilities to natural events as well, for example, in the case of how population-density in the city of Rome intensified suffering in times of flood, fire, and famine, as is discussed in detail in Chapters Two, Three and Four of this thesis. Secondly, this thesis addresses Cutter's and Finch's astute considerations, for traditional lines of approach of the Social-Vulnerability approach can be applied to Roman history only so far, for, like modern Western countries, the Roman world was a multicultural one with many sub-cultures and numerous worldviews. Therefore, if any approach such as the Social-Vulnerability approach is to succeed in addressing the vulnerabilities of all inhabitants in every culture, and sub-culture, and social grouping, on both a social and individual basis, as Cutter and Finch suggest it must, it ultimately has to look beyond uniform over-generalisations. This thesis achieves this by focussing not upon the generalisations of scholars, but by examining the corpus of literary evidence, and other ancient physical sources, left to us by individual Romans themselves, and their contemporary counterparts, and by building upon that evidence together with the more perceptive non-generalising insights of numerous modern historians. In doing so, so many nuances are detected throughout the entirety of the ancient sources that this in itself will show that the validity of a non-generalising thesis such as this is supported at virtually every turn. Future researchers will no doubt add considerably to the degree of non-generalisation within scholarship that this thesis contributes to.

The third set of criteria, which was pioneered during the 1990s by Fausto Marincioni, is the Cultural Reaction to Disastrous Situations approach. This approach found inspiration when Marincioni observed that across the world and across time, 'similar types of natural disasters produce different reactions based on a particular culture and location.'⁴² However, Marincioni's observations did not address individual concerns and nuances within each culture, a criticism taken up by the adherents to this approach themselves, who suspected, as John Grattan and Robin Torrence did, that 'a wide range of responses to disasters of varying magnitudes and frequencies by groups with different social and economic structures' exist with regard to each natural disaster.⁴³ Consequently, Christof Mauch and Christian Pfister introduced the principle, that ideas on both national and cultural levels often do overlap with regard to natural disaster responses.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Susan L. Cutter, Christina Finch, 'Temporal and Spatial Changes in Social Vulnerability to Natural Hazards', in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 105 (2008) 2301-2306.

⁴² Fausto Marincioni, 'A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Natural Disaster Response: The Northwest Italy Floods of 1994 Compared to the U.S. Midwest Floods of 1993', in *The International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, 19, 2 (2001) 209-239.

⁴³ John Grattan, Robin Torrence, *Natural Disasters and Cultural Change* (London: Routledge, 2003) 16.

⁴⁴ Christof Mauch, 'Natural Disasters and Cultural Strategies: Responses to Catastrophe in Global

As a result, this third approach explores cultural sub-divisions from numerous relative perspectives, across cultures and history, and thereby has the strength in being a more inclusive approach, as it seeks to help various cultures and sub-cultures empathise and build up other cultures. This approach is also extremely helpful when addressing Roman history too, for as this thesis demonstrates, the history of Rome is the story of many different cultures and sub-cultures. However, this approach still does not seek to analyse individuals, who each possess their own sets of norms, personal worldviews, and belief systems.⁴⁵ This weakens this approach somewhat, for as this thesis shows, individuals within Roman society and culture were neither uniform nor homogenous – in fact in many cases they were multifaceted and varied.

This thesis incorporates strengths from across the board of the three aforementioned sets. Given the distinctly anthropocentric-Roman focus of this thesis, the Agent-Specific View is utilised throughout. In addition, the second set's focus upon shared Social-Vulnerability in response to natural disasters is central to any attempt to better interpret how the Romans saw their world, and responded to its natural processes as a whole, and is used in this thesis. But if we are to better understand the sub-divisions of Roman culture, then use of the third set of criteria is certainly the most helpful of the three in pursuing our research endeavours. It is more nuanced and comprehensive, and sympathetic in nature, which thus allows us to show exactly how ancient Romans, and not just one group of the elite classes, experienced and responded to their natural world when disasters struck.

But in any event, as Susan L. Cutter notes, there is more at stake in disaster research than mere scholarly definitions and approaches. More pressing concerns include: whether or not a population of people stands vulnerable to any particular natural disaster, and whether or not that population can show enough resilience in the aftermath of that disaster to survive and even thrive once more.⁴⁶ In line with Cutter, this thesis not only focusses upon what modern definitions of natural disasters are, but also upon how certain individual ancient Romans, especially emperors, responded to them.

This thesis, by adopting the above three-fold criteria demonstrates that responses to natural disasters existed collectively as collective stresses in localised regional zones and socio-economic statuses during times of disaster prompted collective, if individualised, responses.⁴⁷ Consequently, this dissertation consolidates current thinking surrounding natural disaster research pertaining to the Romans themselves. Accordingly, it will demonstrate that multiple responses can and do exist within a society, thus confirming recent trends in disaster

Perspective', in *GHI Bulletin*, 35 (2004) 125-132; Christof Mauch, Christian Pfister, *Natural Disasters: Cultural Responses: Case Studies Toward a Global Environmental History* (Lexington Books, 2009); Libby Robin, 'Natural Disasters, Cultural Responses: Case Studies Toward and Global Environmental History', in *Environmental History*, 15, 3 (2010) 552-554.

⁴⁵ Such is a legacy of Marincioni, who argued that individuals do not differ in their responses to natural disasters across the globe and across time. However, Marincioni himself admitted that with more research this position should be pursued in order to prove or disprove its validity. See Fausto Marincioni, 'A Cross-Cultural Analysis', 219-220, 230.

⁴⁶ Susan L. Cutter, 'Are We Asking the Right Questions?', in R. W. Perry and E. L. Quarantelli (eds.) *What is a Disaster?*, 39.

⁴⁷ Allan H. Barton, 'Disaster and Collective Stress', in R. W. Perry and E. L. Quarantelli, *What Is a Disaster?*, 125-152.

scholarship thus referred to. It is hoped this will inform future researchers and policy makers in their efforts to ensure against further loss of life and property in the face of such natural disasters.

However, by bringing together current thinking in each of the three hitherto separated approaches, this thesis diverts from each of them, focussing not only on forms of social-science, sociological and cultural responses, but also upon the responses of the individual Romans themselves. This is a new approach that builds upon current research trends in historical scholarship that explore the emotional value of normative Roman behaviour under the Late Republic and Early Empire,⁴⁸ and is apt for the topic of this thesis, for it comprehensively determines the individualised nuances and heterogeneity that characterised Roman history, instead of simply compartmentalising all Romans under possibly misleading generalisations. As a result, the source-based approach laid out in this thesis is suitably more accurate in its results than those which categorise all Romans under the one heading. Pointing this out is critically important, for it has been shown that the independence of one's own psychological- social processes and one's own personal sense of conscience, is just as valuable when forming one's own perspective and set of beliefs pertaining to the natural world and its processes, as any kinds of social knowledge or the prevailing sets of cultural symbolism an individual may be exposed to on a daily basis.⁴⁹ Therefore, this thesis brings each of the three current approaches together as one as it traces the various social and cultural responses that emerged towards natural disasters. However, in doing so, it also pioneers a new inclusive approach to ancient natural disasters than others. This new approach I refer to as the Internal-External Response to Natural Disasters Approach. This method of analysis examines the outward words, actions, building projects, and behaviours of Roman groups and individuals within these groups. Whilst the sporadic nature of our primary source material does not allow us to know precisely what was going through each Roman's mind when reacting to a natural disaster, through attested instances of outward behaviours we can arrive at conclusions concerning prevailing attitudes.

It will be shown throughout that the Romans' external responses to natural disasters were driven and expressed both to the perceived present danger as well as the places those dangers held in their longstanding attitudes towards them. In achieving this aim, the Agent-Specific Approach is employed in so far as this thesis relates to human beings affected by nature's destructiveness; the Expression of Social Vulnerabilities is used to highlight how the coping mechanisms of social groups and individuals within Rome and throughout the Roman world could break down; and the Cultural Reaction to Disastrous Situations Approach is also brought to bear to analyse separate responses to natural disasters by separate groups. Of these three approaches, the Agent-Specific Approach is incorporated on the most basic level, for this thesis concerns human beings affected by nature. In addition, the Expression of Social Vulnerabilities Approach is relevant since the coping mechanisms inherent in Roman

⁴⁸ See Tanja Itgenshorst and Philippe Le Doze (eds.) *La norm sous le république et le Haut-Empire: élaboration, diffusion et contournements*, 96 (Bordeaux: Ausonius Éditions, 2017).

⁴⁹ Denis Smith, 'In the Eyes of the Beholder? Making Sense of the System(s) of Disaster(s)', in R. W. Perry, E. Quarantelli, *What Is a Disaster?*, 201-236, see especially pages 202-204, 236.

worldviews are most pertinent to understanding their external responses to natural dangers. However, of the three criteria, it is the Cultural Reaction to Disastrous Situations Approach that will become most apparent throughout this thesis, for it maintains, as this thesis does, that responses to natural disasters varied, and still do vary, between social and political strata in every culture and their sub-cultures.

As this thesis shows, by applying its inclusive, but at the same time inherently analytical, Internal-External approach to the period in Roman history from Pompey to the Great Famine (65BC- AD63), one can better detect and trace both continuity and change in Roman thinking towards natural disasters, and those outward responses that came as a direct expression from them. This is detectable through all of the different external responses to natural disasters that emerged through outward expression throughout the period covered by this monograph. Of course, such an approach will be familiar to those well versed in historical and historiographical enquiry and biographical studies, even if only at subconscious levels, for historians and historical biographers know all too well that the character of an individual often changes in certain respects throughout the entirety that individual's lifetime. However, these factors are actually seldom respected with regard to the responses to natural disasters, and especially ancient natural disasters. Yet, it is hoped that by bringing together historical, historiographical, and biographical, techniques to bear in this thesis, social-scientists, sociologists, and cultural- scientists will thereby have at hand a rich minefield of historical information that can exemplify and highlight individual and collective responses to natural disasters that they can use when formulating, and implementing, new disaster-management plans and strategies.

This thesis, therefore, is a unifying, and important step forward regarding the study of ancient natural disasters - a field of study in which cultural approaches have hitherto predominated.⁵⁰ However, this is largely only to be expected, for just as approaches develop among adherent groups, historical analysis also develops allowing individual historians to innovate and weigh up the merits of other historians' innovations both similar and otherwise. But in order to exploit each separate approach to the full, one must also seek to bring them together and through thorough examination of individual details so as not to ignore or overlook useful disaster management insights and tools, determine their inherent relevance. Similarly, while many useful cultural trends among Romans have been identified and explored comprehensively in recent scholarship, adding greatly to our knowledge and appreciation of the Roman world, it is the study of personal beliefs and attitudes with respect to natural disasters that breaks fresh, promising, and exciting new ground.

This thesis aims to inspire further research in this still new field of natural disaster history, and, in the process, it is hoped that a fuller awareness today of how individual

⁵⁰ Books and treatments are wide and varied. However, a general introduction to the use of cultural studies in historical analysis is Michael Foucault, *The order of Things*. For cultural treatments on Augustan Rome especially, and for first century Roman cultural analysis, see Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images*; C. Nicolet, *Space, Geography and Politics*; Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*; Barbara Levick, *Augustus: Image and Substance*. Above all, however, see Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Romans shared or discarded Roman collectivism, across both space and time, will be achieved. Although we are not able to analyse the character traits of every Roman person – only a mere fraction of the Roman population has been included in detailed recorded history – nonetheless, through careful interpretation of the ancient evidence presented and examined throughout this dissertation, we are still better able to grasp those similarities and differences that existed between Roman individuals, and between groups of individuals that existed within Roman society, throughout the period history covered therein; and by those means we can thereby better comprehend the truth that it is these different responses to natural disasters that help us understand that differences in thought and action are actually typical throughout ancient Roman society.

I.7 Pioneering Trends in Constituting Natural Disasters as Part of Human History

Historical research into the natural disasters of antiquity as events in human history, and not just anomalies of geography or geology, is a recent development in current scholarship. Research into modern natural disasters and their effects upon populations stretches back to 1917 when Samuel Prince began his doctoral study into how the Halifax, Canada, munitions ship explosion impacted local communities there.⁵¹ However, research into the social impact of ancient disasters is still a new field, and was pioneered only as recently as 1981 by environmentalist Arno Borst, as he began investigating and producing studies on the Carynthian earthquake of 1348. In his extensive research, Borst made the important ‘discovery’ that this particular earthquake was so integral to the human and social experience at the time that it demanded categorization under the heading of human history.

Modern scholarship on ancient natural disasters began in the fifteenth century as scholars began collecting the existing tracts on prodigies and placing them in collections to study in closer manner.⁵² During the Renaissance and the Reformation, closer scrutiny of written sources of information blossomed as whole catalogues of descriptions of historical natural events were compiled for critical study.⁵³ Although there is strong consensus among scholarship today that by current standards these catalogues were generally incomplete and inaccurate throughout, this was still an important step forward towards thinking critically about the world and its processes.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Neil R. Britton, ‘What’s In a Word? Opening Up the Debate’, in Ronald W. Perry and E. L. Quarantelli (eds.) *What Is a Disaster?*, 64.

⁵² For detailed discussions on these collections, see Ottavia Niccoli, *Profeti e popolo nell’Italia del Rinascimento* (Rome, 1987); Franz Mauelshagen, ‘Die portent et ostenta mines lieben Herren unsers sälligen’, in *Nachlaßdokumente Bullingers im 13: Buch der Wickiana*, in *Zwingliana*, 28 (2001) 73-117; Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wunder und die Ordnung der Natur* (Berlin, 2002).

⁵³ Gerrit Jasper Schenk, ‘Historical Disaster Research’, 10.

⁵⁴ Bruno Figliuolo, *Il terremoto del 1456, 2 Vols* (Altavilla Silentina, 1988) 228-242; Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud, ‘Introduction: The Urban Catastrophe – Challenge to the Social, Economic, and Cultural Order of the City’, in Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud, Harold L. Platt, and Dieter Schott, (eds.) *Cities and Catastrophes: Coping With Emergency in European History* (Frankfurt, 2002); Pierre Alexandre, ‘Problèmes de méthode relatifs à l’étude des séismes médiévaux’, in Bruno Helly and Alex Pollino (eds.) *Tremblements de terre. Histoire et archéologie. Vèmes rencontres internationales d’archéologie et d’histoire d’Antibes*, 2, 3, 4 Novembre 1983 (Valbonne, 1984); Pierre Alexandre, *Le climate en Europe au Moyen Âge. Contribution à*

Over the course of the next four centuries ancient natural events began to become the subjects of progressively deeper analysis from the vantage points of a number of different approaches, including religious, economic, political, historical, and - predominantly today - environmental and climate-change concerns such as those championed by Lukas Thommen.⁵⁵ As the Reformation era slowly moved into more modern times, the increased professionalization of European society meant that most natural disasters were thereupon looked at from the vantage-points of the various professions. This was particularly the case in Italy, where simple church-endorsed literary treatises were later transformed into political manifestoes, and then later still detailed into works outlining workplace risk management strategies; as can be observed in the trajectory from Targioni-Tozzetti in the eighteenth century to Raccolta in the nineteenth, through to Barsanti and Rombai in the twentieth century, and onwards to Marrocchi in the twenty-first century.⁵⁶

1.7.1 Studies on Tiber Flooding

Modern studies from the nineteenth century to the present-day have shaped how we view ancient natural disasters in the past, and how we approach them now. Studies on Tiber floods did not appear until excavations began at Ostia, a Roman harbour located on the delta of the Tiber River, in 1855. Work there continued up to 1912, during which period it was found that Ostia had been repeatedly affected by changes in the course of the Tiber through major floods, such as that of 1557, and other, more ancient floods.⁵⁷ But even that finding was peripheral to the main foci of study surrounding the more tangible remains of buildings at Ostia and the improved use of the alluvial plains around Rome for food cultivation.⁵⁸

With improvements in technology and modern scientific methods, new approaches emerged. By 1971, Ventriglia had begun extensive geological studies both in and around the city of Rome⁵⁹ - work so extensive, in fact, that it was supplemented as late as the late 1980s by Robert G. Thomas, and Renato Funiciello in the mid-1990s.⁶⁰ These geological studies eventually gave rise to more specialised hydrological studies on the course and behaviour of

l'histoire des variations climatiques de 1000 à 1425, d'après les sources narratives de l'Europe occidentale (Paris, 1987); Pierre Alexandre, *les seismes en Europe occidentale de 394 à 1259* (Bruxelles, 1990); Pierre Alexandre, 'les compilations séismologiques et le prétendu cataclysme provençal de 1227', in Bartolomé Bennassar (ed.) *Les Catastrophes* (Toulouse, 1996).

⁵⁵ For an environmental approach, see the environmental history of Greece and Rome in, Lukas Thommen, *An Environmental History of Ancient Greece and Rome*, trans. By Philip Hill (Cambridge University Press, 2009) 1- 3.

⁵⁶ Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti, *Disamina d'alumi progetti fatti nel scolo XVI per salvar Firenze dale inondazioni dell'Arno* (Firenze, 1767); Raccolta, *Raccolta d'autori italiani che trattano del moto dell'acque* (10 Parts: Bologna, 1821-1826); Danilo Barsanti and Leonardo Rombai, *La guerra dell'acque in Toscana. Storia delle bonifiche dai Medici alla riforma agraria* (Firenze, 1986); Mario Marrochi, 'L'impaludamento della Val di Chiana in epoca medievale', in Alberto Malvolti and Guiliano Pinto (eds.) *Incolti, fiumi, paludi. Utilizzazione delle risorse naturali nella Toscana medievale moderna* (Firenze, 2003) 73-93.

⁵⁷ Thomas Ashby, 'Recent Discoveries at Ostia', in *Journal of Roman Studies*, 2 (1912), 157, 164-193.

⁵⁸ Thomas Ashby, 'Recent Discoveries at Ostia', 164-194; 'Tenney Frank On Agriculture in Early Latium', *The Classical Weekly*, 13, Oct 1 (1919), 113-115.

⁵⁹ U. Ventriglia, *La geologia della città di Roma* (Amministrazione Provinciale di Roma, 1971).

⁶⁰ Robert G. Thomas, 'Geology of Rome, Italy', in *Bulletin of the Association of Engineering Geologists*, 26, 4 (1989), 415-476; Renato Funiciello (ed.) *La geologia di Roma: Il centro storico*, 2 Volumes, *Memorie Descrittive della Carta Geologica d'Italia*, vol. 50 (Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1995).

the Tiber River itself. By 1977, Frosini had compiled a vast array of raw material for Tiber River floods, which he published in that year⁶¹ – so vast, in fact, that like Ventriglia's work, it was not supplemented by other specialists until years later, in this case in 1995, and 2001.⁶²

These studies led to greater interest in the flow of the Tiber in antiquity. Alan Roger produced a study on Lakes around Rome in 1987, while in 1989, B. Bower published work on the early urbanisation of the Forum area, arguing that landfill from the seventh-century BC allowed Rome to develop the marshy flood-plains in that low-lying part of the city.⁶³ Interest grew, and in 2005 C. Giraudi published a study on the Tiber's wider catchment's effect on Late-Holocene floods.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, Gregory S. Aldrete drew upon his extensive research to bring together in his monograph, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, published in 2007, every resource available for Tiber floods in the Roman period. This work is especially important for the sources it employs for flooding in Rome during the period covered in this thesis, and is therefore, utilised often throughout where relevant.⁶⁵ In addition to these works, in 2016 Andrea L. Brock also produced a study on landscape modifications in Rome's Early Period owing to Tiber floods.⁶⁶

However, together with interest in Rome's past, such studies facilitated interest in Rome's future. Thus, in 1989, Federico Malusardi called for better city-planning in Rome especially in light of the many flooding disasters throughout Rome's history.⁶⁷ That call found considerable embrace in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, during which time multiple studies utilising ancient,⁶⁸ Medieval and Renaissance,⁶⁹ and modern historical data for the purpose of flood prediction and harm minimisation began to increasingly emerge.⁷⁰

⁶¹ Pietro Frosini, *Il Tevere: Le inondazioni di Roma e I provvedimenti presi dal governo Italiano per evitarle*. Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei Commissione di Studio delle Calamità Naturali e della Degradazione dell'Ambiente, Vol. 13 (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1977).

⁶² M. Bencivenga, E. Di Loreto, L. Liperi, 'Il regime idrologico del Tevere, con particolare riguardo alle piene nella città di Roma', in Renato Funicello (ed.) *La geologia di Roma: Il centro storico*, 123-172; Pio Bersani, Mauro Bencivenga, *Le piene del Tevere a Roma dal V secolo a.C. all'anno 2000* (Servizio Idrografico e Mareografico Nazionale, 2001); Carlo Ferranti, Adriano Paoletta (eds.) *La pianificazione del Bacino del Fiume Tevere 1992-2000* (Gangemi Editore, 2001).

⁶³ Alan Roger, 'The Rise and Fall of Roman Lakes', in *The Legal History Review*, 55, 1-2 (1987), 19-29; B. Bower, 'Early Rome: Surprises Below the Surface. Excavations Find Urban Civilization in 7th Century BC', in *Science News*, 135, 2 (1989), 20.

⁶⁴ C. Giraudi, 'Late-Holocene Alluvial Events in the Central Apennines, Italy', in *Halocene*, 15, 5 (2005), 768-773.

⁶⁵ Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome* (John Hopkins University Press, 2007).

⁶⁶ Andrea L. Brock, 'Floodplain Occupation and Landscape Modification in Early Rome', in *Quaternary International* (2016).

⁶⁷ Federico Malusardi, 'Rome 1989: The Urgent Need for a Planning Process', in *Cities*, 6, 4 (1989), 282-288.

⁶⁸ Lara O'Sullivan, Andrew Jardine, Angus Cook, Philip Weinstein, 'Deforestation, Mosquitoes, and Ancient Rome: Lessons for Today', in *Bioscience*, 58, 8 (2008), 756-760.

⁶⁹ G. Calenda, C. P. Mancini, E. Volpi, 'Distribution of the Extreme Peak Floods of the Tiber River From the XV Century', in *Advances in Water Resources*, 28, 6 (2005), 615-625; David Karmon, *The Ruin of the Eternal City* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Giulia Ceriani Sebgondi, 'The Ruin of the Eternal City: Antiquity and Preservation in Renaissance Rome', in *Future Anterior*, 19, 2 (2012), 122.

⁷⁰ P. Reichenbach, M. Cardinali, P. De Vita, F. Guzzetti, 'Regional Hydrological Thresholds for Landslides and Floods in the Tiber River Basin', in *Environmental Geology*, 35, 2 (1998), 146-159; T. Mormaro, F. Melone, V. P. Singh, 'Assessment of Flooding in Urbanized Ungauged Basins: A Case Study in the Upper Tiber Area, Italy', in *Hydrological Processes*, 19, 10 (2005), 1909-1924; G. Gabriele Villarini, James A. Smith, Francesco Napolitano, Mary L. Baeck,

At present, there exist two distinctly separate strains in scholarship as to the importance of the study of ancient Tiber River floods. Firstly, there are those who look into historical floods for evidence of climate change and humanity's effects on the environment;⁷¹ and secondly, there are those who seek out ancient evidence for Tiber River floods out of an interest in the ancient world – the category in which Gregory S. Aldrete's *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome* neatly fits, as well as other, more recent studies.⁷²

This thesis is an analysis of how the Roman elites recorded their own, and others', external actions in response to natural disasters. As such, it fits more neatly, perhaps, into the latter category, for it seeks edification in Rome's ancient past for its own sake. However, notwithstanding this, the very existence of natural disasters in ancient times can teach us many important lessons today.

They show how religion, economics, politics, and risk management, can be affected by the natural world, and how they can each effect a person's personal reactions, their internal responses, to such disasters when they occur, that find expression outwardly, as external responses; and this is of fundamental importance to the value of this thesis. Our world is in many ways similar to that of the Romans' own. Tectonic plate shifting and the volcanic activity and earthquakes that are associated with it, epidemic plagues, and weather patterns producing fires, floods, drought and famines, are still the same today as they were two millennia ago. Therefore, this thesis also addresses the former category, as highlighted above, for if the ancient world can teach us how to better manage natural phenomena to preserve lives while respecting this planet, then it is essential that we turn to it for those lessons from its ancient past.

1.7.2 *Studies on Fires in Rome*

There are, to date, surprisingly few studies on fires in Rome. Until the early twentieth century, archaeologists had found traces of many fires under the earth in Rome over the centuries. However, all they could conclude at that time was that given the plentiful existence

'Hydrometeorological Analysis of the 2008 Flood in Rome', in *Hydrological Sciences Journal*, 56, 7 (2011), 1150-1165; Salvatore Grimaldi, Alessio Gullo, Massimiliano Crisci, Giuliano Di Baldassarre, Smeralda Saccà, Giuseppe Tito Aronica, 'Human-Flood Interactions in Rome Over the Past 150 Years', in *Advances in Geosciences*, 44 (2017), 9.

⁷¹ On environmental change, see Lukas Thommen, *An Environmental History of Ancient Greece and Rome* (Translated by Philip Hill. Cambridge University Press, 2009); S. Ceschin, I. Tombolini, S. Albati, V. Zuccarello, 'The Effect of River Damming On Vegetation: Is It Always Unfavourable? A Case Study from the River Tiber (Italy)', in *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment*, 187, 5 (2015), 1-12; On climate change, see Cifrodelli, C. Corradini, R. Morbidelli, C. Saltalippi, A. Flammini, 'The Influence of Climate Change On Heavy Rainfalls in Central Italy', in *Procedia Earth and Planetary Science*, 15 (2015), 694-701; L. Sadori, C. Giraudi, A. Masi, M. Magny, E. Ortu, G. Zanchetta, A. Izölebski, 'Climate, Environment and Society in Southern Italy During the Last 2000 Years. A Review of the Environmental, Historical and Archaeological Evidence', in *Quaternary Science Reviews*, 136 (2016), 173-188.

⁷² See also, P. Bellotti, G. Calderoni, F. Di Rita, M. D'Orefice, C. D'Amico, 'The Tiber River Delta Plain (Central Italy): Coastal Evolution and the Implications for the Ancient Ostia Roman Settlement', in *The Holocene*, 21, 7 (2011), 1105-1116; L. Sadori, et al., 'Archaeobotany in Italian Ancient Roman Harbours', in *Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology*, 218 (2015), 217-230.

of charred building stones from antiquity, Rome must have suffered frequent fires, just as the plentiful ancient references to fires there imply.⁷³ These fires, popular imagination held, culminated in the AD64 Great Fire of Rome, as instilled in the public mind's eye with the publication in 1895 of the bestseller book *Quo Vadis?* Nero's madness and personal agency in this fire was especially reinforced by the movie of the same name, released by MGM in 1951. By the 1980s, however, interest had grown exponentially with respect to Roman responses to this and other fires, and with that growth the scholarship became more multifaceted. Thus, P. Gregory Warden produced studies on the Domus Aurea,⁷⁴ and J. S. Rainbird produced his own on the fire stations in Rome under the Early Empire.⁷⁵ It was also during the 1980s that interest specifically into the Great Fire of AD64 came to the fore, and B. H. Warmington and Miriam T. Griffin published biographies on Nero that devoted up to twelve pages apiece on that particular fire and Nero's response to it.⁷⁶

By the twenty first century, with the recent re-opening of the remains of the Golden Palace to tourism in 1999, and the publication of two monographs on Nero in 1999 and 2000 by Malitz and Holland, respectively – monographs that rehabilitated Nero and his role in the fire and its aftermath – interest in fires in ancient Rome quickened.⁷⁷ In 2003 Edward Champlin published his own book on Nero, devoting over twenty two pages in it to the Great Fire and to Nero's public punishment of the Christians whom he believed were actively involved in the fire, as well as his 'magnificent' redesign and reconstruction of the city in its aftermath.⁷⁸ Efforts at Nero's rehabilitation and the vindication of Nero's persecution of the Christians in Rome reached its apogee from 2005, when further studies began claiming that Nero was indeed innocent and the Christians indeed guilty for the Great Fire.⁷⁹

Since that time, scholarship has begun to shift towards more detailed, and less controversial positions. Studies into the fires of Rome, and ancient Roman firefighting techniques, produced by Lukas Thommen and Christine Graf respectively, has led research into responses to fire outside Nero's own individual response,⁸⁰ and in 2010 Stephen Dando-Collins published his seminal monograph on the Great Fire, looking at this cataclysmic event from the points of view of various segments of Roman society, even if Nero remains the main

⁷³ 'Lanciani, Rodolfo, Quoted, on Effect of Fire On Building Stones in Ancient Rome', in *The Classical Weekly*, Oct 1, 16 (1921), 128.

⁷⁴ P. Gregory Warden, 'The Domus Aurea Reconsidered', in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 40, 4 (1981), 271-278.

⁷⁵ J. S. Rainbird, 'The Fire Stations of Imperial Rome', in *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 54 (1986), 147- 169.

⁷⁶ B. H. Warmington, *Nero: Reality and Legend* (Chatto and Windus, 1981), see esp. 123-134; Miriam T. Griffin, *Nero: The End of a Dynasty* (Yale University Press, 1985).

⁷⁷ 'Nero's Golden Palace Reopens After Restoration', in *Daily Commercial News and Construction Record*, 72, 128 (1999), B5. Jürgen Malitz, *Nero* (Blackwell, 1999), 68-72; Richard Holland, *Nero: The Man Behind the Myth* (Sutton Publishers, 2000), 160-161.

⁷⁸ Edward Champlin, *Nero* (Harvard University Press, 2003), 122, 179-200.

⁷⁹ 'Rome's Invention of Pauline Christianity and Its Responsibility for the Great Fire of Rome in 64 C.E., as Part of its Backlash Against the Jewish Guerrilla Movement of Jesus and the Nazoreans', in *Revue des Etudes Juives*, 164, 3-4 (2005), 415-448.

⁸⁰ Lukas Thommen, *An Environmental History of Ancient Greece and Rome* (Translated by Philip Hill. Cambridge University Press, 2009); Christine Graf, 'Firefighting Through the Ages', in *Appleseeds*, 9, 3 (2006), 2.

character of that particular book.⁸¹ Just one year after the publication of Dando-Collins' monograph, Angela Murock Hussein published a study on the proneness of Rome to fire, as did Raoul McLaughlin on the Great Fire of Commodus' Reign, both of which shift focus away from the lengthy debate over Nero's guilt and agency in the Great Fire of AD64.⁸² These studies proved highly influential, and in 2014 Richard Cavendish emphasised the role that combustible, wooden materials in housing throughout Rome in ancient times played in the spread of the 64 fire.⁸³ However, precise guilt and blame for the AD64 fire continues to be debated, as does interest in why Christians specifically were made scapegoats by Nero rather than the Jews, against whom Rome would go to war a mere two years later. According to Karl E. Boughman, it came as a result of Poppaea Sabina's Jewish religious sympathies that Nero compromised with her and the Jews temporarily, blaming the Christians who at that stage probably appeared to him a Jewish 'splinter group' – not strictly Jewish in Poppea's eyes, but all the same Jewish enough to warrant much Roman hatred if blamed for the fire by the Roman emperor himself.⁸⁴

Such nuanced approaches to fire in Rome are included in this PhD thesis. For, this thesis provides a number of examinations of the various types of Roman responses to many instances of fire in Rome. Although this examination does not cover the Great Fire of AD64, it does cover other fires in Rome that bear resemblances or are related to the Great Fire. Thus, this thesis explores fires from various angles and points of view of Roman groups and individuals, but in doing so breaks new ground in its general shift away from just the one, AD64 fire event. Consequently, this thesis narrates the role of fire in Rome under Augustus, and his, and other Romans', responses to them; and how they informed the responses by Tiberius and other Romans in later years to fresh fires after Augustus died, up to the principates of Gaius (Caligula) and Claudius.

1.7.3 *Studies on Earthquakes around the Roman Empire*

From the nineteenth century, new technologies allowed scientists and historians to gain new insights into the ancient world. By 1850, Gideon Algernon Mantell hailed the new approaches of archaeology and geology as twin-disciplines investigating this world's ancient past.⁸⁵ But new technologies also sparked misgiving, and by 1877 Thomas Hitchcock and Goldwin Smith had begun to condemn the use of new scientific and archaeological methods to investigate the past without any regard for biblical frameworks.⁸⁶ And yet, despite these

⁸¹ Stephen Dando-Collins, *The Great Fire of Rome: The Fall of the Emperor Nero and His City* (Da Capo Press, 2010).

⁸² Angela Murock Hussein, 'Rome Burns! (MUSINGS) (Great Fire of Rome in 64 A.D.)', in *Calliope*, 21, 9 (2011), 2; Raoul McLaughlin, 'Galen and the Great Fire of Rome', in *History Today*, 61, 9 (2011), 27.

⁸³ Richard Cavendish, 'The Great Fire of Rome', in *History Today*, 64, 7 (2014), 2.

⁸⁴ Karl E. Boughman, 'Poppea Sabina, Jewish Sympathies, and the Fire of Rome', in *Women in Judaism*, 11, 2 (2014), 1-18.

⁸⁵ Gideon Algernon Mantell, 'On the Remains of Man, and Works of Art Imbedded in Rocks and Strata, As Illustrative of the Connexion Between Archaeology and Geology', in *Archaeological Journal*, 7, 1 (1 Jan 1850), 327-346.

⁸⁶ Thomas Hitchcock, 'The Functions of Unbelief', in *The North American Review*, 125, 3 (1 Nov 1877), 462; Goldwin Smith, 'The Proposed Substitutes for Religion', in *Macmillan's Magazine* 37 (1 Nov 1877), 257.

early divisions, by the twentieth century, scientific methods became more acceptable to archaeologists investigating evidence for earthquakes in the ancient world, especially those referred to by the Bible and other ancient sources. But, such earthquakes ultimately took on a peripheral status, as archaeologists looked for artefacts, not geological anomalies.⁸⁷

However, during the last years of the twentieth century, with the dramatic rise in tourism throughout the Mediterranean basin and Europe, historical earthquakes began to be studied with greater scrutiny by architects and town planners. Essentially, their hope was to find new ways to build and maintain tourism sites under threat of damage by regional earthquakes, and this legacy remains to this day, especially in Italy but also throughout other parts of Europe.⁸⁸ Together with tourism trends, studies in the twenty-first century aim to meet global demand for information on what life was like in Roman times, including during times of seismic activity. Of especial interest is such activity in Late Antiquity, and its effect upon the Christian Roman Empire.⁸⁹

Perhaps the greatest contribution to scholarship comes from studies produced to meet demand that prioritises the intrinsic value in understanding the Roman world itself. In 2009, Christopher M. Higgins produced a Master's degree thesis on the popular and imperial responses to four specific earthquakes, those of: the AD17 earthquake of Asia Minor, the AD62 earthquake in Campania, the AD79 earthquake in the Vesuvian region, and the AD526 earthquake in Antioch.⁹⁰ Others, too, have published work on other seismic events, and the damage they caused to locations such as Larissa, Greece, and Asia Minor during the Early Empire.⁹¹

Perhaps as the greatest sign that modern scholars have distanced themselves from previous eras is the fact that, whereas once archaeologists searched for artefacts in earthquake-prone locations, now archaeologists scour archaeological sites for evidence of

⁸⁷ Note the AD155 earthquake of Rhodes as secondary to Roman troop movement in Britain in 'Some Notes Upon Roman Britain', *The Classical Review*, 18, 9 (1904), 458-461.

⁸⁸ E. Guidoboni, G. Ferrari, 'The Effects of Earthquakes in Historical Cities: The Peculiarity of the Italian Case', in *Annals of Geophysics*, 43, 4 (1 Jun 2000); Sid Perkins, 'Rome at Risk', in *Science News*, 169, 8 (2006), 115-116; Stephan Faris, 'Can An Earthquake Bring About the Fall of Rome?', in *TIME*, (4 Jun 2012); E. Georgescu, 'Seismic Response of Tropaeum Traiani Monument, Romania, Between History and Engineering Assessments', in *Constructii*, 16, 1 (2015), 11-17; Giorgia Di Gangi, 'Regeneration and Structural Strengthening of the Fortress of Arnara, Latium, Italy', in *International Journal of Architectural Heritage*, 10, 8 (10 May 2016), 1041-1054.

⁸⁹ F. Galadini, P. Galli, 'The 365 A.D. Earthquake (Central-Southern Italy): An Archaeoseismological Approach', in *Annals of Geophysics*, 47 (1 Jun 2004) (2-3); George Paranas-Carayannis, 'The Earthquake and Tsunami of July 21, 365AD in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea – Review of Impact on the Ancient World – Assessment of Recurrence and Future Impact', in *Science of Tsunami Hazards*, 30, 4 (1 Jan 2011), 253-292; C. Bottari, M. Coltelli, C. Monaco, 'Evidence of Late Roman Collapse at Catania (Sicily, Southern Italy): An Earthquake in the Fourth Century AD?', in *Quaternary International*, 357 (30 Jan 2015), 336-343.

⁹⁰ Christopher M. Higgins, *Popular and Imperial Response to Earthquakes in the Roman Empire* (Master of Arts Thesis, Ohio University, 2009).

⁹¹ R. Caputo, K. –G. Hinzen, D. Liberatore, S. Schreiber, B. Helly, A. Tziafalias, 'Quantitative Archaeoseismological Investigation of the Great Theatre of Larissa, Greece', in *Bulletin of Earthquake Engineering*, 9, 2 (Apr 2011), 347-366; Mischa Meier, 'Roman Emperors and 'Natural Disasters' in the First Century A.D.', in Andrea Janku, Gerrit J. Schenk, Franz Mauelshagen (eds.) *Historical Disasters in Context* (Routledge, 2012), 15-30.

ancient earthquakes.⁹² Indeed, this is the approach adopted by Nicholas Ambraseys, whose mammoth work, *Earthquakes in the Mediterranean and Middle East: A Multidisciplinary Study of Seismicity Up to 1900*, outlines most of the evidence pertaining to all attested earthquake events, though not all, throughout the Mediterranean and Middle East.⁹³ Out of respect for Ambraseys' thoroughgoing approach, this thesis is also thorough in relation to the ancient literary and modern historical and archaeological scholarship for the relevant period. But, one cannot simply divide the Roman artefact from evidence for a geological event in Roman times, for both featured heavily in the lives of Roman peoples, and together they warrant historical investigation in a PhD thesis such as this. Thus, this thesis examines the intertwining of the human and physical realms in which Romans lived, expanding upon the number of earthquakes covered, both great and small, and both famous and less well-known, than has been previously attempted, in an effort to obtain a better understanding of Romans throughout Italy, and throughout the empire.

1.7.4 *Studies on Plagues in Roman Times*

From the mid-nineteenth century to the early-twentieth century, studies on the Antonine plague and the Justinian plague predominated research into plagues in Roman times, but these were viewed simply an anomaly, and were studied only for information on how to treat illness in modern times. But, given that modern plagues can be as destructive as ancient plagues, most medical scholars from the late 1800s onward preferred to study more modern, relatable, and relevant ones instead, a trend that continues to this day.⁹⁴ However, by the early twentieth century interest in ancient plagues had grown,⁹⁵ and during the 1960s and 1970s several studies were produced on the Antonine plague.⁹⁶ In 1972, Daniel Weitz even produced a PhD dissertation on the role of the Antonine plague and other plagues in the decline of the Roman Empire in the third century.⁹⁷

In the twenty-first century, scholarship on the Antonine and Justinianic plagues became more plentiful, with Charles Haas, Christopher Bruun, E. Cravioto, I. Garcia and Andrés Sáez all publishing work on the Antonine plague,⁹⁸ while D. Stathakopoulos, R. Retief, L.

⁹² Charles Q. Choi, 'Roman Ruins Yield Clues to Ancient Earthquakes', in *Live Science* (20 Mar 2013).

⁹³ Nicholas Ambraseys, *Earthquakes in the Mediterranean and Middle East: A Multidisciplinary Study of Seismicity Up to 1900* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁹⁴ See 'Epidemiological Society', in *The Lancet*, 59, 1489 (1852), 273; 'Proceedings of the Society of Medical Officers of Health', in *Public Health*, 1, 1 (1888), 2-11; Elisa Andretta, *Roma Medica: Anatomie d'un système médical au XVI^e siècle* (École française de Rome, 2011).

⁹⁵ 'Section of the History of Medicine', in *The Lancet*, 210, 5431 (1927), 708-711.

⁹⁶ J. F. Gilliam, 'The Plague Under Marcus Aurelius', in *American Journal of Philology*, 82 (1961), 225-251; Josiah C. Russell, 'That Earlier Plague', in *Demography*, 5, 1 (1968), 174-184; R. J. Littmann, M. L. Littmann, 'Galen and the Antonine Plague', in *American Journal of Philology*, 94 (1973), 243-255.

⁹⁷ Daniel Weitz, *Famine and Plague as Factors in the Collapse of the Roman Empire in the Third Century* (PhD Dissertation, Fordham University, 1972).

⁹⁸ Charles Haas, 'La peste antonine', in *Bulletin de l'Académie nationale de médecine*, 190, 4-5 (2006), 1093-1098; Christer Bruun, 'The Antonine Plague and the "Third Century Crisis"', in *Crises and the Roman Empire: Proceedings of the Seventh Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire, Nijmegen, June 20-24, 2006* (Brill, 2007), 201-218; Enrique Gozalbes Cravioto, Inmaculada García, 'The First Antonine Plague (165 – 170): An Epidemic in the Imperial Rome', in *Asclepio: Revista de Historia de la medicina y de la Ciencia*, 59, 1 (2007), 7-22; Andrés Sáez, 'La peste Antonine: Una peste global en el siglo II d.C.', in *Revista Chilena de infectología*, 33, 2 (2016), 218-221.

Gilliers, William Rosen, and Mischa Meier all presented their own studies on the Justinianic plague.⁹⁹ Alongside these studies, scholarship throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries on ancient medicine has become more plentiful, with studies by Mattern and Temkin centred around Galen.¹⁰⁰

In this PhD thesis, we shall examine the plague of 22BC – a plague not often examined by modern historians - in greater depth than has previously been attempted. Although not as long- lasting as the Antonine or Justinianic plagues, this particular plague was nevertheless devastating, killing tens of thousands, thereby depleting Italy of farm workers, and resulting in one of the worst famines to ever hit Rome.

1.7.5 *Studies on Famines in the Roman Empire*

After a dearth in scholarship on famines in Roman times, in 1934 K. S. Gapp pioneered study on Roman famines in his seminal PhD dissertation, which examined famines throughout the Roman world from the founding of Rome to the principate of Trajan.¹⁰¹ It proved a popular work for several decades, and partly inspired Daniel Weitz's own PhD dissertation in 1972 which explored the Weitz's theory that famines may have had a part in the decline of ancient Rome.¹⁰² This dissertation, in turn, also proved influential, but it would be De Vries who highlighted the need to give greater focus to the methods and methodologies needed in approaching the impact of climate upon food supply in antiquity.¹⁰³ This basic approach led to G. Rickman's reflections on the relationship between grain supply, food storage, and famine in Roman times¹⁰⁴ – a relationship examined in chapters Three, Four, and Six in this PhD thesis.

Although these inroads further inspired Greek historians, including Camp and Jameson, to produce studies on the roles of drought and famine in the Greek world, especially during the fourth century BC,¹⁰⁵ their mark on Graeco-Roman studies generally was more

⁹⁹ Dionysios Ch. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Empire: A Systematic Survey of Subsistence Crises and Epidemics* (Ashgate, 2004); R. P. Retief, L. Gillers, 'The Epidemic of Justinian (AD542): A Prelude to the Middle Ages: The Roman World', in *Acta Theologica: Health and Healing, Disease and Death in the Graeco-Roman World, Supplementum* 7 (2006), 115-127; William Rosen, *Justinian's Flea: Plague, Empire and the Birth of Europe* (Pimlico, 2006); Mischa Meier, 'The 'Justinianic Plague'. The Economic Consequences of the Pandemic in the Eastern Roman Empire and its Cultural and Religious Effects', in *Early Medieval Europe*, 24, 3 (Aug 2016), 267-292.

¹⁰⁰ O. Temkin, *Galenism: The Rise and Decline of a Medical Philosophy* (Cornell University Press, 1973); S. P. Mattern, *Galen and the Rhetoric of Healing* (John Hopkins University Press, 2008); S. P. Mattern, 'Galen and His Patients', in *The Lancet*, 378, 9790 (2011), 478-479; S. P. Mattern, *The Prince of Medicine: Galen in the Roman Empire* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹⁰¹ K. S. Gapp, *Famine in the Roman World: From the Founding of Rome to the Time of Trajan* (PhD Dissertation, Princeton University Press, 1934).

¹⁰² Daniel Weitz, *Famine and Plague as Factors in the Collapse of the Roman Empire in the Third Century* (PhD Dissertation, Fordham University, 1972).

¹⁰³ J. De Vries, 'Measuring the Impact of Climate On History: The Search for Appropriate Methodologies', in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 10 (1980), 599-630.

¹⁰⁴ G. Rickman, *Roman Granaries and Store Buildings* (Cambridge University Press, 1971); G. Rickman, *The Corn Supply of Ancient Rome* (Oxford University Press, 1980).

¹⁰⁵ J. McK. Camp, 'Drought and Famine in the Fourth Century B.C.', in *Studies H. A. Thompson, Hesperia, Supplement* 20 (1982), 9-17; M. H. Jameson, 'Famine in the Greek World', in P. Garnsey, C. R. Whittaker

pronounced. Thus, in 1988 Peter Garnsey published his indispensable monograph on famine and food supply in the Graeco-Roman world,¹⁰⁶ in 2004 Stathokopoulos published a systematic survey of subsistence crisis in Roman times,¹⁰⁷ and in 2010 Fraser and Rimas produced work on the nature of food supply and famine in the rise and fall of human civilizations.¹⁰⁸ Meanwhile, studies into biblical references to famine have also been studied, notably by Joel Green.¹⁰⁹ In this PhD dissertation, we shall examine the main threads of each of the above scholarly strains, including biblical evidence with other literary sources to arrive at a comprehensive view of the nature of famines in Roman times, and the responses of Romans to them. In so doing, we shall analyse the nature of the famine that took place in Rome in 22BC, the famine that was checked by Germanicus in Egypt in AD19, and the empire-wide famine that took place under Claudius and Nero from AD46 to 57, using a full array of ancient sources and modern historical studies.

1.7.6 *Building Upon Scholarship in this PhD Dissertation*

This thesis' aim to use ancient data to help modern disaster management is nothing new in itself. In Italy and other countries prone to natural hazards such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, ancient records of natural disasters began to be studied in far greater depth than before as meteorologists and vulcanologists in the late twentieth century to search for ways to preserve human life during future catastrophes. This is still the main approach among scholars in this field to this day.¹¹⁰ However, thus far, 'a comprehensive history of the engagement with disasters from an explicitly historical angle' has yet to be written.¹¹¹ Jerry Toner's *Roman Disasters* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013) fills parts of this breach admirably well. However, without resting on his laurels, Toner also signalled for increased scholarly enterprise and efforts in this area of natural disaster study order to fill this gap in our historical knowledge and understanding completely. Thus, in reply to Toner, I offer to scholarship and academia this articulate thesis. Throughout, all known relationships between the Romans and all attested natural disasters that occurred throughout the Roman world from 65BC to AD63 are scoured, explored, and analysed and examined using numerous literary sources, epigraphy, numismatics, art, sculpture and architecture, and archaeology, to provide the most comprehensive interdisciplinary, inter-cultural and cross-periodic evidence-based PhD thesis on this subject to date. By doing so, I hope to make my own important contribution to the development of future techniques and methods to prevent and decrease human mortality rates preserving humanity. Primarily, however, I also hope to provide historians seeking to

(eds.) *Trade and Famine in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹⁰⁶ Peter Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply In the Graeco-Roman World* (Cambridge University Press, 1988).

¹⁰⁷ Dionysios Ch. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Empire: A Systematic Survey of Subsistence Crises and Epidemics* (Ashgate, 2004).

¹⁰⁸ Evan D. G. Fraser, Andrew Rimas, *Global Empires of Food: Feast, Famine, and the Rise and Fall of Civilizations* (Free Press, 2010).

¹⁰⁹ Joel B. Green, 'Good News to the Poor: A Lukan Leitmotif', in *Review and Expositor*, 111, 2 (2014), 173-179.

¹¹⁰ Enzo Bosci, et al, (eds.) *Catalogue of Strong Italian Earthquakes from 461BC to 1997. Introductory Texts and CD Rom. Version 3 of the Catalogo dei forti terremoti in Italia, in Annali di Geofisica*, 43/4 (2000) 609-868.

¹¹¹ Gerrit Jasper Schenk, 'Historical Disaster Research', 11.

understand the history of humanity's common heritage with a considerable body of data and findings, and conclusions drawn from each. In short, it is my hope that researchers and historians, on account of this thesis, will now be better prepared to anticipate more human responses to natural disasters by turning to, and understanding, humanity's Roman past.¹¹²

It is also the method of this thesis to examine each disaster presented in the written and physical ancient sources in a thematic and chronological manner, and trace how each one affected Rome and its politics, its economy, religion, and society. But this thesis' method also entails the bringing to bear of current trends in scholarship in this growing field to reinforce, and to highlight, the various types of Romans to natural disasters, as well as the motivations that drove them to react in the ways that they did.

As a result, this thesis follows Borst's discovery that the natural disasters of antiquity did indeed have a bearing upon the history of ancient Roman society. The impressions left to us by the ancient Romans in their writings and other physical remains are the primary focus of this analysis. Therefore, this thesis does divert away from the strictly dogmatic flow of Medieval tracts in the sense that not one single overarching view lay behind this thesis, except the finding, borne out by the evidence itself contained throughout the entirety of this thesis, that the ancient Romans actually possessed no single overarching view identical from one person to the next concerning natural disasters. Of course, needless to remind the reader, I do bring to the task some of my own biases, but it has been my aim throughout this work to showcase the ancient Romans themselves, as best as I possibly can, and not myself.

I.8 Methodology

In order to present the goals of this thesis, the methodology applied throughout demands to be that of critical historical enquiry and analysis, contextualising the ancient Romans in their world. One strength which historical analysis affords to this thesis is that it serves to 'historicise' twenty-first century humans in their approach to natural history. As part of that historicisation, this thesis presents the historical relationship between the positivities and the passivities of the ancient Romans - in their responses to natural disasters - as direct results of their own individual and collective understandings of their place in the natural world, and the natural world in their own worldviews. The interaction between elite symbols and meaning and the modes of production invented by lower classes is thus explored, and this will help one to interpret how Romans at elite and lower levels of Roman politics and society understood natural disasters and each other.

The period covered in this PhD dissertation has been chosen not only for the incredible wealth of primary evidence for natural disasters that spanned the period in both Rome, Italy and around the entire empire – and especially in the eastern half of the empire - but also because there is a considerable gap in current scholarship on natural disasters that occurred throughout this period. It is the aim of this thesis to fill this gap. This provides both advantages and

¹¹² Gerrit Jasper Schenk, 'Historical Disaster Research', 19.

difficulties in application, for in the corpus of the relevant evidence there is a multiplicity of physical artefacts and written genres that were produced by a variety of persons with numerous individual motives. This means that careful and sober historical handling of each is required. Hence, poetry, a source of deep thought and reflection, allows us to trace a poet's deepest thoughts as well as their use of the literary conventions, and their introduction of thematic and stylistic innovations – for Roman poets were never entirely isolated from the political world in which they lived, and often collaborated with it, or reacted against it.

The same could be said for other physical artefacts, including numismatic evidence and architectural artefacts in this period, too. By drawing upon conventional symbols on coins and in buildings, emperors could communicate to a vast, impersonal audience that was used to certain traditions, in relevant, personal ways. Still, coinage and architecture underwent significant change in this period also, as emperors placed their own stamp of authority upon artefacts that built incrementally upon traditions in order to build something new: their principate. The very success of the principate and the popularity of such artefacts in itself indicates a fundamental change within Roman society towards a higher level of respect paid towards the *princeps*' own reinterpretation of the Roman world, not only with regard to politics, but concerning the natural world and natural disasters as well. As a result, those *princeps*' physical reminders of those reinterpretations in buildings and on coins are relevant to this study as well, and are therefore included therein.

With regard to prose written evidence, epistles, like those of the poet Horace, the Apostle Paul, and Pliny the Younger, provide personal touches to the stylistic modes inherent in ancient letter writing that can even go beyond poetry in their expressiveness. Letters also feature in contemporaneous secondary sources too, such as Suetonius' biographies. Although some letters can be replete with deliberate selectiveness as to the information they divulge, they still serve, with careful handling of course, as indispensable first-hand forms of self-expression regarding that information.

Works of natural history and geography, such as those of Strabo, Seneca, and Pliny the Elder, are crucial to a thesis such as this for the sheer weight of knowledge and data the Romans possessed with regard to nature and natural disasters. They provide us with primary evidence on common and popular understandings the Romans had with regard to natural disasters, and as this thesis demonstrates, such understandings found external expression when natural disasters occurred. As a result, such works are indicators for as to why Romans often responded to certain natural disasters in the ways they did.

Other ancient monographs on specialised topics, such as architecture, agriculture, and aqueducts are also helpful in supplying insights into Roman policy regarding the natural world and human habitation throughout it. Thus, Vitruvius, Columella, and Frontinus provide us with informed, contemporary, windows into the feelings and beliefs regarding physical spaces, both urban and natural, that Romans held during this period. This is critical evidence too, since it reflects Roman attitudes to how natural disasters can be managed in urban and rural settings.

Historical records and narratives are in many ways a blend of all of the above mediums.

Ancient historians injected themselves into their works as poets do, providing personal invective or praises for their subjects and themes. They could follow literary and cultural tradition and convention too, employing the styles of their favourite predecessors, like Thucydides or Herodotus, in order to communicate messages to their audience in modes they understood. Yet, they could also add to those conventions with their own stylistic flare and thematic concerns, bringing readers and listeners into new literary surroundings to deal with more recent or contemporary historical issues.

Related to historical narrative is political biography. Although Suetonius' chosen genre is clearly different to that of Tacitus and Cassius Dio, it does still feature many historical details that are not found in any other extant source material. Thus, Suetonius' biographies provide us with personal details of certain emperors that are illuminating for a thesis such as this. Indeed, given that Suetonius was a member of the imperial staff under Hadrian, he had privileged access to historical records that no longer are extant, such as autobiographies and other literary works composed, or partly composed, by emperors and their staff. As a result, Suetonius as a source, if treated with discernment and historical analysis, can be most helpful in understanding the emperors he wrote about.

Thus, the Romans responded to natural disasters on various internal emotional and intellectual levels, using multiple forms and genres in the evidence they left behind. One must, therefore, handle the ancient evidence with respect for their conventional forms as well as their uniqueness within those forms. Nonetheless, by employing diligent care one can detect and distinguish those emotional and intellectual means by which Romans understood, and responded to, natural disasters.

Throughout this thesis, where possible, English translations of literary, archaeological, epigraphic, numismatic, and other primary sources are used, and discussed in light of modern scholarship and its terms. Therefore, this study conveys a broad spectrum with respect to the physical proofs for the Romans' own responses to natural events and disasters. Emperors, poets, prose writers, architects, playwrights, senators, religious practitioners, and scientifically-minded philosophers, as well as others groups of Roman society detectable in the ancient evidence, are discussed through the writings and physical artefacts they left behind. In doing so, it will be shown that individualism among the ancient Romans certainly existed, as did times of increased social cohesion, and also periods of political discontent and dissent, when natural disasters occurred.

I.9 Overview of Each Chapter In This PhD Thesis

Chapter One

In the first chapter of this PhD dissertation, we examine responses by Romans to the locust plague in Apulia, Italy, in 173BC, Pompey's response in 65BC to damage sustained in Syrian Antioch due to earthquakes, and the senatorial responses to the seismic activity that

occurred in and around Rome in 193BC. Thereupon, the evidence in Cicero's *Republic* and *Laws* for various religious responses to natural disasters by Roman individuals and the Roman state will be analysed. Then, finally, Chapter One will explore Lucretius' poetry for signs of that poet's attitude to natural occurrences in their various forms, and Cicero's letters for traces of his attitude towards the same sorts of occurrences, which took on very different forms to Lucretius' own.

Chapter Two

In Chapter Two, we analyse all attested floods and fires in Rome under Augustus' leadership, and his, and others', attitudes and responses to them. In so doing, this chapter will be subdivided under headings of 'Flood' and 'Fire'. Examined will be the 32, 27, 23, 22, 13BC, AD5, AD12 floods, and the preventative and restorative measures that Augustus and other Romans took to recover in those floods' aftermath, and the extent to which they worked together to minimise future flooding disasters, and the success of such measures and harm minimisation. Thereupon, this chapter shall turn to fire in Rome. The 16, 14 and 12BC fires will be treated together. Then, a whole section will be dedicated to the 7BC fire and the flurry of building and administrative measures that were implemented immediately after, and as a result of, it. Then, finally, the AD4 and 6 fires will be analysed and the practicalities of the night-time fire brigades that Augustus established as a result of fire in AD4.

Chapter Three

In Chapter Three, we explore the three types of natural disasters that frequented Italy and the wider empire: earthquakes, plagues, and famines. Each of these types of natural disasters will be treated separately in chronological order. Thus, in the first section, the earthquakes in 26 and 12BC in Asia Minor, the earthquake of 15BC in Cyprus, and the 17-11BC and 2BC earthquakes in Campania will be analysed. In this section shall be dedicated discussions on the evidence in Seneca's *Natural Questions* and Julius Obsequens' writings that informs us as to Roman responses to such earthquakes. Then, under the section of Plague, we shall examine the plague of 22BC, its spread by water-borne infection, and the responses to it by Augustus and other Romans, including the poet Ovid. Finally, under the sub-heading of 'Famine', this chapter will demonstrate how Romans, including the Augustan poets, and Augustus himself, recovered and restored Roman values in the aftermath of the 22BC famine, and how Augustus' measures in response to the AD5 famine alleviated the suffering in Rome that it caused.

Chapter Four

In Chapter Four, we move into Tiberius' principate, and examine the floods that hit Rome in AD15 and 36, and Livia's and Tiberius' responses to the major fires of AD16, 17 and 36 that hit Rome in those years. Next, the earthquake of AD17, which devastated the Roman

province of Asia will be discussed, and Tiberius' monumental restoration of the province will be examined, and the roles the Senate, army, citizen body, provincial leaders, and slave workforces played in that restoration will be set out. Finally, this chapter will close with Germanicus' resolution of the impending famine in Egypt in AD19, and the repercussions this had in the imperial family and the importance it may have had in the death of Germanicus.

Chapter Five

In Chapter Five, we explore the evidence for earthquake activity throughout the eastern Empire. We shall focus on the earthquakes of AD23 that damaged Cibyra in Asia and Aegae in Greece, the literary and archaeological evidence for seismic activity in southern Italy and northern Sicily, and finally, the evidence for the AD33 earthquake in Jerusalem, Judea. In so doing, we shall find that Tiberius' responses to such events varied depending upon the political and economic impact by each seismic event on each region. We shall also analyse the responses by the Roman guards on duty at Jesus' crucifixion to the earthquake activity that took place in Jerusalem at that time, and using the gospel records and other primary sources, and literary and archaeological evidence, we shall contextualise those responses in their historical setting.

Chapter Six

In Chapter Six, which covers the principates of Gaius (Caligula), Claudius, and the early years of Nero's reign, we examine the conditions leading up to, and surrounding the Great Famine that began under Claudius in AD45 and lasted until around AD63. We shall explain Claudius' own initial lack-lustre response to the famine, and then his eventual, but timely and considerable response to it as the famine set in; and we shall also examine the biblical and extra-biblical evidence for provincial responses by Jews and Roman Christians to the worst affected area from the ravages of this famine – that of the Levant, and especially Judea.

Conclusion

In this conclusion, the findings of previous chapters will be bound and brought together. In doing so, we shall conclude that although Romans shared a common culture, within that culture existed much scope for individuality and individual expression, even in the midst and aftermath of the most destructive of natural disasters. Similarly to Toner and Sonnabend, these chapters adhere to thematic categorisations. However, in departure from both, they focus more heavily upon strict chronological sequences in each section under each emperor in every chapter.

CHAPTER ONE: ROMAN RESPONSES TO NATURAL DISASTERS THROUGHOUT THE MIDDLE AND LATE REPUBLICAN PERIODS

1.1 Republican Responses to Natural Disasters I: Civic (*benefactio*, *imperium*)

1.1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we shall examine various Roman attitudes to natural disasters in the Middle and Late republican periods, and the modes of expression their internal and external responses took, focussing primarily upon the elite ranks of Roman society. The range of ancient evidence at hand is slim and fragmentary, however enough exists for an effective analysis. The first set of responses to a natural disaster analysed by this chapter is that which followed the plague of locusts that swept Apulia, Italy, in 173BC, wiping out an entire grain supply source for Rome's swelling population. The second is Pompey the Great's benevolent rebuilding of the Bouleuterion in Syrian Antioch in 65BC after it had been severely damaged by a series of earthquakes there. Then, in section 1. 2, we shall explore the series of earthquakes that hit Rome in 193BC. Taken together, these sets of natural disasters are unique *prodigia* for the Middle Republic in that they prompted responses by Rome's senators of a pragmatic kind. Indeed, these prefigure those more pragmatic, and indeed more monumental, responses by emperors, senators, and other Romans during the Early Empire from Augustus to Nero.¹¹³ Thus, these earlier natural disasters and their resultant responses warrant inclusion and examination in a monograph such as this, focussed primarily as it is from Chapter Two onwards on Roman responses to natural disasters under Augustus and his Julio-Claudian successors.

These events, and the concerted responses by the Roman Senate to them, as described by our main source Livy, and John Malalas, illustrate the workings of the Senate concerning disaster relief during the Middle and Late Republican periods. Through their examination we can better comprehend the Senate's attitude towards both the locust plague of 173BC, and the earthquakes of 193BC. To serve as a clearer example of a more civic response, this chapter begins with the 173BC plague, then moves thematically to Pompey's response to the destruction of the Bouleuterion in Antioch owing to earthquake damage there. In the next section (1. 2) we shall analyse those religious responses, in which discussion of the events of 193BC are placed. Hence, in section one we examine civic responses, in section two religious responses, and in section three philosophical responses. As featured so often throughout this dissertation, these were the three main categories of responses by Romans to natural disasters throughout the Roman world. Thus, although following chapters discuss Roman responses under the categories of the various types of natural disasters, in this chapter we explore these three main types of responses themselves.

Although most medical scholars from the late 1800s onward have preferred to study

¹¹³ Veit Rosenberger, 'Republican *Nobiles*: Controlling the *Res Publica*', in Jörg Rüpke (ed.) *A Companion to Roman Religion* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 294.

more modern, relatable, and relevant infectious plagues instead, the inclusion of the 173BC locust plague in this thesis is not without validity, for by the early twentieth century interest in ancient plagues of all kinds has grown exponentially.¹¹⁴ And, whereas most modern studies on ancient plagues restricted themselves to the Antonine and Justinianic plagues, this thesis further expands on this scholarship not just by treating the 173BC locust plague, but also the 22BC plague in much detail in Chapter Two.

Having set Sicinius and the Senate in its disaster response in the context of the Republican period, this section will then move forward to the Late Republican period – to 65BC in fact, when Pompey rebuilt the Bouleuterion in Syrian Antioch which had fallen into disrepair as a result of prolonged earthquake activity in the region. In doing so we shall draw primarily upon the evidence of John Malalas. By doing so, we shall see that Pompey's actions in Antioch were benevolent, as Sicinius' own were, but were far more removed than Sicinius' from senatorial instruction. Indeed, Pompey's actions were made on the ground in a more independent fashion.

Although seismology is one aspect of archaeology today, this dissertation focusses heavily on ancient literary evidence as well, for there is an absence of solid archaeological evidence for many seismic events in Roman times. However, while the literary record is invaluable for its human perspective, for one cannot divide the geological event from the human reaction in Roman times. Thus, throughout this section, and indeed throughout this entire PhD thesis, there is in-depth analysis of the intertwining of the human and physical realms in which Romans lived.

1.1.2 Civic Responses to Natural Disasters in the Middle Republican Period

In the pre-imperial period, there was no centralized, coordinated disaster relief structure in place to cope with human loss of life, and nor were there detailed programs in place to address any damage that might be sustained to public and private buildings.¹¹⁵ Sonnabend has argued that the Roman *nobilitas* were too culturally conditioned to shame their Senatorial peers by outperforming them in the supply of aid to disaster zone populations. Moreover, since the supply aid provision would have been seen by Senatorial members as a populist move, the *nobilitas* were unwilling to undermine other Senators' aristocratic status, nor cast disfavour on their own class, but positioning themselves above the other Senators in the public eye. Of course, needless to say, this would change under the Principate. Emperors were part of the Senate strictly speaking, however under Augustus the royal family often intervened without senatorial approval, and from Tiberius on would intervene in senatorial provinces when expedient, and since the Julio-Claudian dynasty were derived from, and interlinked with ancient *nobilitas* families, Sonnabend's arguments have their limitations when one considers that such families probably had a will to compete with each other,

¹¹⁴ 'Section of the History of Medicine', in *The Lancet*, 210, 5431 (1927), 708-711.

¹¹⁵ Holger Sonnabend, *Naturkatastrophen in der Antike: Wahrnehmung – Deutung – Management* (Metzler, 1999), 210-213.

however much repressed by Roman culture.¹¹⁶

However, by the Middle and Late Republican periods, there did actually emerge a number of individual senators who were willing to break ranks and stamp themselves upon the Roman world. According to Livy, in 173BC one such senator, the *praetor* Cn. Sicinius, led the disaster relief at Apulia, located at the eastern extremity of southern Italy, extending east of Campania down to the heel of Italy. When a devastating plague of locusts, carried by prevailing winds, wrought terrible ‘destruction to the crops’ there, Livy states:

Such clouds of locusts invaded Apulia from the sea that they covered the fields far and wide with their swarms. To get rid of this destruction to the crops Cn. Sicinius was sent with full powers into Apulia and spent a considerable time in getting together an enormous number of men to collect them.¹¹⁷

This plague had a profound effect not only upon the Apulians’ food supply, but also that of Rome, which required the harvested produce from Apulia through trade for its growing population. The dire scenario this caused in Rome accounts for the urgency behind the Roman Senate’s external response in the appointment of Cn. Sicinius ‘with full powers into Apulia’. The choice of a *praetor* for the task is revealing. By 173BC, praetors could be allotted office in Rome, a region of Italy, or command in either Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, or Spain. And, they had to have held significant experience in regional jurisdiction and the organisation of human resources. This would have fitted Sicinius well for the task of organising the manpower he raised in Apulia in order to collect the locusts by hand.¹¹⁸

As well as experience in holding office over a given region, the powers of the praetorship equipped Sicinius to act on behalf of the entire Senate’s behalf in Apulia. Holding full praetorian power, Sicinius held precedence over all other praetors in that region, and power over the military in the region, including Rome’s armies and naval fleets. This would have allowed Sicinius to use Rome’s army to recruit and train the enormous number of men brought together for the task of collecting locusts, and to use its fleet to transport manpower along Apulia’s coastline to locust-plague affected areas. However, these military powers were conditional upon the Senate’s discretion alone. All praetorships were temporary positions, restricted to a single region, and all praetors had to comply with all senatorial instructions. Thus, Sicinius’ own external responses to this plague were only partly his own. They were also informed by instructions from the Senate. However, whilst Sicinius’ efforts in mustering men from all over the Apulian region, and the collection of locusts, drew upon specific requirements drawn-up by the Senate at the relief-effort’s very outset, the ‘enormous number’ of men Sicinius recruited, and the ‘considerable’ length of time he took in collecting them, appeared unusual to Livy - and therefore probably constitute deliberate independent decision-making on his part. Thus, although under senatorial directive, through holding full powers on the ground Sicinius could, and did, make decisions to address this plague in person, on his own. His mission was granted by the Senate, but the way it was carried out was done so

¹¹⁶ This is the view put forward by Holger Sonnabend, *Naturkatastrophen in der Antike*, 213-217.

¹¹⁷ Liv. 42. 10. 7.

¹¹⁸ Andrew Lintott, *The Constitution of the Roman Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 107.

mostly upon Sicinius' own initiative and planning.¹¹⁹

These events constitute an early instance of the Roman Senate taking responsibility for disaster relief at a collective, civic level. Through them, we can detect common agreement on the part of Rome's senators to appoint and equip Sicinius full responsibility, in the Senate's name, in Apulia. Yet, differences between individual senators in their outward responses, which this dissertation terms 'external responses' are clearly discernible. For, not all senators took an equal share in the disaster relief effort, and most senators simply voted to appoint Sicinius to oversee the disaster relief, and nothing more. However, this apparent lack of interest by senators to Sicinius' relief effort in Apulia stemmed not from a lack of concern for the situation – quite the opposite in fact – for those same senators found themselves invariably preoccupied with full-time religious and ceremonial responsibilities that addressed this same natural disaster while back in Rome. For, theirs was the responsibility to organise and carry out to completion the *supplicationes*, *lectisternia*, and *remedia* that accompanied this locust plague, as it was in the case of every *prodigium*. Thus, although Rome's large number of senators could afford to take part in the relief effort, religious duty took precedence over actual disaster relief on a cultural level. Therefore, whilst Sicinius and other senators shared similar concerns, feelings, and thoughts, which are referred to as 'internal responses' towards this natural disaster, at least at its outset; their outward, external, expressions – their external responses – took different forms, and these forms would diverge increasingly further as Sicinius set about organising manpower and disaster relief in Apulia, and Rome's other senators embarked on the organisation and carrying out of various public ceremonies in Rome. As we shall now see, Pompey would go on to expand upon these types of variation in the internal and external responses to natural disasters that could manifest themselves in Roman individuals further abroad.

1.1.3 *Civic Responses to Natural Disasters in the Late Republican Period: Pompey, Antioch, and John Malalas*

During a period of respite from his campaign against Mithridates of Pontus,¹²⁰ Pompey stayed for some time in Syrian Antioch where, as John Malalas states, the Bouleuterion had sustained serious earthquake damage. Pompey had it completely rebuilt:

Pompeius Magnus came out of Rome because of Caesar and attacked the Cilicians, who had rebelled against him; and when he had defeated them, he made war also on Tigranes, emperor of the Armenians. After defeating him, he captured Armenia, Cilicia and Syria, putting an end to the toparchies too. He laid claim to the Antiochenes and, entering the city of Antioch, he made it subject to the Romans, giving generously to them and rebuilding the Bouleuterion, for it had fallen down.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Andrew Lintott, *The Constitution*, 17; T. Corey Brennan, *The Praetorship in the Roman Republic. Volume 1*

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 98, 101-105, 125, 184.

¹²⁰ Vell. 2. 37. 4; Plut. *Pomp.* 38; Dio. 37. 7a; Flor. 1. 40. 29; G. Downey, 'The Occupation of Syria By the Romans', in *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 82 (1951), 149-155; Robin Seager, *Pompey the Great: A Political Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 58.

¹²¹ John Malalas, 8. 30.

This act of Pompey's was of great importance to the people of Antioch. The Bouleuterion was a symbol of pride in Antioch, for although the city had been governed by Macedonians, the locals prided themselves on those traditional features of a Greek *polis* in their city.¹²² Hence, Antioch's inhabitants viewed the building's state of disrepair resulting from seismic activity as a sign of the decline in their Greek heritage.¹²³ In addition, the considerable length of time the Bouleuterion remained in this state due to the repeated incursions by Armenian, Jewish, and Arab armies, and Mediterranean pirate fleets, that diverted Antiochene funds towards military operations and away from rebuilding the Bouleuterion, this served as a constant reminder that this once-great city of Antioch could no longer defend itself, and as a result, could no longer even afford to repair its own beloved Bouleuterion.¹²⁴

However, when Pompey arrived at Antioch, he decided to use that city as his base for operations against Mithridates. Whereupon, the Boule approached Pompey, and according to the Slavonic version of Malalas, 'asked this [the rebuilding of the Bouleuterion] of him [Pompey]'.¹²⁵ Receiving this request, Pompey discerned the building's importance to the locals, and immediately had it lavishly rebuilt, for such was its importance to them as a civic building and symbol of individual and collective identity, and such was Antioch's importance to Pompey as a base for operations. This episode reveals the importance of the ruling elite in Antioch to Pompey - who had now become that elite's new patron.¹²⁶ It also reveals his importance to places like Antioch, generally. Through his campaigns in the East, Pompey had become the wealthiest Roman on earth, and therefore stood as an attractive source of patronage to many cities, but especially to the Antiochenes who needed Pompey's funds to virtually rebuild their city after prolonged earthquake activity throughout the 60s. Thus, drawn to Pompey's wealth acquired by a vast *clientelae* in the East, the Antiochenes submitted themselves to his *benefactio*, thus adding to the level of provincial subservience within that *clientelae*. In time, Julius Caesar would surpass Pompey in wealth, and that wealth Octavian would inherit and surpass, thus bringing under himself an empire of *clientelae* that would, in turn, seek his *benefactio* just as the Antiochene Boule sought Pompey's.¹²⁷ Nonetheless, such *benefactio* ensured political subservience to patrons like Pompey, who provided it.¹²⁸

From this point on, the local Antiochenes ascribed the Bouleuterion's restoration with a belief that sound governance there had also been restored with it for themselves by Pompey.¹²⁹ Moreover, that Malalas' very mention of the Bouleuterion appears in his world

¹²² E. Bickerman, *Institutions des Séleucides* (Paris, 1938), 157; G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria: From Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 112-113; Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium: The Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 164.

¹²³ Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael Jeffreys, Roger Scott (eds.) *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, 111.

¹²⁴ Dio. 36. 53. 1; 37. 7a; App. Syr. 49. 249-260; 70. 367; Justin 40. 2. 2-8; Frankfort *FO* 291, 318; Robin Seager, *Pompey the Great: A Political Biography*, 49, 58.

¹²⁵ Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael Jeffreys, Roger Scott (eds.) *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, 111.

¹²⁶ Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael Jeffreys, Roger Scott (eds.) *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, 111.

¹²⁷ E. Badian, *Roman Imperialism in the Late Republic* (Pretoria, 1967), 72-80; Robin Seager, *Pompey the Great*, 60, 62.

¹²⁸ Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium*, 661.

¹²⁹ Ann Moffatt, 'A Record of Public Buildings and Monuments', in Elizabeth Jeffreys, Brian Croke, Roger

history illuminates the importance placed in the Bouleuterion as an institution by Antiochenes for many centuries to follow.¹³⁰

Although this seemingly sublime act of goodwill and cooperation on Pompey's part is entirely absent from Plutarch's account of Pompey's campaigns in the East, its importance to Pompey and the Antiochenes cannot be understated. For, while Plutarch's portrayal of Pompey in Syria is not that of the benevolent patron that Malalas conveys, but as a proud general whose sole purpose in Syria is the carrying out of the war against Mithridates, this is to be expected from Plutarch who, as a native of Chaeronea in Greece, did not share Malalas' affinity with civic matters in Antioch. Nor did he, as a biographer of strong generals, sympathise with Pompey's softer feelings towards this city's inhabitants.¹³¹

However, softer feelings clearly existed in Pompey towards the seismic activity in Antioch, taking the following internally responsive forms of sympathy and concern, for these were expressed outwardly, openly and publically, through the rebuilding of its Bouleuterion as a monumental external response, thus setting a precedent for the Julio-Claudian emperors that followed him. Thus, by this single external response we can detect Pompey's own internal, sympathetic and paternal, response to the plight of Antioch generally, and its Bouleuterion in particular. For, those internal responses were clearly visible in Pompey's outward, civic actions. Notably, this pragmatic approach left a lasting legacy throughout the principate, beginning with Augustus and Agrippa, as they responded pragmatically to natural disasters both in Rome and throughout the empire, as following chapters illustrate. However, from Augustus onward, the pragmatic responses enacted by Rome's emperors primarily served the twin purposes to advertise the *princeps*' utility to the state, and legitimise his power over that same state. In the case of Pompey, however, his utility to the Roman state was not advertised through the rebuilding of the Bouleuterion, nor did it serve to increase his military might. But rather, by this rebuilding effort, Pompey's benign benevolence was put on full display, which served to help the people of Antioch, and ensure goodwill between Antiochenes and Romans there. The determination of such internal responses from the external responses they produce is unique to the Internal- External Response to Natural Disasters Approach endorsed throughout this monograph, as opposed to other approaches to ancient natural disasters. However, some care is advised when determining internal motives for outward expression such as these. For, as following chapters reveal, similar modes of outward, external responses to natural disasters could mask different, individualised internally responsive motivations depending upon their historical contexts. For, whilst Roman acts of benefaction certainly continued under the principate, and although Rome's emperors certainly helped restore and rebuild much more than single buildings damaged by natural disasters throughout their reigns, these external responses expressed internal responses that fluctuated between genuine sympathy to a desire to pursue purely self-promoting ambition. However, these trends and variations are highlighted by the following chapters in this dissertation, and their historical, political and cultural contexts help us understand their function. What is abundantly clear in

Scott (eds.) *Studies in John Malalas*, 93.

¹³⁰ Ann Moffatt, 'A Record of Public Buildings and Monuments', in Elizabeth Jeffreys, Brian Croke, Roger Scott (eds.) *Studies in John Malalas*, 93, 111.

¹³¹ Plut. *Pomp.* 42-45.

the case of Pompey, is that he had no tried and true knowledge of how monumental projects such as these following natural disasters could enhance one's political standing exponentially, whereas Augustus certainly did – for he had the example of Pompey to guide him.

1.1.4 Summary

In relation to civic responses to natural disasters under the *res-publica* from the above two cases of Sicinius in 173BC and Pompey in 65BC, we can detect signs of continuity in their external and indeed, internal responses, but also change. As for continuity, it is clear that both figures approached the task of restoring communities after natural disasters with from an internal response of enthusiasm and gusto that appear genuine. Indeed, these left indelible impressions upon the minds of both Livy and Malalas, if not Plutarch. Livy and Malalas were driven by internal responses to the circumstances of 173BC and 65BC respectively, which ultimately they expressed externally through the written word. In their accounts it is evident they were moved to externally respond as they did a single, primary, driving internal response to the events of 173BC and 65BC: that of political affinity. Livy, an Italian, and Malalas, an Antiochene, felt sympathy and empathy for Italy and Antioch which were their respective political homelands. Plutarch, a Roman citizen from Chaeronea in Boeotia in central Greece, however, did not share such a close affinity with either of those regions of the kind that Livy and Malalas shared. However, these authors' common internal response, which took the form of political affinity, developed different characteristics from one author to the next, as each expressed themselves differently through the external responses inherent in their written work. Coming from different parts of the Roman Empire, Livy, Malalas and Plutarch externally responded out of close political allegiances to the settings and their subject matter. Indeed, their external responses emerged from a single deeper, internal response to them: that of political affinity. Livy, an Italian Roman citizen, had a deep interest in Rome's political relationship with Italy; and Malalas, an Antiochene Roman citizen, had a deep interest in Rome's political relationship with Antioch. Plutarch, however, being from Greece, had a deep interest in Rome's political relationship with Greece – hence his *Parallel Lives* of great Roman and Greek generals. Therefore, Plutarch was more interested in showing what he saw as military and political parallels between Pompey and Greek leaders such as Alexander than he was in describing detailed accounts of Pompey's every action in Antioch. Thus, just as these writers' outward, external responses to the natural disasters discussed above progressed along individual courses, so too did their internal responses to them. For, although political affinity was common to each, those affinities were centred on different political focal points. For Livy it was Rome and Italy, for Malalas it was Antioch, and for Plutarch it was Rome and Greece.

As with these authors, so too with regard to their subjects, Sicinius and Pompey, in whose actions there also appear signs of continuity and change between the two. These also appear heavily influenced by political affinities, but in their case the continuity and change that took place in Roman politics from 173BC to 65BC:

1. Whereas Sicinius acted on behalf of the Senate's decision, Pompey acted independently.

2. Whereas Sicinius acted in Italy, Pompey acted in newly conquered territory.
3. Whereas Sicinius was a mere praetor, Pompey held consular imperium in a major war against Mithridates of Pontus.

These three signs of change are accountable in light of Roman political history. During Sicinius' time the Senate held greater influence over the behaviours of members, but by the Late Republic, Roman generals often behaved according to their own will rather than the Senate's – hence the pressure by Pompey in gaining extraordinary commands like that against Mithridates. As Roman power expanded throughout the Mediterranean world, Roman generals were forced to make decisions on the ground further away from the seat of power in Rome and its Senate. The Senate still reserved the right to make war and peace,¹³² however a clear shift had occurred precisely during Sicinius' time as praetor. For, in 173/172BC M. Popillius Laenas was forced by the Senate to make reparations for decisions he had made while on campaign. It may be that the Senate had started to become increasingly wary of its own number exerting independence from the Senate body as Sicinius had displayed to the full in 173BC,¹³³ And indeed, regulations were even set in place by the Senate in the early second century BC forbidding generals from using their armies for personal gain.¹³⁴ But generals like Pompey were soon forced by the sheer geographical distance from Rome, and their newly acquired wealth of funds and *clientelae* abroad, to exercise their own responsibility with regard to their conduct while on campaign, and this applied especially to Pompey who carried Roman arms further from Rome than any Roman general had before him while he was in the East.¹³⁵

By applying the Internal-External Approach to the above facts one can determine that although Sicinius' and Pompey's actions appear similar, these external responses actually cover sharp differences in their internal responses that reflect political change from 173BC to 65BC. For:

1. Whereas Sicinius was ordered by the Senate to respond to plague and Pompey acted solely, and whereas Sicinius's actions were entirely accountable to the Senate but Pompey's independent action suggests otherwise regarding him, it can therefore, be found that Pompey's external response to the prolonged earthquake activity in Antioch emerged from a more personal sense of responsibility than Sicinius'.
2. Such a sense of responsibility has its implications, for whereas Sicinius's external response acted in accordance with senatorial instruction, Pompey acted on his own initiative.
3. Such initiative reflects differences in Sicinius' and Pompey's internal responses, for whereas Sicinius acted in the express interests of the starving in Rome and Italy,

¹³² Pol. 1. 11. 2-3, 63. 1; 15. 1. 3; 18. 42. 4; Liv. 31. 7-8; 33. 25. 7; Andrew Lintott, *Imperium Romanum: Politics and Administration* (London: Routledge, 1993), 43.

¹³³ Liv. 42. 7-9, 21-22; Andrew Lintott, *Imperium Romanum*, 44.

¹³⁴ Liv. 43. 2. 12; Poseidonius, *FGH* 87, F59 (= 265 Edelstein-Kidd); Cic. *Verr.* 4. 9; *lex agr.* 54-55; M. Crawford, 'Rome and the Greek World: Economic Relationships', in *EHR*, 51; Andrew Lintott, *Imperium Romanum*, 44.

¹³⁵ Andrew Lintott, *Imperium Romanum*, 43-46.

Pompey acted for the population of far-off Antioch. Therefore, this demonstrates that while Sicinius and the Senate were driven to action by a self-serving internal response to the locust plague of 173BC, Pompey's internal response to the plight of Antioch was less altruistic and more selfless.

However, it must be noted that Pompey, a general with extraordinary imperium, had the freedom to respond to the earthquake damage in Antioch in ways that simply did not exist during the Middle Republic. Most certainly, Sicinius also had freedom to act up to a point, and he exercised that freedom with much time and effort on his part, but his efforts served primarily to honour the Senate, whereas Pompey could act entirely on his own initiative independent of any Senatorial deliberation or consideration, unbound by senatorial constraints in his external response to the damage sustained at Antioch from earthquake events. Therefore, when Pompey eventually returned to Rome it was the Senate that had little choice, thanks to Julius Caesar's consulship powers, to ratify Pompey's eastern arrangements and settlements in 59BC.¹³⁶

Thus, under the Middle Republic, all authority to externally respond on a civic level to natural disasters lay with the Senate; but by the Late Republic authority and immense wealth had begun to concentrate into the hands of generals. As we shall see in the following chapters, that authority became concentrated under each *princeps*, as individual emperors increasingly monopolised the right to lead the civic external response, Pompey-like, on behalf of those affected by natural disasters, both in Rome, and throughout Italy, and indeed, the entire empire. That freedom was slowly emerging under the *res-publica*, but could not have been foreseen by Rome's senators acting in 193BC to a series of earthquakes in Rome.

1.2 Republican Responses to Natural Disasters II: Religious

Despite individual differences, Roman senators usually presented a collective, public front and stipulated that natural disasters signalled temporary disturbances in the *pax deorum*. These disturbances invariably required specifically state prescribed household and public rituals. These rituals, under the Middle and Late Republic, were often the most practicable disaster relief effort methods at hand to the state, designed and used to restore harmony between the state and gods and therefore restrict further natural disaster occurrences. Rituals such as *lectisternia* which were ceremonial offerings of food to the gods, and *supplicationes*, which were supplication processions through the streets of Rome, were the two most fundamental forms of collective civic and religious external responses to natural disasters during the Middle and Late Republic periods.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ H. H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero: A History of Rome 133BC to AD68* (fifth ed.; London: Routledge, 1982), 103-104, 112-115; Luciano Canfora, *Julius Caesar: The Life and Times of the People's Dictator* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 63-65, 79-82; Robin Seager, *Pompey the Great*, 81-88; Andrew Lintott, *Imperium Romanum*, 25, 35.

¹³⁷ Bruse MacBain, *Prodigy and Expiation: A Study in Religion and Politics in Republican Rome* (Brüssel: Latomus, 1982); Gerhard H. Waldherr, *Erdbeben-Das außergewöhnliche Normale: Zur Rezeption seismischer Aktivitäten in literarischen Quellen vom 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr. Bis zum 4. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1997), 157ff; Veit Rosenberger, *Gezähmte Götter: Das Prodigenwesen der römischen*

1.2.1 *Religious Responses to Natural Disasters in the Middle Republican Period*

Religious ceremonies enveloped the Roman state's response to natural disasters. Rituals shaped and promoted attitudes and responses towards natural disasters among many Romans, but despite its utility, these ceremonies restricted the extent of pragmatic relief effort in the wake of natural disasters, for their observances impeded senators from actually acting upon any desire they may have had to help disaster victims in more practical and useful ways. The following example illustrates just how religion did just that in Rome in the aftermath of natural disasters throughout the republican period.

According to Livy, in 193BC there was such a violent and prolonged sequence of earthquakes in the city of Rome that its inhabitants became exhausted, and even sleepless with anxiety, after many days of earthquake activity there. The Senate took action to appease the gods. According to Roman protocol, all matters of state were considered null and void if associated with unfavourable omens, and to ignore this protocol and to continue in such matters was not only a clear breach of this rule but was also a capital offense.¹³⁸ However, such a protocol only escalated public anxiety and restlessness in 193BC, for in that year there were so many *lectisternia* and *supplicationes* prescribed by the Senate after the repeated seismic events of that year that the people in Rome had even less rest, adding to the insomnia occasioned by the earthquakes themselves, and therefore conditions in Rome only grew worse. Usually in the Middle Republican period, *supplicationes* lasted three to five days, and all Romans were required by law to perform their *lectisternia* as part of the state's *remedia* to restore the *pax deorum*. However, in this case, there were so many after-shocks over so many days, that the Senate was totally absorbed by public ceremonies over a long period, and could not even convene to conduct any public business for the running of the state. Livy states:

At the beginning of the year of office of the new consuls there were such frequent reports of the occurrence of earthquakes that men grew tired not only of the subject itself, but also of the suspension of business which was ordered on account of it. No meeting of the Senate could be held or any public proceedings conducted, as the consuls were entirely occupied with sacrifices and rites of expiation.¹³⁹

At a loss, the Senate consulted the Sibylline books, and these prescribed a three-day vigil of *lectisternia* and *supplicationes* to be observed at both civic and household levels in addition to the ceremonies already carried out. Livy adds:

Prayers were offered at all the shrines, and suppliants wearing laurel wreaths, and a notice was issued requiring all the members of a family to offer up their prayers

Republik (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1998), 14, 21, 23-25, 38-40, 127-130, 154-157; Bernard Linke, 'Religio und res-publica: Religiöser Glaube und gesellschaftliches Handeln im republikanischen Rom', in Bernhard Linke and Michael Stemmler (eds.) *Mos Maiorum: Untersuchungen zu den Formen der Identitätsstiftung und Stabilisierung in der Römischen Republik* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2000) 269-298. See especially 279-298; Mischa Meier, 'Roman Emperors', 15-16.

¹³⁸ Cic. *Leg.* 2. 21.

¹³⁹ Liv. 34. 55. 1-2.

together.¹⁴⁰

Not surprisingly, when the seismic tremors eventually died down, a frustrated Senate convened and took measures for the welfare of the state, decreeing henceforth that only one earthquake each day was to be reported to the Senate in the future to place a limit upon the frequency of public ritual in the midst of seismic events. Religious protocol had failed Rome in 193BC. The Senate was determined to change not the religion, but the protocol. Livy states:

On the recommendation of the Senate, the consuls proclaimed that on any day on which an earthquake had been reported and rites ordained, no one should report another earthquake.¹⁴¹

By this measure, a unified Senate ensured that propitiatory rites arising from those reports would thereby be reduced, allowing more time for senators to conduct state business during future episodic series of seismic occurrences.¹⁴²

Yet, despite this senatorial decree's importance to the city of Rome in times of natural disasters, Livy glosses over that importance all-too briefly. This suited Livy's thematic literary purposes. Throughout his own lifetime, Augustus promoted himself publically as the restorer of temples and traditional Roman religion, which Livy viewed more favourably than the debacles of a Senate responsible for a decline in Roman morals. Thus, by largely ignoring the external responses of senators to the seismic events of 193BC, Livy was able to present the principate of his own times, and that of his immediate audience, in more positive tones. However, Livy respected the Senate's memory enough to use its actions as a mirror for his contemporary Romans, so they could at least learn from and respect them - and even try to surpass them - but in all cases Livy believed his contemporary Romans must correct them, just as Augustus did.¹⁴³ Thus, despite the practicalities of the Senate's decision in 193BC, these did not fit well with the Augustan emphasis on traditional religion, nor with Livy's theme that since the end of the Hannibalic War Rome had been in decline – a decline that, after all, demanded the mammoth historical work Livy committed himself to undertake, and of course the steady leadership of Augustus, to steer Romans away from complete corruption.¹⁴⁴

Of course, some modern historians have disputed the notion of Livy's fondness for Augustus. In the past it has been rightly presumed that the final twenty-two books of Livy's history which dealt with Augustus' gaining and exercise of power must have been far too explosive, and in the main, hostile to the *princeps* on account of Livy's lukewarm remarks about him in his Preface, written shortly after Actium. However, three factors need also to be taken into account when approaching Livy, notwithstanding the obvious fact that Livy's final twenty-two books are no longer extant and that therefore we cannot know what was actually in them.¹⁴⁵ The first of these facts is that Tacitus clearly states that Livy worked under

¹⁴⁰ Liv. 34. 55. 4.

¹⁴¹ Liv. 34. 55. 4.

¹⁴² Liv. 34. 55. 1-4. Jerry Toner, *Roman Disasters*, 61.

¹⁴³ Alain M. Gowing, *Empire and Memory*, 21-23.

¹⁴⁴ Alain M. Gowing, *Empire and Memory*, 21-23.

¹⁴⁵ See especially P. G. Walsh, *Livy*, 5-6.

Augustus' patronage, which casts doubt on the idea of a total lack of fondness for him on Livy's part.¹⁴⁶ Secondly, although Livy was known by Tacitus to be pro-Pompeian and generous towards Brutus and Cassius in the now lost books of his history, it is worth noting that Livy's history does not end with Pharsalus or Philippi, but continues well into Augustus' principate, up to 9BC in fact, which suggests that Livy saw Roman history culminating with Augustus, not with the end of the republic.¹⁴⁷ And thirdly, Livy's books on Augustus were published after that *princeps*' death, and this implies that there was probably a sense of *pietas* in those books in tribute to the emperor's achievements, rather than lack of fondness.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, it may be argued that Livy even developed a genuine sense of confidence in Roman society that progressively grew as the principate of Augustus unfolded - a confidence that grew from Actium onwards, spurring him on to write on with vigour. Moreover, given that Livy stopped writing his history in 9BC, and died in AD17, it may be argued that he stopped writing not from old age, but from the gradual realisation that Rome's moral reform was complete and that it no longer demanded his guiding pen to remind Roman audiences of their once glorious *virtus* – the *princeps* had already done enough to ensure that they had once again found it. Seen in this light, Livy's warmth and fondness towards Augustus means that his accounts of the actions and edicts of the Senate like that in 193BC – the very Senate whose ultimate power Augustus had usurped, and whose position in Rome Augustus had supplanted – are usually cast without any directly positive light by Livy in an attempt to justify Augustus' sole-rule at the Senate's own expense in his own day.

However, regardless of Livy's literary themes, in this episode one observes the Roman Senate acting with decisiveness and resolve, for from their decision emerged opportunities to expand the state's efforts to help affected regions with more practical external responses, like that displayed by Sicinius to the locust plague in Apulia in 173BC, twenty years later. In juxtaposition to Livy's themes of moral decline after the Hannibalic War, such was the all-pervading nature of Roman religion and the state's strict adherence to it, that in 193BC ritualized *lectisternia* and *supplicationes* still consumed much of the Senators' time well after the end of the Hannibalic War. However, by reforming the laws concerning the repetition and number of *lectisternia* and *supplicationes*, Rome's senators were able to free up more of their number's time to run the state and restore a semblance of order in Rome in the aftermath of future earth tremors, and also respond on the ground to natural disasters as we have seen in the case of Sicinius. However, this new freedom extended only to a certain point, for the Senate's responsibility to uphold Roman religion continued well into 173BC. Indeed, such was its continued religious responsibility that the Senate could afford only to despatch a single praetor, Sicinius, into Apulia to lead the relief effort there in that year.

Nevertheless, the Senate's resolve to free up time to run the state and ensure practical disaster relief does represent a unique external response that indicates something about the internal responses to these earthquakes. Clearly, there was an emerging schism between the priority of running the state and the expedencies of maintaining a religious front in the wake of natural disasters. Yet, in the face of these repeated earthquakes, it is clear that real help

¹⁴⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 4. 34.

¹⁴⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 4. 34; Donald Mellor, *The Roman Historians*, 49, 55.

¹⁴⁸ Donald Mellor, *The Roman Historians*, 72.

and action were needed, not just endless ritual punctuated by repeated tremors. Thus, the Senate's decision in 193BC was appreciated by many Romans concerned about the future running of the state when faced with natural disasters such as these. These earthquakes had created a tension between two groups, on the one hand those who yearned to act with more pragmatism, on the other those who were strictly traditionalist in terms of Roman religion. However, the resolution of the Senate found a balance that reconciled the two sides. Moreover, through the delegation of members of the Senate to various responsibilities in the face of natural disasters, the bulk of Rome's senators could still perform their rituals thus maintaining religious control over the more religiously-minded Romans; while others in the Senate could now also organise and lead the disaster relief effort at the head of thousands more concerned with rebuilding than performing ceremonies. Both groups must have felt satisfaction that their governing body was able to make the hard decision to delegate, and thereby serve the Roman state better than it ever had before with respect to both civic, and religious, responses to natural disasters, despite any of Livy's concerns to the contrary many years later.

1.2.2 *Religious Responses to Natural Disasters in the Late Republican Period*

The reason for portions of the senatorial order's desire to continue ritual, as opposed to disaster relief, lay in the nature of the continuity of Roman order. Religious ceremony was an all-pervading custom well into the Late Republic, and it served to maintain obedience to the Roman state with the Senate at its head. In Cicero's vision of the perfect Law-abiding society, family ritual and the established rites of the state were essential in all matters pertaining to the disruption of the equilibrium of the *pax deorum* indicated by a natural disaster.¹⁴⁹ Besides *lectisternia*, public *supplicationes* were most important to the Roman Senate and the Roman state. On account of this, Cicero advocated that all such rituals and rites be guided by the state priesthood only by: firstly, in presiding over public ceremonies; secondly, in the interpretation of prophetic utterances; and thirdly, in rendering to the public any associated omens or portents which required a prescription of ceremonial responses.¹⁵⁰

Cicero lent precision to the forms of responses to natural disasters and other *prodigia* in his *Laws*. Published after Cicero's death in 43BC, the *Laws* is a relaxed and theoretical sequel to the pessimistic and historically-based *Republic*, published in 51BC. In the *Laws*, Cicero proposed a genuine political model for Rome that contained elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, with a leading military character to guide the proposed state.¹⁵¹ Although this model held the flaw in that a leading military leader prone to misuse the state and its resources could always emerge, even in the midst of growing militarism among generals like Pompey and Caesar, that did not hinder Cicero from finding comfort in its

¹⁴⁹ Cic. *Leg.* 2. 19-20.

¹⁵⁰ Cic. *Leg.* 2. 21.

¹⁵¹ K. Büchner, *M. Tullius Cicero 'De Re Publica'*, Wissenschaftliche Kommentare zu griechischen und lateinischen Schriftstellern (Carl Winter, 1984), 395; Anthony Corbiell, 'Ciceronian Invective', in James M. May (ed.) *Brill's Companion to Cicero: Oratory and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 197; Andrew Lintott, *Cicero as Evidence: A Historian's Companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 436-437; Kathryn Tempest, *Cicero: Politics and Persuasion in Ancient Rome* (Continuum, 2011), 101-102, 138

composition.¹⁵² Cicero had confidence that in these and other generals ‘right reason’ - a natural attribute of all human beings – would ultimately prevail, and that, in the context of a state such as the one he proposed, such reason would always come to the fore and result in utopian-like right statutes and right justice. In that sense Cicero and Livy shared similarities in that both tried to create conditions to produce the ideal Stoic state. But they differed in the extent to which Livy sought to create those conditions through exempla and thematic teachings in his history, while Cicero simply assumed that reason was innate and required little work - just an appropriate conditioning environment sufficed.¹⁵³

Of course, political jousting was nothing new to Cicero, especially when it came to the occurrence of *prodigia* and their handling by state powers. In 63BC several earthquakes occurred in Rome, which Cicero later contrived were heavenly signs foretelling Rome of the threat that Catiline posed.¹⁵⁴ In 56BC another earthquake occurred in Rome and the Senate turned to the Etruscan soothsayers for advice. This body interpreted this earthquake as a sign of human transgressions and the profaning of holy ground in Rome. Clodius, after becoming an enemy of Cicero’s over his testimony against him in court over the *Bona Dea* scandal, with some political skill blamed Cicero for this since his house had been built over the site of a shrine. But Cicero, not to be outdone and with matching skill, blamed Clodius for the earthquake, declaring that it had been sent by the gods in protest over Clodius’ intrusion into the *Bona Dea* festival – the cause of so much scandal in Rome. To protect Cicero from Clodius’ gangs, Milo gave Cicero a guard for his house. Thus, Cicero knew the political importance of prodigies and how a state could respond to them in public.¹⁵⁵

In his ideal state, Cicero envisioned that Romans ought to worship and supplicate in the family household the traditional Roman gods only, and new or foreign divinities could only be worshiped if endorsed by a decision of the state. In cities, too, shrines in public spaces were to be revered, while in the countryside groves and other abodes were to be treated in like manner. But among the gods, demigods including Hercules, Liber, Aesculapius, Castor, Pollux, and Quirinus were also to be supplicated as beings ‘whose services have secured them a place in heaven’.¹⁵⁶ The proper interpretation of *prodigia* and the decision of the appropriate response by the state could be referred by the Senate to the Etruscan soothsayers, the *haruspices*. It was their decision as to which gods were supplicated in the household and on behalf of the Senate and Roman people in public. These customs ought to be held, Cicero believed, ‘in perpetuity’.¹⁵⁷

Thus far, in this section we have discussed the nature of Roman religious external

¹⁵² Cic. *Pro Murena*, 60-66; C. P. Craig, ‘Cato’s Stoicism and the Understanding of Cicero’s Speech for Murena’, *TAPA*, 116 (1986), 229-239; R. Stem, ‘Cicero as Orator and Philosopher: The Value of the ‘Pro Murena’ for Ciceronian Political Thought’, *Review of Politics*, 68 (2006), 206-231; Anthony Corbeill, ‘Ciceronian Invective’, 199-200; Kathryn Tempest, *Cicero*, 101-102; Yelena Baraz, *A Written Republic: Cicero’s Philosophical Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 9.

¹⁵³ Cic. *Leg.* 1. 32-33; *Rep.* 3. 33; Andrew Lintott, *Cicero as Evidence*, 437.

¹⁵⁴ Plut. *Cic.* 14.

¹⁵⁵ Dio. 39. 20-21; Anthony Everitt, *Cicero: The Life and Times of Rome’s Greatest Politician* (Random House, 2003), 165; Kathryn Tempest, *Cicero*, 118, 141.

¹⁵⁶ Cic. *Leg.* 2. 19.

¹⁵⁷ Cic. *Leg.* 2. 21-22.

responses to natural disasters and *prodigia* collectively. But Cicero's *Laws*, Cicero laid down that each Roman citizen should approach their tasks of *lectisternia* and *supplicationes* in a spirit of deep internal purity as well, and indeed, it was upon this sense of personal purity alone that the gods' restoration of the *pax deorum* hung. Cicero states:

They shall approach the gods in purity; they shall adopt a spirit of holiness... God himself will punish whoever does otherwise.¹⁵⁸

Cicero espoused that such purity must consist of a 'pure heart' which was to be prioritised higher by Cicero than even bodily cleanliness, 'since the heart is far superior to the body' and such a heart externally expresses itself through acts of 'goodness of character' which are more 'pleasing to God' than simply an externally ceremonially cleansed body without the accompanying pure heart. By these statements, one discerns that just as the senators in 193BC attempted to address the yawning gap between the requirements of religion and the need for pragmatic action in the aftermath of seismic activity, so too Cicero found evidence of varying degrees of personal senses of religious purity in the hearts of his Roman contemporaries. But whereas the Senate tried to move beyond religion alone in 193BC, Cicero took pains to restore it – a sentiment that prevailed in the literary work of Livy, and the religious program of Augustus.¹⁵⁹

1.2.3 Summary

As the above analysis demonstrates, the Senate's external responses to the earthquakes of 193BC, in the form of religious duties, initially reflect a sense of collective purpose and commitment. However, as the tremors continued so too did the Senate's and the people's patience, until eventually it frayed and was replaced, in part, by frustration and disparity, thus dividing senatorial delegations, and their emerging pragmatism with the increased religiosity exhibited by Roman writers. Thus, the tremors that had brought the running of the Roman state to a grinding halt, opened opportunity for:

- The Roman Senate to streamline the functioning of the state,
- Reappraisal of the seriousness of seismic events in Roman society,
- And, a shift in Roman responses to natural disasters from the solely religious to those also more multifaceted and practical.

As we shall see in following chapters, these new multifaceted and more practical approaches to natural disasters created a precedent that would continue well into the Julio-Claudian era. For, contrary to Livy's thematic nuances, Augustus did not respond to natural disasters on a solely religious level, but also employed multifaceted civic and religious replies to earthquakes and other natural events when they occurred while *princeps* – a multifaceted array whose Genesis began in Rome with its Senate in 193BC.

However, multifaceted responses brought with them personal devotion to certain types of responses over others. Thus, Cicero's *Laws* one finds flux and variation in the extent that

¹⁵⁸ Cic. *Leg.* 2. 19.

¹⁵⁹ Cic. *Leg.* 2. 25-25.

Romans placed their confidence in tradition and innovation. For, lying beneath the façade of a collective Roman society, there existed nuances in the religious sincerity of Roman hearts and minds, with some preferring pragmatic action, and others religious dutifulness. Thus, in 193BC, we find heterogenic responses to natural disasters in the Senate that gradually dispersed to base individual levels throughout the whole of Roman society over a lengthy period of time. Such flux in responses to natural disasters would extend well into the principate, and each emperor would differ in how he responded to each one.

By their very longevity, religious ceremonies retained the power to instil individual religious zeal, but in the case of events in 193BC, they could also be met with frustration and despair, leading to political and social change. Nonetheless, their continual practice did inspire internal responses to natural disasters that promoted a deeper sense of personal, of not entirely collective, religious purity, as described by Cicero. This purity, on a personal level, encouraged a new sense of relationship with the state Roman gods, thereby strengthening individual Roman identity, and thus bringing renewed common solidarity with it. Nonetheless, common outward behaviours can often cover varying degrees of zeal and frustration in individuals, and the Romans were no different.

In the following section, we shall examine how the different prevailing sentiments towards nature and the state's role in managing it, presented themselves across a whole spectrum of behaviours among Romans. These responses were inspired by various religious and philosophical beliefs, amply demonstrated in the cases of Lucretius and Cicero. These two towering philosophical Romans writers demonstrate that while similar behaviours can mask different sets of belief as examined above, starkly opposed behaviours do often uncover vastly divergent character traits and diametrically opposed internal responses to natural disasters – divisions that found germination within the Senate with relation to natural disasters from 193BC onwards, and which grew exponentially in scale and variation well into the Late Republic.

1.3 Republican Responses to Natural Disasters III: Philosophical (Lucretius, Cicero)

Such was the power that the Roman Senate exercised through religion that it had become blatantly clear to many during the second and first centuries BC that Roman power depended upon the state religion and its ceremonies and rituals to sustain it. Although only a fraction of the Romans' writings have survived, of those we do have, in the Greek historian Polybius and the Roman statesman Cicero there are clear signs that religion was a strong controlling device. Polybius, who was close to the Roman elite and observed thereby that Rome's subjects were 'restrained' by the state 'by mysterious terrors or other dramatizations of the subject', that is, through myth and religious rituals, to ensure their loyalty to the state, including after natural disasters.¹⁶⁰

Cicero expressed through writing his deep impression that religion should be maintained at all costs by the state, for 'the maintenance of the state' is ensured by 'the prudent

¹⁶⁰ Polybius, 6. 56.

interpretation of religion'.¹⁶¹ Cicero, and indeed many Roman senators, believed that religious control was critical to maintain the continued survival of the Roman state.¹⁶² Like Polybius, Cicero observed that the state's power depended heavily upon the deepest and most lasting impressions on its subjects about that state; but what set Cicero apart from Polybius was his insistence that religious control was not an underhand method for political power, but rather, it served everybody's interests. There were some who would exhibit dissent, like the epic poet Lucretius, as will be discussed below, but such dissent was limited, and among those Romans philosophically-minded, like Cicero himself, such dissent often faded before the opportunism of the republican age, especially throughout the first century BC.

1.3.1 *Lucretius' Impact and Legacy*

As was the case with other educated Romans, Lucretius looked to the earth not as a source of exploitation or physical danger, but one of beauty, and his external response to nature, together with its natural disasters, in its written form is as much one of awe and wonder as it is of fear. In his epic poem, *On the Nature of Things*, published in 55BC, Lucretius elevates the 'crafty earth' which 'contrives sweet flowers', and the 'oceans' that 'laugh', and the 'skies that grow peaceful after showers', to the rank of divine status in place of the Roman gods themselves. Thereby, the poet portraying the earth in Epicurean terms, as the true guide of 'the nature of things upon its course', rather than the gods; thereby conveying the earth as being the divine medium through which the atomic structures and elemental particles change and progress upon life's course.¹⁶³

For Lucretius and other Epicureans like him, natural disasters were not entirely disastrous in themselves, but were simply the signs of a living and powerful divine earthly being slowly running along its natural course to its own eventual death.¹⁶⁴ With the image of a living earth in the forefront of his mind, Lucretius believed that when this earth is in the throes of volcanic eruption it is not as from a mere mixing-bowl shaped 'krater' as the Sicilians described the mouth of Mount Etna, but rather from the volcanic 'jaws' of a living and restless god. Thus, as Lucretius waxes eloquent:

Now I'll set forth the reason from time to time fires breathe
Out of the jaws of Etna...
Crucibles of Etna this fire sparks and breathes its blast...
Sicilians call the summit a 'krater', to denote
'Mixing bowl' – the part we call the mountain's mouth or throat.¹⁶⁵

Thus, for Lucretius and other Epicurean Romans like him, the terror that often accompanied natural disasters, such as a volcanic eruption, could be mixed with awe and wonder.

¹⁶¹ Cic. *Dom.* 1. M. Beard, J. North, and S. Price (eds.) *Religions of Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 115; 2, 197-198.

¹⁶² Cic. *N.D.* 2. 9-10.

¹⁶³ Lucr. 1. 8-9; 19-21; 214-216; 221-224.

¹⁶⁴ Lucr. 1. 469-470.

¹⁶⁵ Lucr. 1. 639-640; 6. 681-692; 701-702.

In *On the Nature of Things*, humankind's search for fame and power was merely a social construct,¹⁶⁶ and the mere thought of placing them above the welfare of the earth and its inhabitants was sheer madness and proof that that state was in a condition of acute *stasis* to Lucretius.¹⁶⁷ Indeed, in human terms, Lucretius believed that *stasis* could take hold of the body corporate and destroy entire civilizations like a plague.¹⁶⁸ Drawing upon classical Greek philosophical motifs found in Hippocrates, Herodotus, and Thucydides, Lucretius also believed that the institutions of the state can suffer from sickness much like a human being does. Lucretius believed that that was the case in Rome in his own lifetime.¹⁶⁹ Thus, it was that *stasis*, that natural disaster of which the state of his day was so much a part, that Lucretius felt the most horror towards, above and beyond any other natural disaster.¹⁷⁰

By applying the internal-external approach to ancient natural disasters to Lucretius, we can detect much about his own understanding and personal responses to natural disasters. A great admirer of Epicurus, Lucretius chose to mention his debt to this founder of Epicureanism in his work.¹⁷¹ But despite the influence of Epicureanism, with regard to other Epicureans Lucretius chose to fall silent. He does not even mention his famous Epicurean peer Philodemus, who knew of Lucretius and whose library at Herculaneum may contain some allusions to Lucretius' work, although this is yet to be authenticated.¹⁷² However, with regard to other Italian Epicureans, whilst there are some resemblances to Lucretius in their works, no major philosophical links exist, and Lucretius mentions not one of them in his poem.¹⁷³ Thus, Lucretius' views of the natural world, and his understandings and responses to natural disasters were unlike those of most of his Epicurean peers, marking him as unique in his attitudes towards nature and natural disasters. Thus, as David Sedley has put it, Lucretius operated 'outside established philosophical circles', and within a more 'poetic one' - hence his mastery over verse and lack of interest in philosophical developments within Epicureanism itself.¹⁷⁴ Lucretius' views were influential over younger poets, but not over already established Epicurean philosophers.¹⁷⁵ Lucretius, the consummate poet, expressed an

¹⁶⁶ James Warren, 'Lucretius and Greek Philosophy', in Stuart Gillespie and Philip Hardie (eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to Lucretius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 19.

¹⁶⁷ Lucr. 2. 11; 3. 63; 5. 1120-3; 5. 1135-42. Alessandro Schiesaro, 'Lucretius', 45, 49.

¹⁶⁸ H. S. Commager Jr., 'Lucretius' Interpretation of the Plague', in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 62 (1957) 105-118; P. H. Schrijvers, *Horror ac divina uoluptas: études sur la poétique et la poésie de l'œuvre* (Amsterdam, 1970) 320; Alessandro Schiesaro, 'Lucretius', 55.

¹⁶⁹ For a comparison between Lucretius and Hippocrates, see M. Vegetti, 'metafora politica e immagine del corpo nella medicina greca', in *Tra Edipo e Euclide* (Milan, 1983), 41-58.

¹⁷⁰ On *stasis* in Lucretius, see G. Cambiano, 'patologia e metafora politica. Alcmeone, Platone, Corpus Hippocraticum', in *Elenchos*, 3 (1982), 219-36, especially 224; M. Cagnetta, 'la peste e la *stasis*', in *Quaderni di storia*, 53 (2001) 5-37; Alessandro Schiesaro, 'Lucretius', 55.

¹⁷¹ Lucr. 3. 1-13.

¹⁷² On the positive side, see K. Kleve, 'Lucretius in Herculaneum', in *Cronache Ercolanesi*, 19 (1989) 5-27; D. Obbink, 'Lucretius and the Herculaneum Library', in S. Gillespie and P. Hardie (eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to Lucretius*, 33-40. On the negative side, see M. Capasso, 'Filodemo e Lucrezio', in A. Monet (ed.) *Le jardin romain: Épicurisme et poésie à Rome. Mélanges offerts à M. Bollack* (Lille, 2003) 77-107; D. Delattre, 'Présence ou absence d'une copie du *De rerum natura* à Herculaneum?', in A. Monet (ed.) *Le jardin romain*, 109-116; David Sedley, 'Epicureanism in the Roman Republic', in James Warren (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 41.

¹⁷³ David Sedley, 'Epicureanism', 41.

¹⁷⁴ David Sedley, 'Epicureanism', 41.

¹⁷⁵ David Sedley, 'Epicureanism', 41.

understanding of the earth in a poetic manner all of his own in a way that most others simply never could master as he did. In this regard, Lucretius differed to many Romans, including other Epicurean Romans, and since his ingenious ability to express himself through poetry was not as informed or indoctrinated as others' – Epicurean or not – this resulted in the paradox that through the production of a unique poetic work, Lucretius' views proved at once shocking to audiences and attractively comforting. Even Cicero, a philosopher himself, conformed to Lucretius' uniqueness for a time.¹⁷⁶

1.3.2 Cicero's Response to Lucretius

Lucretius suspected that his philosophical tones would not be shared by the majority of elite Romans for any long period of time – hence his poem's sense of urgency and pessimism.¹⁷⁷ That pessimism was well-founded, for in Cicero's own philosophic treatise, *The Republic*, published soon after Lucretius' poem itself was published, nature is most certainly not divine as Lucretius imagined, but is rather the setting for the state's traditional pantheon who charge human beings to show respect to them, and the ruling elites who are the earth's caretakers.¹⁷⁸ That, according to Cicero, naturally brought with it a Stoic enthusiasm to attain heavenly favour – a heaven which lay above and beyond this earth in its 'lowest sphere... subject to death and decay'.¹⁷⁹

However, caretakers aside, for Cicero as for other elite Romans, the earth was primarily a stage to seek glory on, that is, in the sense of *fama* and one's glowing reputation, and the *gloria* accrued when one is the boast of all others. But even Cicero recognised that *fama* and *gloria* were fleeting in the face of natural disasters:

...owing to the floods and fires which at certain times will inevitably afflict the earth, we cannot achieve, I will not say eternal, but even long-lasting glory.¹⁸⁰

In respect for the earth, Cicero initially warmed to Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things*, and upon its publication Cicero hailed its value in a letter to his brother Quintus as a work with 'flashes of genius' and 'of great artistry' (*multi tamen artis*).¹⁸¹ However, as Philip Hardie has observed, ancient writers normally 'oscillate between hero-worship and violent antagonism' towards other writers, and that this is especially the case when the writing concerns 'the ultimate truths of the universe', which is precisely what Lucretius had wished to have the final say on.¹⁸² Consequently, in oscillation, in a short span of time Cicero transformed from an admirer of Lucretius into a hostile critic of both Lucretius and Epicureanism.¹⁸³ Indeed, although Cicero initially praised the newly published *On the Nature*

¹⁷⁶ David Sedley, 'Epicureanism', 41.

¹⁷⁷ Alessandro Schiesaro, 'Lucretius', 57-58.

¹⁷⁸ Cic. *Rep.* 6. 15.

¹⁷⁹ Cic. *Rep.* 6. 16-17.

¹⁸⁰ Cic. *Rep.* 6. 22-23.

¹⁸¹ Cicero, *Q Fr.* 2. 10. 3; Philip Hardie, 'Lucretius and Later Latin Literature in Antiquity', in Stuart Gillespie and Philip Hardie (eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to Lucretius*, 113.

¹⁸² Philip Hardie, 'Lucretius', 112.

¹⁸³ G. C. Pucci, 'Echi lucreziani in Cicerone', in *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica*, 38 (1966), 70-132; V. A. Novara, *Les Idées romaines sur le progrès d'après les écrivains de la République: essai sur le sens latin du progrès* (Paris, 1983), 386-443; A. Schiesaro, 'Lucrezio, Cicerone e l'oratoria', in *Materiali e Discussioni*,

of *Things* in his letter to Quintus in February 54BC, by May of that same year he had already begun work on his *Republic*, as he informed Quintus in another letter, a literary work that would become an open attack on Lucretius' Epicureanism.¹⁸⁴

Cicero set forth in his *Republic* that there existed a clear alternative to Lucretius' claims – an alternative that centred upon state endorsed symbolic dialogue of evolution, history and politics.¹⁸⁵ What was seen to be *stasis* and therefore a plague-like natural disaster inherent in the workings and abuse of the Roman state by Lucretius was, by contrast, the fulfilment of Rome's destiny in the eyes of Cicero.¹⁸⁶ Again, whereas Lucretius believed that the earth's golden age had expired long ago with the expulsion of its kings,¹⁸⁷ Cicero believed that Rome was 'strong and well-established' and at the dawn of a new golden age, under which, as Momigliano summarised, the Roman state would consist of Cicero's magistrates and laws, not the kings envisaged by Lucretius, and would thus bring true harmony to the Roman state and the natural order of things.¹⁸⁸

1.3.3 *The Influence of Marcus Crassus Upon Cicero*

In this harmonious order, Cicero envisaged a key role for the exploitation of nature's resources by the state, and the exploitation of natural disasters by individuals for financial gain. In the 80s, Marcus Crassus was the first Roman to observe that handsome profits could be accrued from buying fire-damaged properties in Rome, then developing them and selling them on at increased prices. Crassus would simply clear the fire-damaged property site, build new apartment blocks over those properties using his more than 500-strong cheap corps of slave architects and builders, then either rent them out or sell them on at exorbitant prices. As Plutarch states:

Crassus also observed what frequent and everyday occurrences in Rome were fire and the collapse of buildings owing to their size and their close proximity to each other. He therefore bought slaves who were architects and builders, and then, when he had more than 500 of them, he would buy up houses that were either on fire themselves or near the scene of the fire; the owners of these properties, in the terror and uncertainty of the moment, would let them go for next to nothing. In this way most of Rome came into his possession.¹⁸⁹

19 (1987), 29-61; J. E. G. Zetzel, 'De re publica and De rerum natura', in P. E. Knox and C. Foss (eds.) *Style and Tradition: Studies in Honour of Wendell Clausen* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1998), 230-47; Philip Hardie, 'Lucretius', 113.

¹⁸⁴ Cicero, *Q Fr.* 2. 12. 1; Jonathan Powell, 'Introduction', in *Cicero: The Republic and the Laws* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), xi.

¹⁸⁵ E. Andreoni, 'Sul contrasto ideologico fra il De re publica di Cicerone e il poema di Lucrezio (La genesidella società civile)', in *Studi di poesia latina in onore di A. Traglia* (2 Vols.) (Rome, 1979), Vol. 1, 281-321; J. D. Minyard, *Lucretius and the Late Republic: An Essay in Roman Intellectual History* (Leiden, 1985), 75; J. E. G. Zetzel, 'De re publica and De rerum natura', in P. E. Knox and C. Foss (eds.) *Style and Tradition: Studies in Honour of Wendell Clausen* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1998), 230-47.

¹⁸⁶ Cic. *Rep.* 2. 5. A. Momigliano, Review of Farrington (1939) in *Secondo contributo alla storia degli studi classici* (Rome, 1960) 375-88, originally in *JRS*, 31 (1941), 149-57.

¹⁸⁷ Diogenes of Oenoanda, frag. 56; Hermarchus, frag. 24. B. Farrington, *Science*, 59-62; Alessandro Schiesaro, 'Lucretius', 46.

¹⁸⁸ Cic. *Rep.* 2. 3.

¹⁸⁹ Plut. *Crass.* 2; Lukas Thommen, *An Environmental History of Ancient Greece and Rome*, 76, 124.

As Crassus' calculated methods became more and more infamous, and senators noticed the speed and success with which Crassus acquired much property and profit throughout the city of Rome, others began to follow his example in the hope of similar success there. Although a relatively latecomer, by April 44BC Cicero was also indulging in this practice, buying properties cheaply in bad states of repair owing to damage incurred by fire or flood or simply age, and then, once those properties feel under the weight of that damage, he would then rebuild them and sell them on. Indeed, in a private letter to Atticus in that month, Cicero even exuded with much titillation and excitement over this new venture in his life:

... two of my shops have fallen down and the rest are cracking. So not only the tenants but the very mice have migrated. Other people call this a misfortune, I don't call it even a nuisance. Oh Socrates and Socratic philosophers, I shall never be able to thank you enough! Good heavens, how paltry such things are in my eyes! But after all I am adopting a plan of building on the suggestion and advice of Vestorius, which will convert this loss into a gain.¹⁹⁰

Thus, as a result of this personal change in Cicero's attitude to natural processes and disasters so soon after the excitement of Lucretius' published work, the statesman now regarded the earth as simply inanimate and exploitable by the opportunistic. Thus, Cicero gradually progressed from seeing nature through epicurean lenses, then towards regarding it as a cause for political control, and then finally as a means for plain financial profit. This progression was no doubt similar to other Romans' of that era, but in its individualised workings in Cicero, this progression would be a life-long one in this particular Roman individual.¹⁹¹ This same spirit of opportunism would extend well into Augustus' principate, as Chapter Two examines in detail, especially with regard to the construction of the Augustan Forum.

1.3.4 Summary

Like Lucretius, in certain regards Cicero did not follow the crowd. As pervading as cultural trends can be, Cicero's thinking was not entirely the product of cultural conditioning or overarching social tendencies. As an independent-thinking Academy philosopher himself, Cicero was well-adept to weighing up philosophical arguments against one another. Consequently, after the initial excitement Cicero felt and embraced upon reading Lucretius' work, Cicero reflected upon it carefully, and within a matter of months or even weeks, thoughtfully rejected it, along with its claims about the divinity of the earth. Thus, in a short space, Cicero went from internally responding to the earth's processes with their resulting natural disasters with thoughts and feelings that they derived from a divine earth, to seeing them as simply inconsequential events on an inconsequential earth upon which humans can accrue political and financial gain. Indeed, this shift in internal responses would alter his own external responses, too. Through his letters and philosophical treatments, we observe Cicero's initial, palpable, physical excitement towards the divinity of the earth, and later his tangible, open, expressions of disgust, towards Lucretius and towards an exploitable physical

¹⁹⁰ Cic. *Att.* 14. 9. 1; Lukas Thommen, *An Environmental History of Ancient Greece and Rome*, 76, 124.

¹⁹¹ Cic. *Rep.* 6. 27-28.

realm.

However, unlike Lucretius:

- Cicero eventually did follow the crowd in respect to the exploitation of natural disasters for personal gain. Internally and externally, by 44BC Cicero was willing to follow Crassus' example and profit monetarily from the occurrences of natural disasters in Rome - without any regard for tenants.
- Cicero's attitudes and behaviours towards the natural realm shifted and changed more than did Lucretius' own, which means that Cicero reacted against ideas concerning nature, rather than against nature itself far more often than Lucretius did.
- Cicero was more politically adaptable than Lucretius. For, Cicero's sense of loyalty to ideas concerning nature and natural disasters should not remain unaltered, as Lucretius' did, under changing conditions during the Late Republic.
- Finally, Cicero saw nature as politically, militarily, and financially profitable, and embraced it as such. Thus, Lucretius was more of an idealist than Cicero, and therefore less realistic than Roman statesmen generally and Cicero in particular.

In the next chapter, two types of natural disasters, flood and fire, as they occurred in Rome throughout the principate of Augustus, are examined closely. For that period there exists an abundance of primary sources, which have to date been seldom brought together in natural disaster research in a PhD project such as this.

1.4 Conclusions

The first finding of this section is certainly that Roman responses to natural disasters during the Middle and Late Republics were never homogenous. As was the case with Sicinius in 173BC and Pompey in 65BC, external responses at the civic level could dispense practicable relief to areas affected by plague, famine, and earthquakes. However, such dispensations varied from one to the next case, and just as Romans varied in their attitudes, feelings, and beliefs towards natural disasters, and nature generally, these individual variations produced an array of internal responses to natural disasters that often found outward expression as external responses to natural disasters at civic, religious, and philosophical levels.

Moreover, in keeping with these differences, relief efforts were never the only form of civic response to natural disasters under the *res-publica*. In regard to the events of 193BC, the civic external response to prolonged earthquake activity in Rome was primarily religious in form. Indeed, such was the level of religious observance following natural disasters and other forms of *prodigia*, the Senate often could only spare little time to take practical action. Moreover, in addition to the Roman state itself, Roman households often performed rituals, prayers, and supplications as they were prescribed by Rome's priesthood and Rome's Senate. Furthermore, at a more fundamental level, Roman individuals could, and did, take personal responsibility in their responses to varying degrees, as Cicero's *Laws* reveals. We see this principle at work in Sicinius's autonomous external response through taking action in Apulia, and even more so in Pompey's actions in Antioch, who acted not upon decisions made by the

Senate, as Sicinius did, but entirely on his own initiative in response to the needs of the Antiochenes on the ground.

Other Roman individuals formed philosophical views which informed their external responses to natural disasters. Lucretius and Cicero both laid out blueprints for others to live by, and each blueprint stands in opposition to the other. Whereas Lucretius externally responded to nature's processes through his verse that the earth and its processes are divine and sacrosanct, Cicero externally responded to them as though they were simply anomalies on the earth, a limitless resource that remained a common and base means to lucrative ends. The partial success of each blueprint serves to further underscore the gaping divisions that existed among Romans during the late republic concerning one's political position.

We may properly account for these variations in external responses to nature generally, and to natural disasters in particular, by observing their historical contexts, and understanding the spectrum of different types of internal responses that lie beneath them. As Cicero pointed out, each Roman individual approached state and domestic rituals in varying degrees of enthusiasm and interest - what was sacred to one was laborious to another. Even Livy regarded rituals as anathema to his philosophical ideals, but even he recognised they served as political necessities nonetheless. However, in the Senate, religious responses to natural disasters were of the highest priority in that they maintained the Roman state's prerogative to use the earth as a vehicle for fame and glory so long as the gods approved, or were at least perceived of by other Romans as approving. However, even in the Senate, members approached natural disasters differently according to their religious responsibilities and personal aptitude for benevolence and dedication to others. Thus, in 193BC Rome's senators responded repeated seismic events to limit ceremony slowly, and gradually, only after many days of prolonged earthquakes, eventually realising that the running of the state was of greater importance to themselves and the public than rituals alone. Thus we can detect changes within individuals' internal responses to natural disasters over time. In 193BC, individual senators gradually shifted in their external responses to aftershocks from the purely religious towards eventually finding common cause for the running of other state business.

Such shifts continued into 173BC as many of the same senators who voted for the new regulations in 193BC delegated Sicinius to take a leading part of the Roman state's relief efforts in Apulia, Italy. Moreover, it is also worth noting that immediately after his return from the East, Pompey would focus less upon his achievements as a benevolent restorer of Antioch and more upon his reputation as a world-conqueror. Even Cicero would himself undergo dramatic change, after having initially an admirer of Lucretius' Epicurean love for the earth, becoming entirely hostile to it in a matter of mere months. Yet, although Cicero was not alone among Romans who changed their general religious and philosophical positions, not every Roman shared Cicero's attitudes exactly at precisely the same time in all cases. Thus, although the life- decisions Cicero made were never always entirely unique to him, nor were they entirely identical to other Romans' either.

These nuances between Roman individuals within collective groups such as the Roman Senate, and within Roman individuals over the course of time, lay at the heart of this Doctoral monograph, and it is the chief argument throughout that nuances and changes between, and

within, Roman individuals, characterised Roman responses to natural disasters - not simply in the Middle and Late Republican period, but also under the Julio-Claudians. For, as the following chapter shows, not only were there political changes under Augustus, but so too there also existed a semblance of continuity with Rome's past. But in each individual, these continuities and changes produced variations in responses to natural disasters, as they each found expression externally. These could be similar to others' in certain respects, or even entirely different to others', depending on their historical contexts; and these internal and external responses, together with their defining historical contexts throughout the Julio-Claudian era, lay at both the heart and the forefront of the five chapters that follow this one.

CHAPTER TWO: FLOODS AND FIRES IN AUGUSTAN ROME

This chapter analyses in detail the phenomena of flood and fire in the city of Rome, and in particular, the various responses by Augustus and other Romans to them. These two categories of natural disasters typify the kinds of natural disasters that occurred in Rome, for although Rome was most certainly affected by other natural events such as earthquakes, plagues and famines, these mostly affected areas outside Rome throughout Italy and the empire, whereas flooding and fires characterise most of the natural disasters that hit the city of Rome itself, especially under Augustus.

First and foremost, this chapter analyses Augustus' external responses to natural disasters through institutions, through the erection of monuments, and through the provision of a diversity of cultural markers that included most Romans into his imperial dialogue with Romans citizens and Roman subjects. However, this chapter also draws attention to the responses made by other Roman individuals, as well. This chapter draws on examples of other inhabitants under Augustus' aegis in Rome, and in doing so demonstrates that in their responses to natural disasters they often looked to Augustus as their rallying point of patriotic solidarity. For, it was Augustus who served them as mediator between Romans and gods – and the gods alone could bring respite from future danger – and so therefore Augustus was seen as being instrumental in saving Rome from future divine wrath.

In the first part of this chapter we shall analyse the phenomena of flooding in Rome. This first part is divided under categories of 1) civic, 2) religious, and 3) philosophical. How they affected living conditions, and the roles they played in producing plagues and famines, are explored; as are the floodwater's effects on Rome's drinking water supply. In each section we shall explore the nature of each event, and examine chronologically every attested case of these natural disasters, and examine the various responses and preventative measures put in place by Augustus and Marcus Agrippa that to an extent limited damage and suffering.

2.1 Flooding in Rome Under the Principate of Augustus

The principate of Augustus is the best attested period regarding the flooding of the Tiber. Nearly one-sixth of all literary references to flooding in Rome from 414BC to AD162 belong to Augustus' principate. Consequently, as one develops a clearer understanding of Augustus' responses to flooding, one can appreciate better the responses, both external and internal, of other Romans too, and especially those close to his power, such as Marcus Agrippa and Rome's elite. As for modern, secondary, and comparative sources, reference is made throughout this section, but by no means exclusively, to Gregory S. Aldrete's monograph.¹⁹² Taken together with the ancient evidence and other modern treatments, this section shall demonstrate that religion, economics, politics, and risk management, were each affected by the natural world; and these, in turn, influenced how Romans saw the natural world and appropriate responses to natural disasters as they occurred.

¹⁹² Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome* (John Hopkins University Press, 2007).

Table 1: Major Tiber Floods Under Augustus

Date	Source
27BC	Dio. 53. 20. 1
23BC	Dio. 53. 33. 5
22BC	Dio. 54. 1.
13BC	Dio. 54. 25. 2
AD5	Cassiodorus, <i>Chronicon</i> , 604; Dio. 55. 22. 3.
AD12	Dio. 56. 27. 4.

With regard to the human responses to the inundations attested to in the above literary references, focus rests primarily upon the responses of the Roman elite. As for the lower classes' responses to flooding in Rome, one can search for traces in the literary evidence, but more crucial are the topographical, archaeological and meteorological data for Rome, as well as other comparative data from other similar urban areas located around the world. As Figures 1, 2 and 3 show, while the wealthier hill regions were never inundated by floods ranging from 10 to 20 meters above sea level (masl), the poorer valley and plain regions often bore the brunt of flood waters when the Tiber flooded.

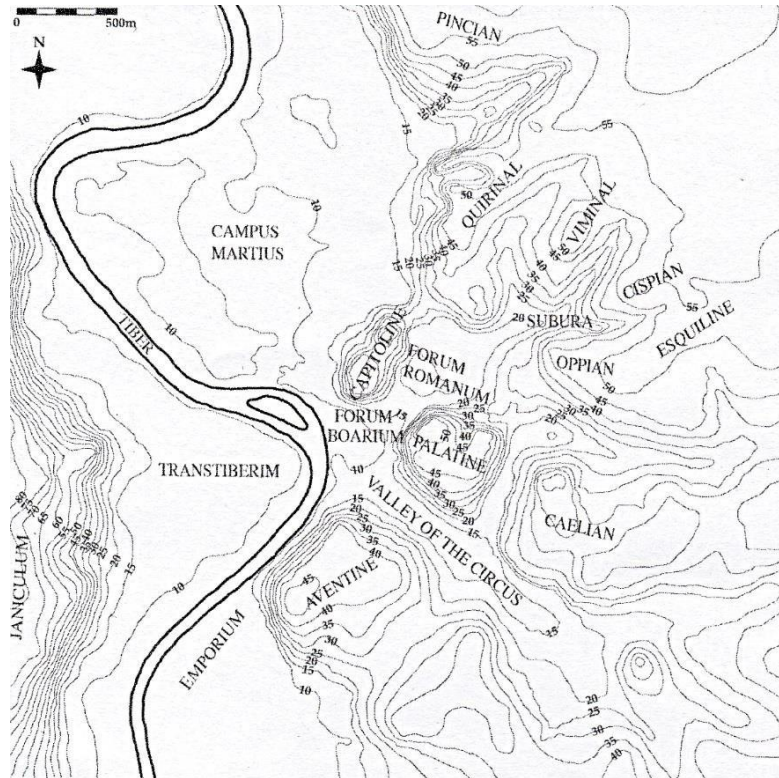


Figure 1. Topographic Map of Rome Under Augustus. Source: Gregory S. Aldrete, page 44

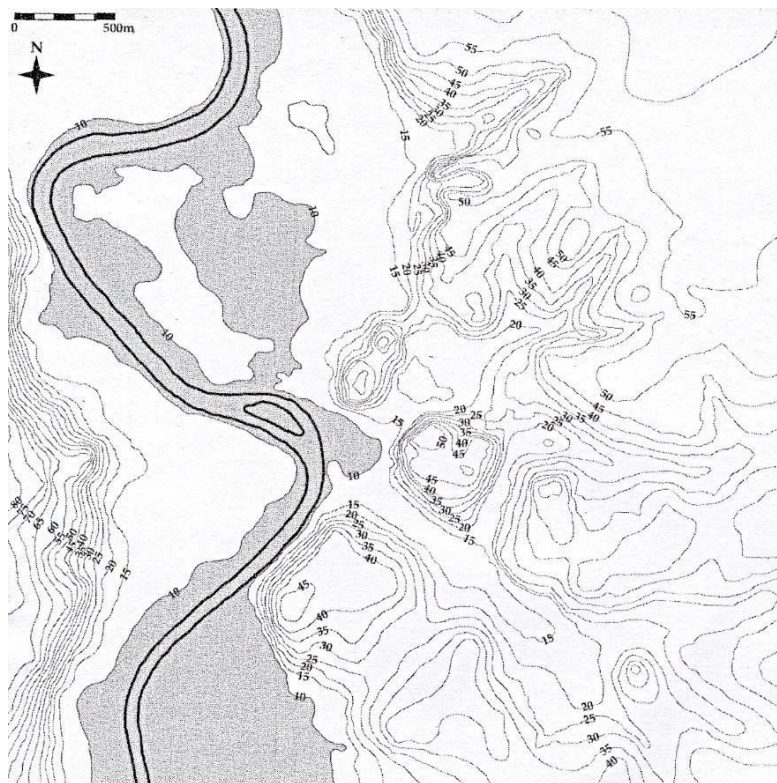


Figure 2. Topographic Map of Rome with a 10 masl Flood. Source: Gregory S. Aldrete, page 45.

In ancient times, Tiber flooding usually occurred during the colder, wetter seasons from November to February, although flash-floods from storm activity in other months were not entirely uncommon. Topographical and meteorological data indicate that the lower-lying environs of Rome were more catastrophically affected than higher reaches of the city. With the rising of flood waters from the swollen Tiber reaching from 10 to 20 meters in height above normal flow levels (Figures 2 and 3), almost all of Rome's low-lying regions, including its public monumental sites around the Forum, were the first to be inundated. Flood waters also submerged areas between Rome's hills, thus temporarily turning them into islands, cutting them off from the city's lower-lying districts (Figure 3). Increase in population density in Rome meant that building standards in these lower, cheaper areas were especially low. Although many sturdy buildings continued to be constructed using fired brick upon concrete foundations in Rome, such dwellings became rarer in the poorer low-lying areas of the city. In those areas, sun-dried clay-brick and wattle-and-daub constructed buildings would quickly predominate. The wattle-and-daub method, popular in poorer areas, consisted of clay packed around a wicker or wooden framework. This method was cheaper and faster than other methods, and the end result could be plastered and painted over to make it look safe to the eye. Furthermore, the clay-brick method and the wattle-and-daub method were popular in the construction of high-rise apartments in Augustan Rome - cheap and lightweight, they were used extensively by builders and architects in Rome seeking to build up quickly with minimal outlay, albeit sacrificing the tenants' safety.¹⁹³ Moreover, the clay-brick method, which was the more secure method of the two building techniques, also sacrificed tenants' safety as well, for as Vitruvius states, if the bricks were not sun-dried for two days they quickly disintegrated.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 110.

¹⁹⁴ Vit. 2. 3-4; Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 110.



Fig. 1.10. Map of Rome with 20 masl flood, flooded sites mentioned in primary sources, and major Augustan structures. Key to primary source sites: (1) Campus Martius, (2) Via Flaminia/Campus Martius, (3) Theater of Balbus, (4) Porta Flumentana, (5) Forum Boarium, (6) Roman Forum, (7) Regia and Shrine to Vesta, (8) Circus Maximus, (9) Piscina Publica, (10) Temple of Mars, (11) Emporium district warehouses.

Figure 3. Topographic Map of Rome, and its Buildings, with a 20 masl Flood. Source: Gregory S. Aldrete, page 49.

Rudimentary building methods meant that when apartment buildings of the low-lying poor were exposed to flood waters, the porous clay used for their construction soaked up the moisture, swelled, and melted away, disintegrating and becoming death-traps for tenants inside. If not properly covered or maintained, the moisture could reduce these buildings' walls to wet mud, proving disastrous, if not deadly, to tenants, especially during major floods rising to 15 to 20 meters above normal levels. Consequently, if the flood water velocity itself did not succeed in pushing poorly constructed buildings in Rome over, they inevitably succeeded, over a matter of days, in turning high-rise *insulae* into melting death-traps.¹⁹⁵ This phenomenon of melting apartment building is attested to by Dio in his account of the 54BC flood. In that account, Dio states:

The houses, therefore, being constructed of brick, became soaked through and collapsed... the people, all who did not take refuge in time on the highest points were caught, either in their dwellings or in the streets, and lost their lives.¹⁹⁶

Augustus' response to these dangers by setting a limit of 70 Roman feet on all buildings in Rome. Strabo states:

¹⁹⁵ Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 111-118.

¹⁹⁶ Dio. 39. 61. 1-2.

...[Augustus acted] against collapses, reducing the heights of new buildings and forbidding that any structure on the public streets should rise as high as seventy feet.¹⁹⁷

However, these measures had limited success and building regulations were often ignored by Rome's wealthy elite builders, and despite Nero's regulation of building height after the fire of AD64,¹⁹⁸ and Trajan had to limit building height in Rome to 60 Roman feet,¹⁹⁹ and these regulations went largely unenforced. Whilst it is true that high-rise apartment buildings of that height made up only 13 percent of all *insulae*,²⁰⁰ even still, their existence allowed Martial, at the end of the first century AD, to observe instances of apartments with staircases of 200 stairs from ground to top levels, an indication that they rose to a height of around 10 stories.²⁰¹

Diane Favro has advocated that Augustus' lack of concern for building height regulations, especially in regard to *insulae*, was motivated chiefly by religious concerns. Most Romans, Diane Favro explains, did not imagine 'a clear horizontal boundary between heaven and earth'. Rather, they believed that divine and earthly realms were closely intertwined. Indeed, it was accepted as fact by many that deities frequently visited Rome and its empire, and priests read portentous omens for Rome in the skies immediately above it. Therefore, many Romans did not draw a definitive line between the 'earthly realm of humans and the heavenly realm of the gods', as Favro puts it.²⁰² For, to the vast majority of the Romans, religion and politics blended seamlessly.²⁰³ Thus, the *princeps*' relaxed building policy allowed those in high-rise apartments in Rome to literally reach up to the Roman gods, and touch heaven itself and all with little cost to Augustus and to Rome's other wealthy elite landlords of *insulae*.²⁰⁴

However, Favro overemphasises these religious concerns. In relation to Augustus' building policy, Suetonius recorded that Augustus liked to boast that he found Rome built of brick and left it in marble.²⁰⁵ Cassius Dio would later go on to clarify this statement in that Augustus 'was not referring literally to the state of the buildings, but rather the strength of the empire'.²⁰⁶ Nonetheless, Augustus did build and restore many buildings in Rome with marble, but these were civic buildings, public spaces, and temples. Thus, in his lists of buildings he built and restored in Rome in the *Res Gestae*, Augustus places the curia first and foremost, followed by a procession of temples, the Capitolium, the theatre of Pompey, aqueducts and roads, the Julian Forum, and the Augustan Forum. As a result, in Augustus' building programmes, it was only the civic and public buildings that were of any concern to him. The living conditions of the poor simply did not concern him, and nor did they factor

¹⁹⁷ Strab. 5. 3. 7. Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 106.

¹⁹⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 15. 43.

¹⁹⁹ Sext. Aur. Vict. *Epit.* 13. 13.

²⁰⁰ Glenn R. Storey, 'Housing and Domestic Architecture', in Paul Erdkamp (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*, 155-156.

²⁰¹ Mart. *Ep.* 7. 20; Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 106.

²⁰² Diane Favro, 'The IconiCITY of Ancient Rome', in *Urban History*, 33, 1 (May 2006), 24.

²⁰³ Eric Orlin, *Foreign Cults in Rome: Creating a Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 114-115.

²⁰⁴ Diane Favro, 'The IconiCITY of Ancient Rome', 24.

²⁰⁵ Suet. *Aug.* 28.

²⁰⁶ Dio. 56. 30

into his overarching vision for Rome. In other words, Augustus simply did not place great importance, religious or otherwise, in the *insulae* in Rome, at all.²⁰⁷

The reason for the exclusion of the poor in Augustus' building policy was one of convenience. There was a plentiful supply of clay and timber all around Rome, which ensured that poorer apartment buildings could continue to be built using cheap materials indefinitely, and could be cheaply rebuilt in the event of collapse from Tiber floods. As Strabo states:

...his [Augustus'] constructive measures would have failed by now were it not that the mines and the timber and the easy means of transportation by water still hold out.²⁰⁸

As a result, Augustus' policy towards the plebs in 27BC was negligible. However, as we shall now explore, as early as 33BC Augustus did, at the very least, acknowledge that flooding was a real problem to all Romans; and that if he would not bring himself to address Rome's building regulation shortcomings, he would nevertheless attempt to tackle the flow of the Tiber River.

2.2 The Aedileship of Marcus Agrippa

In order to understand the development of Augustus' various civic responses to Tiber flooding, it is essential to begin with the aedileship of Marcus Agrippa. For, it marks the genesis of a progression of civic external responses to Tiber flooding that expanded incrementally under Augustus.

The public works programmes introduced by Agrippa throughout his aedileship in 33BC stand as a synthesis of concerted, preventative measures, designed to protect the health and well-being of Rome's inhabitants at all times, especially during times of flood. Between 193BC and the beginning of Agrippa's aedileship, numerous minor floods, and eight major ones are recorded by the ancient sources to have inundated Rome. Of these, three major floods had occurred since 60BC, one in that year, another in 54BC, and yet another in 44BC. In light of this recent data, by the time of Agrippa's aedileship many people in Rome expected that the city was overdue for another major flood, and these expectations would indeed be realised the year after Agrippa's aedileship itself.²⁰⁹ Indeed, these expectations go a long way in explaining why Agrippa's aedileship had such a heavy focus upon fresh water supply in Rome and Tiber flow.²¹⁰

Cassius Dio states that during his Agrippa's aedileship, Agrippa restored Rome's sewerage system, improved and overhauled its aqueduct system, and restored the Aqua Julia and the Aqua Virgo.²¹¹ Certainly, there were longstanding republican precedents for projects

²⁰⁷ *RG.* 19-21.

²⁰⁸ Strabo 5. 3. 7.

²⁰⁹ Werner Eck, 'The Administrative Reforms of Augustus: Pragmatism or Systematic Planning?', in Jonathan Edmondson (ed.) *Augustus* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 239.

²¹⁰ 193BC: Liv. 35. 9. 2-3; 192BC: Liv. 35. 21. 5-6; 189BC: Liv. 38. 28. 4; 181BC: Plut. *Numa*, 22; 156BC: Julius Obsequens, 16; 60BC: Dio. 37. 58. 3-4; 54BC: Dio. 39. 61. 1-2; Cic., *Ad Quintum fratrem*, 3. 7. 1; 44BC: Hor., *Carm.* 1. 2. 1-20

²¹¹ Dio, 49. 43.

such as these in Rome and Italy - projects that brought instant fame to those projects' overseers.²¹² One inscription from Aletrium in Latium, dated to c.135-90BC, records that one Lucius Betiliensus Varus superintended, on behalf of the local Senate, the construction and repair of the area's local reservoirs, aqueducts, and lead pipes, for which that local body awarded him a statue of him in the centre of their city, as well exemption from military service.²¹³ However, Frontinus states the sheer scale of Agrippa's aqueduct projects was unprecedented. Frontinus informs us that Agrippa took an active role in tapping new sources of water, and upon his restoration and extension of the Aqua Julia, that aqueduct stretched for 15,426 and a half paces, 6,472 of which were on raised aqueduct arches.²¹⁴ Furthermore, water sourced from Apennine foothill springs flushed out Rome's entire water system of aqueducts, with its 247 settling tanks called *castella*, and its 591 basins scattered throughout Rome, on a constant and steady basis. As Aldrete notes, these measures helped prevent water stagnation in Rome, giving Romans living there healthy sources to drink from during floods, which allowed Rome to recover much quicker from water supply contamination than many modern developing countries do today. Thus, to paraphrase Aldrete, no matter how severe a flood might henceforth be in Rome, its inhabitants were now assured a constant flow of 'millions of litres of good, drinkable water' to sustain life in Rome.²¹⁵ This was probably Agrippa's intention from the start. For, whilst Romans did not understand molecular biology, they did recognise that stagnant water played a part in this and other diseases' transmission to human beings. For this reason, Columella advocated residential buildings be built as far away as possible from marshy pools:

...from which are often contracted mysterious diseases whose causes are beyond the understanding of physicians.²¹⁶

A supply of fresh running water during times of flooding, therefore, ensured the health and well-being of Rome's teeming population both during and immediately after Rome's inundation. In declaration of the intended permanency of this valuable life-affirming water infrastructure, Agrippa appointed himself perpetual commissioner for the upkeep of these projects and formed a slave-gang of 240 male slaves to serve as a permanent maintenance crew.²¹⁷

The first test of the worth of Agrippa's achievements as aedile came about in 32BC, when there occurred a serious flood in Rome caused by violent and prolonged storms. It is conspicuous in its absence that there is no mention in any of the ancient sources of any great loss of life owing to this flood – a credit to Agrippa's recent provision of new fresh water supplies in the city under his aedileship. However, from the very fact that this flood's only major damage was to the statue of Victory in Pompey's Theatre in the Campus Martius and

²¹² On republican and imperial aqueducts generally, see Hazel Dodge, 'Greater than the Pyramids: The Water Supply of Ancient Rome', in Jon Coulston and Hazel Dodge (eds.) *Ancient Rome: The Archaeology of the Eternal City* (Oxford University School of Archaeology: Monograph 54, 2000), 166-209.

²¹³ *CIL* I², 1529.

²¹⁴ Front. *Aq.* 1. 9.

²¹⁵ Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 152-153.

²¹⁶ Columella, 1. 5.

²¹⁷ Front. *Aq.* 2. 98, 116.

just one wooden bridge over the Tiber, we may confidently conclude that this flood was probably only 10 masl in height (See Figures 2 and 3).²¹⁸

Nonetheless, such damage aside, Agrippa's achievement in ensuring a supply of fresh water during this flood – fresh water that probably saved many lives – prompted the Senate to immediately establish, upon Augustus' satisfied encouragement, the office of *cura aquarum* complete with a high-ranking Agrippa-like *curator aquarum* at its head. This *curator* was to be appointed by none other than the *princeps* himself, a prerogative that illustrates both Agrippa's success and Augustus' ability to incorporate and integrate the state's traditional power bodies under himself.²¹⁹ Such incorporation and integration was of great necessity to Augustus, for after Actium, as Wallace-Hadrill observes, the *princeps* still needed a policy of consistent and 'continuous process of change', one that would eventually result in Augustus' total redefinition of power-structure in Rome under his sole-rule. In this case Augustus redefined that power by drawing upon Agrippa's achievement in alleviating suffering in Rome during flood there – a success that was visibly demonstrated to all in 32BC – and one that belies the fact that along with his own political ambitions, Augustus had the general welfare of Rome's population in mind while exercising power in 32BC.²²⁰

2.2.1 Findings

The aedileship of Marcus Agrippa thus occasioned external responses to Tiber flooding in a manner so as to prevent needless deaths in Rome during and after inundation. In a sense, Agrippa's efforts were imperative and rushed. Flood was expected in Rome. However, the vast scale of Agrippa's projects, and the foresight embedded in their function show that Agrippa was determined to supply Rome with ample fresh water for any conditions, including those of an imminent flood.

In this respect, Agrippa's aedileship proved a resounding success, for when in 32BC the Tiber did flood, there would be structural damage to Roman buildings in the Campus Martius and along the Tiber's banks to be sure, but there would also be minimal loss of human life.

To perpetuate Agrippa's achievements and foresight, Augustus ensured the Senate decree the office of *curator aquarum* – an office that proved so useful that the *princeps* had it retained and expanded upon in the aftermath of the next major Tiber flood in 27BC.

Agrippa's achievements would in time also extend beyond the boundaries of flood control in Rome, spilling over into that of fire management. For, unwittingly, Agrippa had established the same apparatus and infrastructure that would supply Rome's future fire-fighting Cohortes Vigiles, which Augustus established in AD6, with the water they would need to fight fires all over the city of Rome, as we shall examine in the section of fire, further into this chapter.²²¹

²¹⁸ Dio, 50. 8. 3; Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 23-24.

²¹⁹ Christer Bruun, 'Water Supply, Drainage and Watermills', in Paul Erdkamp (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*, 301.

²²⁰ Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, 'Mutates Formas: The Augustan Transformation of Roman Knowledge', in Karl Galinsky (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 81.

²²¹ See Section 2. 7.

2.3 The Flood of 27BC: Civic, and Poetic-Philosophical Responses

Augustus took more steps to protect Rome's population from the hazards of flood in 27BC, after a particularly destructive inundation during that year. Augustus continued Agrippa's legacy, but also expanded upon that legacy. For many plebs, Augustus' response to the flood of 27BC held great importance. According to Cassius Dio, the floods that had hit Rome in 32BC had been regarded by many Roman soothsayers, and consequently many plebeian Romans, to have been a sign that the Roman state would soon come under the power of the victor in war between Octavian and Antony, which is precisely what transpired, confirming the suspicions of both the soothsayers and the plebeians. Consequently, when Rome was inundated by a single body of flood waters in 27BC, the soothsayers were again consulted by the Senate and also by many plebeians, and when these again announced in repeated fashion that this flood was also a portent that the Roman state would 'come under the rule of the victor', many plebeians immediately looked to Augustus as the fulfilment of these predictions.²²²

2.3.1 From Octavian to Augustus

On the day that the 27BC flood occurred, 13th January, Augustus had convened the Senate to inform it that he now wished to restore the *res publica*. However, in response, the Senate decreed Octavian new *imperium* over a *provincia* – a new province that consisted of the Spains, Gaul, and Syria – those which had the greatest concentration of legions - and also the consulship in Rome. But, such a senatorial response, although it went against Octavian's outward demonstrations to the Senate itself, was not entirely against Octavian's own inner wishes. After all, as Dio states, Octavian still intended on retaining control over the imperial treasury, and he still had not disbanded those legions serving under him which constituted the bulk of Rome's armies.²²³ In an act of goodwill to the Senate, or perhaps as a reward for its part in granting him powers that accorded well to his own wishes, Octavian thereupon appointed a number of senators to govern the senatorial provinces as well as his own, with the sole exception being Egypt which, being the main breadbasket of the empire, Octavian would rule directly as his own property through *equites*.²²⁴ In gratitude for his cooperation with the Senate, on that night it bestowed the title 'Augustus' upon him. Initially, Octavian had suggested the title 'Romulus' for himself – a clear indication that Augustus wanted to retain supreme powers all along - but, when it was suggested by some senators that that name implied kingship and civil discord with one's own brethren, L. Munatius Plancus proposed the title 'Augustus'. Octavian accepted this name with much satisfaction, for it carried with

²²² Dio, 50. 8.

²²³ Dio, 52; 53. 16; Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 1939), 307; H. H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero: A History of Rome 133BC to AD68* (Fifth Ed; London: Routledge, 1992), 210-212; J. A Crook, 'Political History, 30BC to AD14', in *CAH X²*, 73, 77, 79; J. A Crook, 'Augustus: Power, Authority, Achievement', *CAH X²*, 113-114, 117; Walter Eder, 'Augustus and the Power of Tradition', in Karl Galinsky (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 24-26; Erich S. Gruen, 'Augustus and the Making of the Principate', in Karl Galinsky (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, 39-41

²²⁴ Dio, 53. 3-13.

it implications – Romulus, according to myth, held *augury* powers at Rome’s foundation.²²⁵ Thus now, as ‘Augustus’, Octavian was now in a new Romulus-like re-founder of Rome, but without the taint that kingship.²²⁶

But then, suddenly, Dio records that on that same night the Tiber River burst its banks again, and:

...flooded all the low-lying districts of Rome, so that these became navigable to boats.²²⁷

Although this flood inundated primarily the poorest low-lying regions of Rome, it is probable that Rome’s poor were not left to fend for themselves, at least not entirely. Pliny the Younger, an eye-witness of a particularly destructive flood in Rome during Trajan’s principate, observed that many Roman elites at that time felt a sense of helplessness as they looked down from their properties, down onto the chaos of loss of life and property amongst Rome’s poor in its low-lying regions. Notably, Pliny recorded what he himself saw with a shock and dismay that was probably shared by many other elite Romans ‘who live in the highlands [i.e. in Rome]’, and indeed many other Romans generally, thus:

Those who live in highlands out of the reach of these terrible storms have witnessed, here, the paraphernalia and weighty furniture of the wealthy, there, the simple tools of the farm, over there oxen, ploughs, and the ploughmen themselves, here herds set free and straying, jumbled amongst the trunks of trees, or the beams and roofs from villas, and all of it floating about randomly and widely.²²⁸

Moved by similar feelings or despair and pity at such sights, sections of Rome’s population used boats to bring food and supplies to poorer sufferers from flood. Although we do not possess any record of this from the Augustan era, we do have the testimony of the reliable Ammianus Marcellinus, which describes such water-borne efforts in AD371 when flood inundated Rome in that year. According to this account, segments of Roman society traversed over the swollen flood waters to bring food and aid to Rome’s poor, even in the full knowledge of the dangers of such a task. As Ammianus Marcellinus states:

In order that many people not waste away from starvation, boats and watercraft supplied food in abundance since the depth of the floodwaters did not allow travel by foot.²²⁹

As for who exactly commanded these ships, a hint is given by Livy, who recorded, tantalisingly, that after the battle of Trasimene in 217BC, the acting consul in Rome and the army stationed there took control of the ships at Ostia and filled them with soldiers and marines to defend Rome. Although we cannot be entirely certain that the same power structures were used during times of inundation in Rome, what we can be sure of is that the

²²⁵ Ennius, *EP*, 22; Liv. 1. 7-8; Dio. 53. 26; J. A Crook, ‘Political History, 30BC to AD14’, 79.

²²⁶ J. A Crook, ‘Political History, 30BC to AD14’, 79; Walter Eder, ‘Augustus and the Power of Tradition’, in Karl Galinsky (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, 24.

²²⁷ Dio 53. 20. 1-2.

²²⁸ Pl. *Ep.* 8. 17.

²²⁹ Amm. Mar. 29. 6. 17-18.

army in Rome took an active leadership role in coordinating flood-relief in Rome, and that in 27BC the army would have brought much relief and support to Rome's poorest affected by this flood.²³⁰ Moreover, acting under the army's directives, barge operators probably took a prominent role in flood-relief as well. Indeed, given that there were over 6,000 barge trips made between Ostia and Rome per annum during the principate of Augustus, it is probable that barge operators took a leading part in carrying grain and other foodstuffs to Rome's poor during this flood, and during other floods, as well.²³¹ Since large cargo ships were too cumbersome to sail the Tiber, these smaller barge ships transported their cargos instead, using the river's watercourses and adjoining canal systems, together with ferrying and passenger boats.²³² In achieving their aim, ship owners would have also enlisted the help of Rome's urban plebeian workforces who, even under normal circumstances, hauled barge cargos from the river docks to nearby depots and storehouses called *horrea*.²³³ They would even have been paid for their efforts to bring relief during times of inundation, for as Brunt and others have demonstrated, the urban plebs could not subsist solely on the grain dole.²³⁴ Ship owners may also have enlisted the help of the many grain ship sailors who happened at the time to be in Rome where, as one papyrus letter dated to the 2nd or 3rd century AD illustrates, they were always accommodated before being discharged.²³⁵ But slaves were seldom used during flood-relief efforts. Although numbers of slaves in temporary surplus may have been conscripted for more menial tasks in flood-relief operations, the erratic nature of flooding meant that a reserve slave workforce would have been underemployed and idle throughout most of the year, resulting in an unwanted drain on the state's economy and slave-owners' finances.²³⁶

However, not all segments of Rome's elite were as robust as these when it came to pooling resources to help Rome's poor. We have already observed that Roman landlords like Crassus and Cicero often showed little concern for their tenants' welfare in Rome when it came to obtaining income and profit under the Late Republic.²³⁷ And, this same elitist attitude thrived well into the Principate period, as well, with many wealthy senators building *insulae* apartments in the lower-lying regions of Rome using the inferior building practices and materials already described to minimise outlay and maximise eventual profit.²³⁸ This kind of opportunism was practically inevitable though, for under Augustus, Rome's population had

²³⁰ Liv. 22. 11. 7-8.

²³¹ David J. Mattingly, Gregory S. Aldrete, 'The Feeding of Imperial Rome: The Mechanics of the Food Supply System' in Jon Coulston, Hazel Dodge (eds.) *Ancient Rome: The Archaeology of the Eternal City* (Oxford: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2000), 149, 155.

²³² Steven L. Tuck, 'The Tiber and River Transport', in Paul Erdkamp (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 237.

²³³ David J. Mattingly, Gregory S. Aldrete, 'The Feeding of Imperial Rome', 146-148.

²³⁴ On plebs ordinarily working on top of receiving the corn dole in Rome, see Suet. *Aug.* 40. See also P. A. Brunt, 'Free Labour and Public Works at Rome', in *JRS*, 70 (1980), 81-100; David Mattingly, Gregory S. Aldrete, 'The Feeding of Imperial Rome', 156.

²³⁵ Berlin Papyrus No. 27 (= *Select Papyri* No. 113.)

²³⁶ David Mattingly, Gregory S. Aldrete, 'The Feeding of Imperial Rome', 156-157.

²³⁷ See Section 1. 3. See also Bruce W. Frier, 'The Rental Market in Early Imperial Rome', in *Journal of Roman Studies*, 67 (1977), 27-37; Bruce W. Frier, 'Cicero's Management of His Urban Properties', in *Classical Journal*, 74 (1978), 1-6; Bruce W. Frier, *Landlords and Tenants in Imperial Rome* (Princeton, 1980); Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 106.

²³⁸ Simon P. Ellis, *Roman Housing* (Duckworth, 2000), 85.

swelled to near one million inhabitants, and the city's population density was high, especially in its poorer, and thus less expensive, low-lying regions. Indeed, despite the obvious dangers of flooding to those living in these lower-lying parts, population density simply demanded that multi-storeyed apartments in those *insulae* be built. Vitruvius, living in Rome under Augustus, witnessed the construction of such multi-storeyed apartments in Rome for himself:

But with the present importance of the city and the unlimited numbers of its population, it is necessary to increase the number of dwelling places indefinitely. Consequently, as the ground floors could not admit of so great a number of people in the city, it has been necessary to find relief by increasing the heights of buildings.²³⁹

2.3.2 *Sextus Pacuvius and Augustus' Flood-Management Reforms of 27BC*

As the level of the Tiber's floodwaters rose, and the soothsayers' interpretation that Augustus be accorded greater honours that had spread among Roman plebeians became known in the Senate House, the senator Sextus Pacuvius announced his support for the awarding of greater honours, first in the Senate House, and then to the plebeian crowds assembled outside the curia. Thereupon, he proceeded along Rome's streets and laneways and ordered the plebeians to offer sacrifices to supplicate the gods on account of this flood in both public spaces and in their houses, which they promptly did.²⁴⁰ The fact that the bestowing of Augustus' powers and Pacuvius' proclamations are out of sequence clearly indicate that cajoling did not take place between Augustus and Pacuvius, for Pacuvius only began to petition the Senate and remonstrate Rome's plebeians, so that Augustus be given more power, *after* Augustus had already been given more power in the Senate. Furthermore, Augustus received no further powers in the immediate aftermath of Pacuvius' petitions and remonstrations. Therefore, Pacuvius acted on his own initiative in voluntary appreciation of Octavian's real importance to Rome, especially after the predictions by the soothsayers had been made public. The plebs, also had much to gain from Octavian by the 13th January 27BC, and Pacuvius' cries for more powers for their ruler. As Augustus listed overtly in his *Res Gestae* for the express purpose of public perusal by Roman patricians and plebeians alike, in 44BC he had paid out three hundred sesterces per man in accordance with Julius Caesar's will, and then another four hundred apiece in his own name after Actium.²⁴¹ He had also treated the soldiers of the legions well, assigning them land he bought out of his own funds, and distributed one thousand sesterces to each soldier from the spoils of Actium and Egypt.²⁴² In addition, he had strengthened the Roman economy by aiding the public treasury,²⁴³ and he had restored eighty-two temples throughout the city - which served as financial lenders.²⁴⁴ He gave gladiatorial shows for entertainment,²⁴⁵ and made the seas around Italy safer for trading by clearing it of pirates.²⁴⁶ But after all these dramatic events had transpired, and the

²³⁹ Vit. 2. 8. 17.

²⁴⁰ Dio, 53. 20.

²⁴¹ RG. 15.

²⁴² RG. 15.

²⁴³ RG. 17-18.

²⁴⁴ RG. 19-21.

²⁴⁵ RG. 22.

²⁴⁶ RG. 25.

floodwaters had finally abated, Augustus enacted a series of reforms to address flooding in a far more thorough and effective manner. He established a permanent board of appointees to maintain the water system in Rome, and another board to monitor the health and flow of the Tiber estuary. According to Frontinus, these boards were appointed, funded and controlled by Augustus himself, were presided over by consuls, and membership was open not only to senators, but also to *equites*, and even freedmen, who were appointed responsibility over workforces of slaves, organised by slave superintendents.²⁴⁷ One inscription even bears the name of one such superintendent: Hierocles, a slave who this inscription states Augustus had appointed as a superintendent over a number of other slaves to maintain public works and Tiber flow control. Hierocles was honoured with this tributary inscription by his under-slave Eros upon Hierocles' death.²⁴⁸

These measures mark the high point in Augustus' abilities to innovate in response to flooding in Rome. Building upon Agrippa's achievements in 33BC, Augustus' reforms extended Rome's capacity to manage Tiber flow during inundation even further. However, those reforms met with mixed results. Most certainly, as examined in following sections of this chapter, thanks largely to Augustus' boards, Rome was not only prepared, but able, to effectively cope with the low to moderate Tiber floods of 23BC, 12BC, and AD12. However, against the damage and destruction wrought by the floods of 22BC and AD5, which swept away apartment buildings, and seriously damaged many public buildings, and which resulted in famine and starvation and high mortality rates, Augustus' reforms were largely ineffectual. As was Augustus himself. Indeed, in both 22BC and AD5 Augustus' overall responses, when they eventually did come, did not actually address the problems meted out by the floods themselves, but only the famines that these floods directly or indirectly caused, as will be amply demonstrated in later sections of this chapter.

Still, Augustus' establishment of these two boards in response to the 27BC flood produced far-reaching repercussions for Roman society, politics, and the nature of Rome's own capacity to deal with all future floods throughout Augustus' principate. The reasons for the 'opening up' of membership on such boards by Augustus to those outside the Senate were primarily twofold. Firstly, as Favro argues, Augustus created these boards to 'exert comprehensive control while preserving the appearance of Republican structure'.²⁴⁹ In this regard, Augustus further disarmed senatorial 'rivals for power and acclaim' by these boards' creation – for these boards ensured that the Senate retained less of an impact on Rome's cityscape.²⁵⁰ Secondly. We must take into account another consideration – sheer practicalities demanded the creation of these boards. Augustus was actually forced to expand on Agrippa's innovations by the inclusion of members from outside the Senate on these two monitoring boards and their workforces – workforces much larger than Agrippa's – in order simply to properly confront the issue of Tiber flooding in a more thorough and practical manner. Dio exaggerates when he claims that after years of civil wars all of Rome's senators were bereft of funds, and could not even fill the aedileship – surely what we see here is a

²⁴⁷ Front. *Aq.* 2. 99, v 108; Diane Favro, "Pater Urbis", 78.

²⁴⁸ *ILS* 1604; Thomas Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman Slavery* (Routledge, 1983), 165.

²⁴⁹ Diane Favro, "Pater Urbis", 75.

²⁵⁰ Diane Favro, "Pater Urbis", 83.

further concentration of power by Augustus.²⁵¹ In any event, in 28BC Augustus removed the aedileship's judicial responsibilities - transferring them to those wealthier senators holding the praetorship; and in that same year Augustus even provisioned his own funds to numerous senators so that they could fulfil stripped-down duties of the aedileship, which now constituted the monitoring of the Tiber estuary.²⁵² However, Augustus could not afford to wait for the Senate to recover from its financial ruin, and Augustus had to be seen, especially so early on as 'Augustus' to be acting decisively on behalf of Rome. Thus, the *princeps* created these two boards, and gave men like Hierocles a greater stake in Rome's maintenance, out of practical necessity over a desire to undermine an already impoverished Senate with limited military resources when compared to Augustus himself.²⁵³ Fortunately for Augustus, and for Rome too, these boards proved highly effective in controlling Tiber flow through Rome – a result Augustus expected at their very inception.²⁵⁴

2.3.3 *Beautifying Rome, Enhancing One's Power*

Machiavellian-like political tactics aside, Augustus responded to the 27BC flood as he did for other reasons, too. The *princeps* desired Rome to live up to the prestige and power it had attained as capital of a vast empire. Throughout the Late Republic, Rome had suffered from neglect, street fighting, and factional skirmishes throughout the city, and its buildings were crumbling and unsafe.²⁵⁵ The neglect of the city of Rome under the Late Republic signalled not just a poverty of resources, but also a debilitated Roman public spirit, which demonstrated to all the lack of the Senate's ability to conduct and maintain the repair and provision for the city. As a result, Augustus took it upon himself to address this neglect.²⁵⁶

By ensuring a rebuilt, and far safer Rome, Augustus displayed his intention to endear his image to the Roman public, to continue garnering for himself further insurance against any future political opposition.²⁵⁷ Actium had been fought and won, but political uncertainty remained, and as we have already seen, Horace and other Romans still feared a return to civil war. Thus, from 27BC onwards, Augustus enfranchised the Roman populace into official board bodies that would thereupon look to him, and him alone, for strong leadership.²⁵⁸ Thus, as Tacitus stated:

Step by step he [Augustus] began to make his ascent and to unite in his own person the functions of the Senate, the magistracy, and the legislature.²⁵⁹

Thus, as Favro elaborates, Augustus 'overtly dealt with urban care' in 27BC by rebuilding damaged structures and establishing his flood management boards, but 'covertly'

²⁵¹ Dio. 53. 2.

²⁵² Dio. 53. 2.

²⁵³ Suet. *Aug.* 27. See also Diane Favro, 'Making Rome', 242-243.

²⁵⁴ Diane Favro, "'Pater Urbis'", 84.

²⁵⁵ See J. Carcopino, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome* (New Haven, 1940); E. Paoli, *Vita romana: La vie quotidienne dans la Rome antique* (Paris, 1955); Z. Yavetz, 'The Living Conditions of the Urban Plebs in Republican Rome', in *Latomus*, 17 (1958), 500-517; Diane Favro, "'Pater Urbis'", 61.

²⁵⁶ Diane Favro, "'Pater Urbis'", 61.

²⁵⁷ Diane Favro, "'Pater Urbis'", 61.

²⁵⁸ Diane Favro, "'Pater Urbis'", 83-84.

²⁵⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 1. 2.

Augustus hoped that such measures would aid him in his aim to control ‘the urban populace at every level’.²⁶⁰

Floods, therefore, provided Augustus with opportunities to further extend his informal *auctoritas* as well as his formal *imperium*. But, notwithstanding Augustus’ political agenda, his measures were of great benefit to the welfare of the people of Rome, and allowed the city to recover more quickly after floods. Hence, as Dio recorded, when in 23BC the Tiber flooded again, and the Pons Sublicius bridge and the Pons Fabricius bridge were washed away and the lower parts of Rome were inundated for three days – indications that the river level may have risen to an even greater height than in 27BC, perhaps as high as 15 or even 20 masl²⁶¹ – Augustus’ boards appointed in 27BC responded quickly and effectively, just as Augustus had intended them to. Thus, one inscription from that year shows that in immediate response to the 23BC flood, Augustus ordered the consuls Q. Lepidus and M. Lollius, who were both presidents of these boards, to restore the Pons Fabricius. This order, the inscription states, was promptly carried out and seen through to a successful and quick completion, thus restoring order to Rome – albeit, as so often throughout Augustus’ career, an order under the politically uncompromising, yet at the same time benevolent, patronage of Augustus.²⁶²

2.3.4 Summary

In 27BC, Augustus encouraged cooperation with the Senate, which produced a degree of, if not entirely uniform, senatorial compliance under his sole-leadership, as observable in Plancus and Pacuvius in the Senate on the night of the flood itself. However, not all senators acted in the same way towards Rome’s poorest during Tiber flooding. In fact, the facts instruct us that during times of flooding, Rome’s elite externally responded in one of three ways: in ignorance of the sufferings of the poor, promoted by a politico-religious milieu that conditioned the likes of Augustus to lack appreciation for the vulnerability of human life among that poor; or in scorn for the plight of the poor in Rome, as displayed by many of Rome’s elite landlords through low-quality building practice, and who only grudgingly agreed to observe Augustus’ decreed constraints on birthday festivities; or genuine sympathy for Rome’s poor, as evidenced by the bringing of food, aid and relief by boat over a span of days to a week.

In order to open new veins of more uniform bureaucratic loyalty to himself, following the flood of 27BC Augustus provided opportunities for Romans of lower social strata to serve as agents on a broader, bureaucratic scale in the aftermath of the 27BC flood. This civic external response to the 27BC flood was certainly an outward expression inspired by the plight of ordinary Romans during times of flooding in Rome; however, it was also inspired by a pressing need after Actium for Augustus to cement and legitimise his rule in Rome. As a result, in Augustus’ behaviours one detects a certain realisation that opportunity to increase prestige and political power through outward, benevolent, civic, external responses, had presented itself in 27BC. This internal response to the flood of that year was expressed as an

²⁶⁰ Diane Favro, “Pater Urbis”, 71.

²⁶¹ Dio, 53. 33. 1.

²⁶² CIL 6.1305 = ILS 5892; Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber*, 24.

external response through the bureaucratic enfranchisement of multiple levels of Roman society under Augustus, which although fractured the Senate's exclusivity to supreme power, strengthened Augustus' own public image, and legitimacy as ruler over and above it, and thereby ensured the *princeps*' dual objectives consistent thereafter: the preservation of life in Rome, and the neutralisation of any further source of political opposition there.

2.4 The Floods of 23 and 22BC

Even after Augustus' reforms in 27BC, Tiber flooding continued to be a major problem in Rome. As mentioned above, in 23BC an especially high flood hit Rome carrying away a whole wooden bridge, such was its force. Many buildings in Rome's low-lying poorer regions were also damaged, and Dio states that the city's entire low-lying business areas and central Forum were navigable only by boat for three days. To quote Dio in full:

The Tiber, rising, carried away the wooden bridge [the Pons Sublicius] and made the city navigable by boats for three days.²⁶³

Dio also states that the city's stored food supplies were spoilt - such was the flood's height which may have reached up to the dizzying height of 20 masl.²⁶⁴ Yet, Dio records no loss of life in this flood. Although there must have been at least some lives lost, Dio's lack of concern for mortality rates in this flood probably means that such rates were small, which is an especially positive reflection on Agrippa's and Augustus' reforms in 33BC and 27BC, which were specifically put in place to minimise loss of life. As for the bridge, one inscription from Rome, already mentioned, records that as soon as the floodwaters of 23BC subsided, the bridge was promptly rebuilt by the consuls Q. Lepidus and M. Lollius and the twin boards Augustus had established in 27BC.²⁶⁵

2.4.1 The 22BC Flood

In Book 54, Chapter 1, of his *Roman History*, Cassius Dio lists the prodigies and various Roman interpretations pertaining to them in Rome during the year 22BC, which includes a major flood, a plague, and famine. As for his history of Augustus' principate, Fergus Millar has argued that Dio used Livy, Cremutius Cordus, and other Augustan literary sources; which he advocates applies in the case of the 22 flood as well.²⁶⁶ As Dio opens:

During the following year [22BC], when Marcus Marcellus and Lucius Arruntius were consuls, the city was again flooded by the overflowing of the river [the Tiber] and many objects were struck by thunderbolts, in particular the statues in the Pantheon, so that the spear fell from the hand of Augustus. The people suffered both from sickness and from famine, for the plague affected the whole of Italy and nobody tilled the land, and I suppose that the same afflictions also prevailed abroad. The Romans concluded that these disasters had befallen them for no other reason than that they did not have

²⁶³ Dio. 53. 33. 5.

²⁶⁴ Dio. 53. 33. 4-5; 54. 1. 1-3.

²⁶⁵ *CIL* 6. 1305 = *ILS* 5892; Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 24.

²⁶⁶ Fergus Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio* (Oxford, 1964), 83-85.

Augustus serving as consul at that time, and they therefore wished to appoint him dictator.²⁶⁷

The plague and famine of 22BC will be examined more closely in the next chapter for they affected not only Rome, but Italy and large parts of the empire, too. Nonetheless, one's first impressions are that the above passage appears so simple that, as one commentator once described it, it contains 'nothing remarkable', but is just a simple presentation of plain historical facts.²⁶⁸ However, when one reflects on the details of the passage, and also those historical details that are omitted from it, one gains a real insight into the chaos and destruction that this flood did cause to much life and property in Rome. In regard to the former, Dio states that much of the city was flooded. Thus, the flood height may have reached up to a high 20 masl. Given this fact, and the fact that the stagnant pools left behind by floodwater were probably responsible for transmitting mosquito or rat carrying plague, and that the plague this flood helped spread depleted agricultural production resulting in acute famine, as we shall examine more closely in the next chapter, one must find that this was no ordinary, unremarkable, Tiber flood. Indeed, with regard to Dio's omissions, Dio omits any mention that boats were used upon the floodwaters, as they were in 27BC, and in the previous year in 23BC,²⁶⁹ and again in 12BC,²⁷⁰ AD5,²⁷¹ and AD12,²⁷² which probably means that the floodwaters of the 22BC flood were so high, and so swift and violent, that boats simply could not be used upon them, such was the power of its rampaging flow (See Figures 2 and 3). Indeed, given Augustus' hesitancy to act, it appears he was at a total loss as to how to respond to it. As we shall see in Chapter Three, Augustus' response to this flood, and the resulting plague and famine, only eventuated when the famine had begun to abate in late 22BC, and that response only consisted of the restoration of Rome's food supply. Clearly, the *princeps* was remained at a loss as to how any improvement on his 27BC reforms could address a flood as ferocious as that of 22BC.

2.4.2 Summary

The floods of 23BC and 22BC stand in sharp relief against the other. Whereas the former allowed navigation by boat, the latter's violence did not; and, while the former was managed well by Augustus' boards and by Augustus himself, control of the latter was entirely beyond the *princeps*' ability to handle.

Given Augustus' own hesitancy to act in 22BC, he may have been at a total loss in how he should respond to it. As we shall see in chapter three, Augustus' response to this crisis in 22BC eventuated extremely late. Only once the famine had begun to abate in the final months of 22BC, well after the floods had subsided and the plague had dissipated did Augustus finally act. Yet, when that response did come, it addressed only the food shortage in Rome alone, and contained no improvements on the emperor's reforms of 27BC. Clearly, the

²⁶⁷ Dio. 54. 1.

²⁶⁸ P. M. Swan, 'Cassius Dio on Augustus: A Poverty of Annalistic Sources?', in *Phoenix*, 41, 3 (1987), 249.

²⁶⁹ Dio. 53. 33. 5.

²⁷⁰ Dio. 54. 25. 2.

²⁷¹ Dio. 55. 22. 3. See also Cassiod. *Chron.* 604.

²⁷² Dio. 56. 27. 4.

princeps remained at a total loss regarding how any improvement on his 27BC reforms could address a flood as ferocious as that of 22BC, and the unpredicted, and indeed unpredictable, plague and mayhem it caused.

2.5 The Floods of 12BC, AD5, and AD12

2.5.1 The Flood of 12BC

Three more major Tiber floods occurred under Augustus' principate, in 12BC, AD5, and AD12. The first of these took place on the 4th July during the dedication of Cornelius Balbus' Theatre in the Campus Martius. However, the dedication was not cancelled, but Balbus and others did have to use boats to reach the celebrations at the theatre itself. Omitted from Dio's brief description of this flood is any reference to loss of life or property.²⁷³ This probably indicates that this particular flood reached only around 10 masl, meaning that the Campus Martius, where Balbus' Theatre was situated, was inundated, but not the Forum or urban centres in city of Rome itself (See Figure 2, and the locations of the Theatre of Balbus as building 3 in Figure 3).

2.5.2 The Flood of AD5

There was nothing mild about the AD5 Tiber flood, whatsoever. According to Dio, owing to this flood the city centre of Rome was navigable by boat for seven long days – a period that extended longer than any other Tiber flood under Augustus.²⁷⁴ This may indicate that the Tiber's water levels reached the dizzying height of 20 masl. In fact, such were the floodwater heights in this year that Rome's grain stores were again spoiled, as they were in 22BC, but this time on a greater scale, which resulted in one of Rome's worst ever food crises. Famine ensued throughout the city.²⁷⁵ As we shall examine more closely in the next chapter, to Augustus' credit, the *princeps* improved on his lacklustre response to the 22BC flood and resulting food crisis; and according to Dio, Augustus invested great effort to alleviate the suffering in Rome as quickly as he could, thus making numerous grain distributions funded at his own expense. However, Dio adds, even this proved wholly insufficient to many of the plebs living in Rome at the time; and when Augustus' prohibition on wealthy elite's banqueting in honour of his birthday was complied with only grudgingly by that elite, many of whom provided precious little in the way of support to poorer sufferers of the flood, civil discord quickly spread throughout the entire city.²⁷⁶

As this civil discord escalated, plebeians under the leadership of one Publius Rufus began to plan a full-scale uprising in Rome – a plan that would linger on well into the following year after fire, in turn, also ravaged Rome. The plebs' despair and fear of death after flood and famine, led to outward expressions of anger, and violence, and as an outward response to this, Augustus offered monetary rewards for information about the planned uprising. It took

²⁷³ Dio, 54. 25. 2.

²⁷⁴ Dio. 55. 22. 3. See also Cassiod. *Chron.* 604.

²⁷⁵ Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 132.

²⁷⁶ Dio 55. 26; Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 132. See also section 3. 3. 4 of Chapter Three of this thesis.

up to a year before information was received, but the uprising was eventually checked before it could erupt in full. The famine in Rome was eventually relieved by Augustus' efforts.

Thereupon, when gladiatorial contests were staged for the masses' enjoyment as a gift from the *princeps* as a sign of cooperation to ensure the plebs' goodwill, their sense of alarm was calmed, and the uprising began to melt away.²⁷⁷

2.5.3 *The Flood of AD12*

The flood of AD12 occurred on the 4th July during the *ludi martiales* religious festival. In height, it was akin to the 12BC flood rather than the more destructive floods of 22BC and AD5. Like the 12BC flood, this flood also coincided with a major public event. But unlike the flood of 12BC, which coincided with the dedication of the theatre of Balbus, and which required the use of boats to attend that theatre's dedication, in AD12 Augustus decided to avoid use of boats and move the *ludi martiales* festival's celebrations from the flooded circus to higher ground in the Forum of Augustus. Augustus had clearly learnt from the debacle of Balbus theatre's inundated grand opening, and chose not to repeat history by the simple act of moving the location for festivities. But, in characteristic Augustan fashion, Augustus blended the practical with the political. For, by choosing to hold the *ludi martiales* in his own Forum, Augustus used this opportunity to enhance his own position in the wake of the civil unrest that had followed the flood of AD5. If he could not entirely restrain the Roman public's angered external response to flood, then he would use this present flood to reaffirm his power and this time within the period of flood itself – by moving this popular religious festival to his own Forum. Thus, by this single move, Augustus reaffirmed his position by bringing all Romans under his own politico-religious agenda once again, nullifying the social and political unease. It proved a success. No civil unrest is recorded either during, or after, this flood, or indeed throughout the entirety of AD12. Thus, what was seen by many as a practical and simple shift of venue, served to ingratiate the *princeps* to all Romans by the most subtle means, and coerced Romans into re-accepting his rule after the civil uprisings after the natural disasters of AD5 and AD6, and all in a most peaceful fashion. The absence of any mention of any further uprising throughout the entirety of AD12 demonstrates the success with which Augustus met in this mission to bring Rome to heel.²⁷⁸

2.5.4 *Summary*

Augustus achieved great prestige by accepting that in responding deliberately to the floods of 12BC, AD5 and AD12, and he exploited each one as an opportunity for both self-promotion and reinforcement of his legitimate right to rule. It was a self-centred, if politically necessary ideal that would be sorely tested during periods of flood and food shortage in Rome, but its success and longevity belies its importance to Augustus' long-term vision for an empire which, like the natural world, he believed was his to rule alone, over and above all others.

²⁷⁷ Dio 55. 26-27; Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 132.

²⁷⁸ Dio, 56. 27. 4.

Augustus' power was based upon his own personal *auctoritas*, constitutional powers, and ability to vouchsafe his own legitimacy through the maintenance of the welfare of all classes, including the lower classes, in Rome. Of course, Augustus' exercise of that power was acceptable to many other Romans at the time as well. However, though most plebeians adored Augustus throughout the 20s as he distributed largesse to all Romans and restored peace to Rome itself, by AD5 not all plebeians remained wholly satisfied with Augustus' inability to prevent the flood of AD5, and the famine in Rome during that same year. Yet, Augustus showed determination to check the unrest this dissatisfaction caused by as early as AD5, and maintained that determination consistently right up to AD12. Through shrewdness and patience, Augustus promoted *concordia* and *harmonia* under his indisputable hegemony. By these means, Augustus ensured that Roman society would remain intrinsically unequal, supporting at its apex the person and rule of the emperor. However, by AD5 it had become abundantly clear to Augustus and all of Rome that the entitlements of such a position still demanded the responsible handling of natural disasters, including Tiber floods. This responsibility would thereafter be exercised more subtly by Augustus, but in actuality it would be exercised more practically, ably, and effectively by his imperial successor, Tiberius, as is examined in depth in Chapter Four of this thesis.

2.6 Flooding: Conclusions

From 33BC onwards, Augustus and Agrippa ensured the continuous flow of water sourced from Apennine foothill springs flushed out Rome's entire water system of aqueducts, with its 247 *castella*, and its 591 basins scattered throughout Rome, on a constant and steady basis. As a result, the achievement of Agrippa's aedileship was to be seen effectively addressing anticipated flooding in Rome under the auspices of the new ruling regime. However, after the floods of 27BC had subsided, Augustus went a step further than Agrippa, and established permanent boards of appointees to maintain the water system in Rome, and monitor the health and flow of the Tiber estuary. These boards were appointed, funded and controlled by Augustus himself, but their membership was open to senators, *equites*, and freedmen, who were responsible for slave workforces with slave superintendents, but loyal to the *princeps* alone. By such means of external responses to floods in Rome generally, Augustus followed his: impression that Tiber floods required a larger bureaucracy and more resources by the creation of new boards and workforces to address the issue of inundation in Rome, and thus decrease loss of life during Tiber floods, and enhance Rome's appearance to endear his legitimacy to rule among Romans living in Rome.

However, the extent to which these hopes were prioritised or intermingled were by no means homogenous, and transformed with time. Thus, this sense of cooperation with Augustus in 27BC stands in sharp relief against the civil unrest of AD5, further evidencing that even among Rome's lower classes, there was never a lone, homogenous external response to flooding or any type of natural disaster. Rather, there existed a spectrum of external responses among all Romans, each coloured by internal motivations, thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and attitudes, which combined together to prompt the visible outward actions and behaviours recorded throughout similarly arrayed primary sources analysed by

this dissertation.

However, Augustus' preventative measures and responses to flooding in Rome were successful to a point. Although health conditions among Romans after 27BC, flooding continued to be a problem in Rome, and Augustus could never determine with complete certainty the individual or collective responses of Romans in the aftermath of the Tiber's unpredictable floods. This is clearest in the aftermath of the AD5 flood, in which the popular uprising was planned. Only after Augustus' own tactful attention, and perseverance right through to AD12, was he eventually able to quell any planned civil uprising and calm tensions in Rome to ensure order there once again. Thus, in memory of the internal response of fear and uncertainty Augustus felt arising from the turmoil of AD5, in AD12 Augustus was forced to show a determined, but also equally subtle and deft, hand - moving the *ludi martiales* to the Augustan Forum. Begun in 7BC and finished in 2BC, this Forum was a symbol of Augustus' redefinition of Roman history, and its destiny under Augustus' new regime, under Augustus' own imperial, and dynastic sway. As he approached death, it would be with that same dynastic sway in mind that Augustus sought to reaffirm his imperial position in Rome, through the public reaffirmation of his centrality to all Romans, during the AD12 flood. That sway would, in time, be embraced by Tiberius upon succeeding Augustus as *princeps*. Thus, the Augustan propaganda of new hope for Rome proved effective, and its emphasis on the sensitivities of Rome's new regime to the concerns of many Romans extended throughout Augustus' principate and into those of his imperial successors.

FIRE IN AUGUSTAN ROME

2.7 Fire in the City of Rome Under Augustus

Fire had always been a real threat to life and property in ancient Rome. Under the Republic, there was simply no administrative solution for dealing with fire in Rome. Under Augustus, the *princeps* would tackle this problem in a more progressive and determined, if somewhat piece-meal, for throughout the Julio-Claudian era, natural disasters such as fires provided the occasions for rebuilding, and reconfigurations of the city of Rome, as is evidenced by the Augustan Forum and the introduction of new *vici*, as this chapter bears out. Augustus' general policy towards fires in Rome had success, but this success was rather limited.²⁷⁹ For, as Suetonius states, Rome's population density, and its widespread use of wood in housing, invariably meant that urban Rome was always vulnerable to fire.²⁸⁰ In fact, fire was simply a part of everyday life for all Romans. Alongside the innumerable minor fires that burnt contained parts of Rome, six major fires destroyed or damaged large parts of the city under Augustus' rule, in 16BC, 14BC, 12BC, 7BC, circa AD4, and AD6.

²⁷⁹ P. K. Baillie Reynolds, *The Vigiles of Imperial Rome* (London, 1926), 18-21; O. Robinson, 'Fire Prevention at Rome', in *RIDA*, 24 (1977), 377-400; R. Sablayrolles, *Les cohorts de vigils* (Rome, 1996), 6-10; Werner Eck, 'The Administrative Reforms of Augustus', 241-242.

²⁸⁰ Suet. *Aug.* 28.

Table 2: Fires in Rome During the Principate of Augustus

Date	Source
16BC	Dio. 54. 19
14BC	Dio. 54. 24
12BC	RG. 20; Dio. 54. 29
7BC	RG. 21; Dio. 55. 8
c. AD4	Dio. 55. 12
AD6	Dio. 55. 26

Firstly, with regards to those smaller fires that burnt parts of Rome, comparative data from archaeological fieldwork conducted at Ostia shows that apartments there, which were very similar to those in Rome under Augustus, were usually built using combustible wooden floors, ceilings, and stairs, which fed fires. Traces of such fires have been found in Ostia at the bakery in Via dei Molini next to the Casa di Diana, the temple of the guild of the *stuppatores*, and the Caseggiato del Sole. However, small scale fires like those fires that left these traces at Ostia were far more common in Rome.²⁸¹

Evidence from Ostia also shows that building methods there and at Rome lent themselves well to severe damage from fires. Of the approximately 175 buildings studied at Ostia, 115 were either four storeys or over giving fire much upward fuel in them; and yet, the height of many *insulae* apartment buildings in Rome far exceeded those at Ostia. Thus, the fires at both Ostia and Rome that were ignited on the lower levels of *insulae* often quickly engulfed high ones as well.²⁸² Other aspects of *insulae* design also made them difficult to wage a fire-fight from. Prior to the fire of AD64, apartments in Rome lacked any *porticus* additions - additions that were only eventually introduced by Nero. These additions would give fire-fighters greater safer access to fight fires from the lower storeys. After Nero, these *porticus* additions became the norm in architectural design, and were henceforth built into every apartment *insulae*. However, prior to AD64, fire-fighters had to fight fires either from the ground-floor, or from inside the *insula* itself – a most dangerous fire-fighting method.²⁸³ Other aspects of *insulae* design also made the spread of fire throughout Rome swift and easy. Given that Rome was criss-crossed with narrow, winding streets, over which multi-level apartments hanged precariously (as landowners built out their second and third stories over the top of them to maximise rental space), fires usually spread very quickly from one apartment to another through Rome, along and over the narrow, winding streets below.²⁸⁴

However, although fires were common in Rome, their sheer, acute destructiveness

²⁸¹ G. Hermansen, *Ostia: Aspects of City Life* (Edmonton, 1981), 213, 216.

²⁸² James Earnest Packer, *The Insula of Imperial Ostia* (MAAR, 1971), 80-90; James Earnest Packer, 'Housing and Population in Imperial Ostia and Rome', in *Journal of Roman Studies*, 57 (1967), 80-88; Gustav Hermansen, *Ostia*, 218.

²⁸³ Tac. *Ann.* 15. 43; Suet. *Ner.* 16; Gustav Hermansen, *Ostia*, 217-219.

²⁸⁴ Stephen Dando-Collins, *The Great Fire of Rome: The Fall of the Emperor Nero and His City* (Da Capo Press, 2010), 57-58.

always prompted intense fear in all Romans, often expressed through panicked running. For, as Seneca remarked simply in his *Natural Questions*:

Fire cannot pursue us if we run away from it.²⁸⁵

As natural and basic as this survival reaction might seem, it was simply all that most Romans could do against the threat of fire throughout Augustus' principate. For, permanent daytime fire-fighting Cohorts were not introduced in Rome until 7BC, and night-time fire-fighting Cohorts were not introduced until AD6. Thus, for most of the people living in Rome under Augustus, running away from fire was actually the only effective way they knew to escape injury, at least until 7BC.²⁸⁶

Adding to the mayhem caused by fires in Rome's poorer areas, once fires came under control, wealthy Roman landlords razed the remains of *insulae* to the ground with a view to building more lucrative dwellings. In fact, building reconstruction remained the main civic response to fire, too. Unlike the Late Republic when Marcus Crassus deliberately purchased apartment blocks prone to fire at low prices to rebuild them after fire damaged them, and then sell them on for a profit, in a spirit of individual entrepreneurship, under Augustus and his imperial successors this practice became commonplace.²⁸⁷ As we shall see later in this chapter, even Augustus took part in this practice, as he demolished fire-damaged buildings in the centre of Rome after the 7BC fire to build his own, politically and financially profitable Augustan Forum – a space that would see the conduct of most of Rome's public and state business, and all under Augustus' auspices.²⁸⁸

2.7.1 The 16, 14, 12BC Fires of Rome

Due to a rebellion in Gaul in 16BC, Augustus was absent from Rome, together with Tiberius, to conduct military affairs in that province throughout that year. But, according to Dio, the very night after their twin-departure for Gaul an intense fire damaged many parts of Rome, and burnt the temple of Juventas to the ground. The Senate decreed *lectisternia* and *supplicationes* as *remedia* to mend the perceived breach of the *pax deorum* and ensure 'Augustus' safe return'.²⁸⁹ In addition, a four-yearly celebration of Augustus' sovereignty was also introduced and held, led by the major priesthoods in Rome. These rituals lasted several days, starting immediately after this fire had burnt itself out. As observed, from 27BC Romans were accustomed to interpret Tiber floods were *prodigia* sent by the gods to espouse their wish that Augustus be according increased power in Rome. Now, in the wake of the fire of 16BC, the Senate itself drew the same conclusion, and accordingly added to Augustus' political honours forthwith it would ensure their mediator's speedy return back to help in disaster relief and reconstruction efforts in Rome; and this, upon Augustus' return to Rome after a brief period in Gaul, was precisely what he did, rebuilding those parts of Rome

²⁸⁵ Sen. *NQ.* 6. 1. 6-7.

²⁸⁶ For the introduction of daytime fire-fighting cohorts in 7BC, see section 2. 8. 1. For the introduction of night-time fire-fighting cohorts in AD6, see section 2. 9. 1.

²⁸⁷ Plut. *Crass.* 2; Gustav Hermansen, *Ostia*, 215.

²⁸⁸ See section 2. 8. 3.

²⁸⁹ Dio. 54. 19.

damaged by this fire.²⁹⁰

However, just two years later, in 14BC another fire, more damaging than the fire of 16BC, burnt Rome. Among buildings destroyed were the Basilica of Paullus and the temple of Vesta. Given the cult of Vesta's constant use of fire, it is possible this particular fire was started there by accident. However, according to Dio, this fire actually spread to the temple of Vesta, and did not start there.²⁹¹ As this fire raged, the Vestal Virgins had to resort to carrying out of their temple many sacred objects for their preservation, placing them for safekeeping in the house of the priest of Jupiter on the Palatine hill, near Augustus' residence – a demonstration of the closeness between Augustus and Roman cults in general, and that of the Vestals in particular. Moreover, this episode illustrates the notable degree with which Augustus was associated with natural disaster responses in Rome as *princeps*. Augustus would have the temple of Vesta rebuilt and rededicated in his own name in quick time, and as a symbol of cooperation with all of Rome's many institutions, the emperor also had the Basilica of Paullus rebuilt, but under the name of Aemilius Paullus, a descendent of the Paullus who originally built it.²⁹²

According to Dio, when Marcus Agrippa died in 12BC the vast majority of Romans considered his death as a great loss to their city. Compounding this collective melancholy, at around the time of Agrippa's death, a number of *prodigia* occurred that occurred only 'when the greatest calamities threaten the state'.²⁹³ One of those *prodigia* was fire. This fire began when several hungry crows stole some burning meat from one of Rome's temple's altars, and dropped some mid-flight onto the hut of Romulus on the Palatine. The hut was burned down and destroyed, and then the fire spread around the Palatine.²⁹⁴ According to Augustus himself, the fire then spread to the Julian Forum, and proceeded to burn it and the Basilica Julia.²⁹⁵ In his *Res Gestae*, Augustus recorded that he immediately restored all these buildings. In Augustus' own words:

I completed the Julian forum and the basilica, which was between the temple of the Dioscori and that of Cronos, buildings whose foundations were laid by my father, and began that same basilica which had been burnt down on an augmented site, with an inscription in the name of my sons [Gaius and Lucius], and if I should not myself have completed it, I ordered it to be completed by my heirs.²⁹⁶

Although the Basilica would not be completed and rededicated in the names of Gaius and Lucius until AD12, the beginning of work on these eventual architectural triumphs would prefigure as prototypes Augustus' much grander monumental achievements in the Augustan Forum, built between 7BC and 2BC after another fire, as discussed later in this chapter. Thus, the seeds of change in Rome's urban fabric that would blossom after the fire of 7BC were

²⁹⁰ Dio. 54. 19.

²⁹¹ Dio. 54. 24.

²⁹² Dio. 54. 24.

²⁹³ Dio. 54. 29.

²⁹⁴ Dio. 54. 29-30.

²⁹⁵ *RG.* 20. 2.

²⁹⁶ *RG.* 20. 2; Alison E. Cooley, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 193-194.

planted in the aftermath of the fire of 12BC.²⁹⁷ Perhaps sensing what was afoot in Augustus' mind, many Senators, so Dio informs us, declared this fire an especially ominous sign concerning the welfare of Rome and, believing Augustus required further honours to placate the gods, awarded Augustus among other powers the illustrious honour of being religious reformer of the entire Roman state for a period five years. It is noteworthy that from 7BC, Augustus' new Forum would heavily feature religious motifs, including a temple to Mars Ultor. But these motifs would pale in comparison to the common theme, in that Forum especially, that it was Augustus, not the gods, who wielded political power in that place.²⁹⁸

2.7.2 Summary

Augustus responded to each of these three fires with invariably the same methods to be sure: he allowed himself to be accorded fresh honours by the Senate with the apparent blessing of the gods, and only upon being awarded these fresh powers would he then proceed to lead the reconstruction of fire-damaged buildings throughout Rome. Thereby, these external responses provided the appropriate *remedia* for the perceived breach in the *pax deorum* for Rome, a breach that most Romans believed was occasioned by Augustus simply not having enough constitutional and religious power.

However, notable changes would occur in Augustus' external responses to fire from the 7BC fire of Rome onward, which, as discussed below, a year which marks a clear shift in Augustus' own personal attitude towards presented opportunities for obtaining more political power as a consequence of fire in Rome. For, whereas previously, the *princeps* had merely settled for fresh honours, from 7BC onwards Augustus actively sought greater control over the minds of Roman both collectively and individually. This he achieved in great measure through his new public image as Rome's re-founder. Already, his title and name 'Augustus', which he had held since 27BC, had implied that he was a new Romulus. But, after the fire of 7BC, Augustus actually set about fulfilling that name's symbolism on a monumental scale never before witnessed even in Rome.

2.8 The Fire of 7BC: Augustus' Reconfiguration of the City of Rome and the Function of the Augustan Forum

As under the Republic, throughout Augustus' principate demolition and rebuilding were the main means of fire-control in Rome.²⁹⁹ However, Augustus was different to all other landlords in that in addition to demolition and rebuilding, he also took preventative measures to counter the occurrence of fires in Rome. This is highlighted by Augustus' external responses to the fire of 7BC. This fire began near the Roman Forum, and burned down many of public buildings surrounding that entire space. Initially lit by desperate Romans in debt who calculated that if their places of work around the Forum were destroyed they might be awarded compensation, the destruction caused by this particular fire presented Augustus the

²⁹⁷ Suet. *Aug.* 29; Dio. 56. 27; C. F. Giuliani, P. Verduchi, 'Basilica Iulia', in *LTUR*, 1 (1993), 177-179; Alison E. Cooley, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, 194.

²⁹⁸ Dio. 54. 29-30.

²⁹⁹ Gustav Hermansen, *Ostia*, 215.

perfect opportunity to reorder the entire city centre, through demolition and then rebuilding on a vast scale while putting into place new fire-control measures to preserve his new architectural creations there.³⁰⁰ In fact, Augustus' fire-control reforms, and his monumental projects built over those areas around the Roman Forum damaged by fire - most notably the new Augustan Forum – synthesise as the single greatest external response to a natural disaster in Rome under Augustus.

2.8.1 *Augustus' Organisational Reforms of the vici in Rome*

Immediately after the extinguishment of the 7BC fire, Augustus divided the city into 265 neighbourhoods, called *vici*. Our main source for this number is Pliny the Elder, however it should be noted that Pliny was writing under Vespasian, after most of Rome's neighbourhoods had been rebuilt and reorganised by Nero following the AD64 fire.³⁰¹ In any event, these *vici* synthesised fourteen regions under Augustus' reforms, and oversight of them thereupon came under the commission of senatorial magistrates - either an aedile, a tribune, or a praetor, chosen annually by lot, with bureaucratic bodies and workforces serving under themselves sourced from all levels of Roman society.³⁰² In each of these neighbourhoods, Augustus had fire stations built, and recruited daytime fire-fighters to serve at every one of them. Thus, herein we observe Augustus acting in response to the fire of 7BC in the same manner as he had done in after the flood of 27BC, with the commissioning officials with workforces serving them, with the responsibility for the prevention and management of future natural disasters. Moreover, just as in 27BC, so too in 7BC: these officials were answerable to Augustus alone, and membership to these bureaucracies and workforces, as well as that of the daytime fire-fighter corps, were opened up to those of non-senatorial rank, thereby allowing Augustus to tap into wider talent reserves and at the same time promote his position in Rome through more levels of Roman society.³⁰³

However, fire-control measures of 7BC fire enabled the *princeps* to do more than fight fires – they also instigated Augustus' long-held ambition to recreate Rome in his own political image.³⁰⁴ Already, by 27BC there had been talk among senators of bestowing upon the young Octavian the title 'Romulus' and ever since then he continually styled himself as Rome's re-founder, albeit under the title 'Augustus', and thereby deliberately aligning 'every level of society', to paraphrase Lott, 'and every place in the city behind his rule'.³⁰⁵ But, in 7BC, Augustus went much further, aligning the plebeian population of Rome to his regime through the *vici*. In each, localised ceremonies reformed by Augustus himself portray Augustus as their main focus and sole patron. He renamed the crossroad *Lares Compitales* as the *Lares Augusti*, and throughout every *vici* new buildings and monuments pointed to the blessings of the present-age under Augustus, a phenomenon Favro neatly describes as

³⁰⁰ Dio. 55. 8.

³⁰¹ Pl. *NH.* 3. 66-67; J. Bert Lott, 'Regions and Neighbourhoods', in Paul Erdkamp (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*, 179-180.

³⁰² J. Bert Lott, 'Regions and Neighbourhoods', 173-174.

³⁰³ Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Augustan Rome*, 45.

³⁰⁴ J. Bert Lott, 'Regions and Neighbourhoods', 171.

³⁰⁵ Suet. *Aug.* 7; Dio. 53. 16. 7-8; J. Bert Lott, *The Neighborhoods of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 98.

‘dynastic imprinting’.³⁰⁶ Among the many ceremonial reforms Augustus implemented to advertise his authority, was concerning the cult of Diana, whose temple was situated on the Aventine Hill. The plebeian community that lived there had celebrated rites sacred to Diana in her temple on the Aventine for centuries. Augustus took charge of the cult, and promoted Diana’s rites throughout all of the new Augustan *vici* in Rome, dedicating new statues to her in each one – and with every statue the epithet ‘Augusta’ was inscribed, connecting Augustus more intimately with the plebs’ beloved Diana.³⁰⁷ But that was not the only cult Augustus reformed in 7BC. He also had repaired and rededicated the temple of Hercules Musarum in the Circus Flaminius – once again, very popular among the plebs - around which he installed gardens and parks for public use.³⁰⁸ Finally, Augustus made open parts of his own residence for public use, and had built a new public hearth there.³⁰⁹ Thus, by all these means, Augustus established his presence in plebeian hearts and minds through those religious cults dearest to them, and all as part of his concerted and deliberate overarching response to the 7BC fire. As Taylor has so neatly put it, by all his reforms in 7BC, and especially by placing his image in the religious focal-point in the centre of every *vici*, and by making his own house the ‘public domain’, Augustus succeeded in ‘making his private household’ worship a living part of ‘the official cults of the Roman state’.³¹⁰

As to why Augustus performed to the plebs thus becomes abundantly clear when one considers Augustus’ and the plebs’ political roles in Rome: plebeians had the constitutional right to vote in Rome, and Augustus as *princeps* held *tribunicia potestas* – a power maintained by the plebeians. Thus, he deliberately sought, to paraphrase Mollenkopf, to ‘keep potential sources of electoral challenge fragmented or demobilised’ amongst them.³¹¹ Mollenkopf originally intended this remark to apply to every state that holds elections, however Lott endorses it as especially applicable to Augustan Rome, where the *princeps* needed to develop a ‘grassroots base of legitimacy’ among the plebs together with ‘support from elite interests.’³¹² Therefore, by performing to his plebeian audience thus, Augustus progressively undercut their power to undermine and oppose his regime. These methods worked brilliantly. Under Augustus’ bureaucratisation of Rome, active ‘politicking’ among the plebs gradually disappeared, and in its place there would emerge a new public order constituted and characterised by loyalty to the emperor alone.³¹³

2.8.2 The Augustan Forum and the Fire-Screen Wall

In addition to these organisational reforms, Augustus also responded to the 7BC fire with a monumental vision. After every major fire in Rome, parts of the city had to be rebuilt from

³⁰⁶ Diana G. Favro, *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 128- 133; J. Bert Lott, *The Neighborhoods of Augustan Rome*, 101.

³⁰⁷ Festus 460 L; Paulus 467 L; J. Bert Lott, *The Neighborhoods of Augustan Rome*, 68.

³⁰⁸ J. Bert Lott, *The Neighborhoods of Augustan Rome*, 69.

³⁰⁹ J. Bert Lott, *The Neighborhoods of Augustan Rome*, 86.

³¹⁰ Lily Ross Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor* (American Philological Association, 1931), 184.

³¹¹ John H. Mollenkopf, *A Phoenix in the Ashes: The Rise and Fall of the Koch Coalition in New York City Politics* (Princeton University Press, 1992), 227.

³¹² J. Bert Lott, *The Neighborhoods of Augustan Rome*, 117.

³¹³ J. Bert Lott, *The Neighborhoods of Augustan Rome*, 127.

the ground up. In the aftermath of the 7BC fire, this was no different. But one factor that separated the civic response to the 7BC from all others was the scale vast with which Augustus rebuilt – vaster than Rome had ever seen as part of rebuilding following any fire. From 7BC onwards, Augustus employed Roman engineers and labourers to rebuild, and indeed ‘reinvent’ parts of the city, as Favro describes this process, precisely in the form of the Augustan Forum and other areas around the Roman Forum. These projects would be completed in 2BC. Through them, the talents of Rome’s engineers were put on public display to all in Rome; and the new Rome symbolised by the new Forum became an amalgamation of collective objects of great Roman pride.³¹⁴

The Augustan Forum celebrated all things Augustus. At the centre of the Forum, and indeed dominating it, stood the Temple of Mars Ultor, which hosted the standards lost to Parthia by Crassus and Antony but recovered by Augustus in 20BC.³¹⁵ As Augustus himself recorded in his *Res Gestae*:

On private ground I built from plunder the temple of Mars Ultor and the Augustan forum.³¹⁶

In its two porticos and exedrae which ran alongside this temple stood numerous statues of great Romans of the city’s past, each adorned with their own *elogia*,³¹⁷ together with a repository of mementos of Rome’s past and other artistic works.³¹⁸ Although in private rooms of his Palatine residence Augustus often experimented with different forms of art, and though in Room 15, there are combinations of Egyptianised motifs, miniature friezes, and vegetal ornaments,³¹⁹ the artistic works and statues of the Augustan Forum were crafted in revered classical Greco-Roman style, thus countering the Easternised motifs of what was once Antony’s Alexandria, and thereby endowing the Forum with an ethical, as well as an aesthetic, collective political symbolism.³²⁰ This symbolism, as conveyed in the Forum, overtly communicated to all onlookers that a sedate, conservative and modest Rome, had arrived and was only to be found under their ruler Augustus;³²¹ and also that a new classical, and conservative, golden era under Augustus had at last dawned in Rome.³²² These themes were met with public applause, and even Vitruvius wrote that Augustus’ new classical style ought to be the only permissible form of architecture to appear in Rome.³²³ However, it was Augustus himself, and not these works of art, that would remain be the true focus of this new

³¹⁴ Diane Favro, ‘Making Rome’, 243.

³¹⁵ *RG.* 29; Dio. 54. 8. 3.

³¹⁶ *RG.* 21.

³¹⁷ T. J. Luce, ‘Livy, Augustus, and the Forum Augustum’, in Kurt A. Raafaub, Mark Toher (eds.) *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate* (University of California Press, 1990), 123.

³¹⁸ Pl. *NH.* 35. 27, 93-94; P. Zanker, *Forum Augustum: das Bildprogramm* (Tübingen, 1968), 7-14, 23-24; M. C. J. Putnam, *Artifices of Eternity: Horace’s Fourth Book of Odes* (Ithaca, N. Y., 1986), 332-335.

³¹⁹ John R. Clarke, ‘Augustan Domestic Interiors: Propaganda or Fashion?’, in Karl Galinsky (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, 271.

³²⁰ Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 245; Diane Favro, ‘Making Rome’, 241, 245.

³²¹ Diane Favro, ‘Making Rome’, 248.

³²² Alessandro Barchiesi, ‘Learned Eyes’, 292-295, 301.

³²³ Vit. 7. 5. 3-4; John R. Clarke, ‘Augustan Domestic Interiors’, 268.

Forum. On the architrave of the Temple of Mars Ultor was emblazoned the name of 'Augustus' in large writing;³²⁴ and in the centre of the Forum was a large statue of Augustus in triumphal dress driving a quadriga, at the base of which was inscribed 'PATER PATRIAE'.³²⁵

Another important part of Augustus' new Forum was its rear firescreen-wall. But this wall served as a greater purpose than just screening-off fires from the Forum. Thanks to it, the space within the Augustan Forum served as an introverted device that endorsed and promoted within the minds of viewers the political entitlements and non-entitlements of Roman society as a whole; thus turning the Augustan Forum, to quote Wallace-Hadrill, into an edifice of prejudiced introspection.³²⁶ Yet, such was the *princeps*' all-pervasiveness that even at the centre of that introspection invariably stood Augustus. There, there were statues and elegies of the great Romans of the past, but each chosen by Augustus, together with those statues of the gods - but the largest of all these statues, and the one that in the centre of the Augustan Forum was that of Augustus himself. Therefore, this Forum served a comparative function highlighting Augustus' achievements over and above those of other great Romans and even the gods themselves. Thus, whereas in Republican times senators and other Romans sought to match or outshine their linear ancestors, under Augustus, Luce finds, the emperor would lay claim through the physical edifice of his own Forum, that he and he alone above all other Romans had 'matched or surpassed the deeds of all great men of Roman history'.³²⁷

Thus, although this wall's ostensible purpose was to protect the Forum from the fire hazards of the combustible slums behind it, it also served a permanent theatrical backdrop to the constant and relentless playing out of politics in the Augustan Forum, serving as it did as centre-stage for the city's administrative associations - with the emperor centre-stage, and the poor going about their business invisibly behind the scenes.³²⁸ Indeed, it is often said by modern historians that the Augustan Forum and the entire setting of the city of Rome served as one great monumental backdrop for Augustus' political exhibitionism. As for precisely what audience Augustus was playing to in Rome, the literary sources and the art and architecture of Rome suggests it was all humanity. To Ovid, it seemed as if the whole world was converging into Rome:

The extent of the Roman city and the world are the same.³²⁹

Seneca would also similarly recall of the influx of foreigners to Rome in the Augustan period:

The majority of them left their birthplace in towns and colonies and from the whole world they have flooded together.³³⁰

³²⁴ Ov. *Fast.* 5. 567-568; T. J. Luce, 'Livy, Augustus, and the Forum Augustum', 125.

³²⁵ RG. 35; T. J. Luce, 'Livy, Augustus, and the Forum Augustum', 125.

³²⁶ Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Augustan Rome*, 58.

³²⁷ T. J. Luce, 'Livy, Augustus, and the Forum Augustum', 125-129, 137-138.

³²⁸ Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Augustan Rome*, 58; Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 208.

³²⁹ Ov. *Fast.* 2. 684.

³³⁰ Sen. *Tranquillitate Animi*, 2.

Furthermore, Rome's cosmopolitanism was intended by its imperial rulers to remain as such indefinitely. Recalling Ovid's impressions, Aelius Aristides would later reflect in the second century:

What another city is to its own boundaries and territory, this city is to its own boundaries and territory of the entire civilised world.³³¹

Thus, through its engineering and architecture, Augustus' new Forum attempted to speak to all peoples with their multiplicities of cultural and ideological languages, denoting the benefits of a semblance of harmony and tolerance that could be achieved among them only under Augustus' rule, thereby promoting the Augustan ideal of cultural proximity between all of the inhabitants in Rome under the emperor's institutionalised power.³³² Therefore, life in Rome, as Wallace-Hadrill has noted, was 'remarkably inclusive', but also strictly 'hierarchical',³³³ and these observations were reflected in the Forum's architecture, which spoke of the way that things were done in the permanently stratified Roman society, and also the permeability of Rome's universal citizenship in a city founded no less by the migrant Romulus. Thus, to paraphrase Wallace-Hadrill under Augustus, Rome was 'a city of immigrants and vagrants, not of autochthonous natives'.³³⁴

This metaphor of universal performance crystallised in Augustus' architectural programme did not go unnoticed among those living in Rome at the time either. Strabo himself considered the Augustus' Rome as one vast political stage that presented:

...to the eye the appearance of a stage-painting, offering a spectacle one can hardly draw away from.³³⁵

Thus the *princeps* wished to be visibly seen responding to the threat of fire in 7BC, in the hope of bringing a sense of greater social and cross-cultural cohesion and collaboration in Rome. But, by employing multicultural symbolisms to establish Rome's own new and renewed culture, Augustus established Rome's universality in the process, and thus to most among Rome's one million inhabitants, to quote Galinsky, 'Roman culture became a world culture'.³³⁶ Therefore, Augustus' architects – so devoted as they were to the *princeps*³³⁷ – purposefully took into account the assortments of the culturally-based sensitivities of Rome's citizens and subjects, and used them to craft metonymic identifiers in Rome that could be understood as symbols of Roman solidarity under Augustus by as many viewers as possible.³³⁸ Thereby, the emperor turned his political and social agenda into art,³³⁹ which, in its turn, he used to indoctrinate as many people as possible into embracing his political and

³³¹ Ael. Ar., *Orat.* 26. 61.

³³² Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, 28.

³³³ Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, 148, 454.

³³⁴ Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, 209, 445, 452.

³³⁵ Strabo, 5. 3. 8; Richard Beacham, 'The Emperor as Impresario: Producing the Pageantry of Power', in Karl Galinsky (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, 151.

³³⁶ Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 174.

³³⁷ Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 101.

³³⁸ Diane Favro, 'The IconiCITY of Ancient Rome', 20-21, 35.

³³⁹ Diana E. E. Kleiner, 'Semblance and Storytelling in Augustan Rome', in Karl Galinsky (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, 198.

social agenda of establishing an imperial Rome under the Augustan regime even further, and all this in the very face of nature's very forces displayed by the fire of 7BC, which consequently served to only bring the *princeps* even greater appreciation and applause, giving Romans a collective solidarity despite the duress from fire in that city.³⁴⁰

Together with the form and artistry of the Augustan Forum, we must also consider its function when seeking to comprehend its role as a response to the 7BC fire. According to Dio, Augustus and the Senate determined prior to 2BC that upon its completion, the Augustan Forum would serve a number of important civic roles. Spoils of war would be presented there, the awarding of military triumphs would be announced there, returning generals would dedicate their sceptres and crowns in the Temple of Mars Ultor there, equestrians hold festivals there, new recruits to Rome's legions be presented there, and it would also serve as the symbolic marshalling area and starting point for all future Roman military campaigns.³⁴¹ In short, the Forum served, through its physical permanency and its reaffirmation of power through repeated use, to instil national pride in its onlookers and participants alike, entirely within an Augustan framework and context. Thus, by its fixed symbolism and functionality, the Forum served as a space that affirmed Augustus' superiority to natural disasters to all eyes, while celebrating Rome's eternal ability to rebuild, even after the worst that nature could throw, thus continually reaffirming the triumph of Roma over the world, and the *urbis* over the *orbis*.³⁴² In so doing, Augustus effectively triumphed as a victorious general over the natural world as his vanquished enemy, in manifest contradistinction to the epicurean pantheism of Lucretius from years gone by. Or so Augustus might have wished Romans to believe. But, in fact, natural disasters would continue to hamper Rome throughout the remainder of Augustus' principate time and again, and not only were there floods in AD5 and AD12, but there were also more major fires in AD4 and in AD6. However, if the Pater Patriae could not permanently eradicate natural disasters from Rome nor the Fatherland itself, through permanent, physical, architectural and artistic symbols embedded in the Forum, and that Forum's ongoing use, Augustus could at least redefine Roman identity under himself using his lexicon of architectural, artistic, and nationalistic ceremony, influencing how Romans might at least perceive and respond to the natural world, with its associated natural disasters in the city of Rome.³⁴³

However, one must be careful not to project the assumption that all of Augustus' audiences were benign, uniformly passive, onlookers. Although Cicero had warned his Roman audiences against the trap of falling victim to art's seductiveness,³⁴⁴ the fact is that every person living in Rome, whether patrician or plebeian, was a participant in city life and lived as both as audience as well as actor.³⁴⁵ Rome's inhabitants were not simply programmed

³⁴⁰ Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 112, 114.

³⁴¹ Dio. 55. 10.

³⁴² Ov. *Fast.* 2. 684; Diane Favro, 'Making Rome', 234-235.

³⁴³ Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 195; Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 198-202; R. Hannah, 'The Temple of Mars Ultor and 12 May', in *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts Roemische Abteilung*, 104 (1997), 527-535.

³⁴⁴ Cic. *Att.* V. 38. 2; Alessandro Barchiesi, 'Learned Eyes: Poets, Viewers, Image Makers', in Karl Galinsky (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, 291.

³⁴⁵ Diane Favro, 'The City Is a Living Thing: The Performative Role of an Urban Site in Ancient Rome, the

and conditioned by stimuli even in a city so well designed by Augustus; rather, they were each discerning interpreters of stimuli and were willing participants in their public display too, bringing to bear their own social and cultural ideas to the city's performance.³⁴⁶ Therefore, whilst Augustus' exhibitionism might have bordered on the theatrical, in Rome both spectators and patrons were nonetheless committed to 'express, comment upon, and redefine' that drama, as Beacham aptly puts it.³⁴⁷ Augustus' power might have rested upon Rome's legions and political structures. But his legitimacy as ruler in Rome rested on the 'perceptions and beliefs of men' - to quote Crook, and this principle also applied especially after the 7BC fire.³⁴⁸

Most certainly, after the fire of 7BC, Augustus deliberately and purposefully sought to win over these perceptions, from all levels of Roman society, to his own side. Indeed, the Augustan Forum and most of Augustus' other public building projects were conspicuously located in the lowest areas of Rome, near its poorer neighbourhoods. Thus, Augustus was clearly interested in continuing to appease plebeian sentiment after 7BC, and promote among them a multiplicity of harmonious perceptions and beliefs through metonyms that continually pointed to Augustus' greatness.³⁴⁹ This message of political harmony, expressed through the Augustan Forum and other Augustan buildings from 7BC onwards, had a most profound effect upon the Roman psyche - for good reason Quintilian would make the astute observation, that besides simple oratorical verbalisations:

...many other things have the power of persuasion.³⁵⁰

Indeed, through the sheer clarity of Augustus' public message of social harmony under his leadership, so embedded in his architectural projects of 7BC, Augustus became, to quote George Kennedy, 'the greatest rhetorician of antiquity'.³⁵¹

So long as Augustus ensured his civic protection, and his art and architecture maintained a sedated sense of cultural stability, most Romans were content to play their expected parts in the performance that the city of Rome generally stood for, with the fire-screen wall as their backdrop.³⁵² Thus, the seductiveness of art that Cicero had warned Romans against was successfully harnessed by Augustus as a useful means of cultural conditioning along Roman power-structures.³⁵³ The fire-screen wall was built to protect the Forum from fire to be sure, but it was also designed to insulate the centre of Roman power from the class inequalities and struggles just outside it that the symbolic nature of the Forum sought only to

Vallis Murcia', in *Studies in the History of Art*, 56, Symposium Papers 34: The Art of Ancient Spectacle, 205- 206.

³⁴⁶ Diane Favro, 'The City Is a Living Thing', 206.

³⁴⁷ Richard Beacham, 'The Emperor as Impresario', 161.

³⁴⁸ J. A. Crook, 'Augustus: Power, Authority, Achievement', in *CAH* (2nd Ed.), 117.

³⁴⁹ Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 114.

³⁵⁰ Quint. 2. 15. 6-9; Kathleen S. Lamp, "'A City of Brick'", 172-180.

³⁵¹ George Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World* (Princeton, 1972), 378, 382.

³⁵² For more on the city and public performance, see Sally Moore and Barbara Myerhoff, 'Introduction: Secular Ritual: Forms and Meanings', in Sally Moore and Barbara Myerhoff (eds.) *Secular Ritual* (Assen, 1977) 17; Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York, 1983) 58; Carol Dougherty, *The Poetics of Colonization: From City to Text in Archaic Greece* (New York, 1993) 6; Diane Favro, 'The City Is a Living thing', 204-219, especially page 214.

³⁵³ Alessandro Barchiesi, 'Learned Eyes', 291-292.

perpetuate.³⁵⁴

2.8.3 Summary

Augustus' external response to fires in Rome took the forms of fire prevention, and fire management, on a monumental scale for the express purposes to address:

- 1) The need to protect Rome's inhabitants from danger,
- 2) Opportunity to impress and absorb visitors and newcomers coming into Rome, and Display the Roman social hierarchy and political disequilibrium with him at the very top as renewing and beneficial to all. Inequality was everywhere to be seen throughout Rome; however, through extensive public works and the erection of the fire-screen wall Augustus was able to repeatedly justify them on a public stage and a monumental scale.

Taken together, Augustus' reorganisation of Rome's *vici*, and his creation of the monumental Augustan Forum, together constitute the single, greatest civic external response to a fire ever enacted by Augustus. The building of the Augustan Forum was the largest post-natural disaster monument of its kind since Pompey had had the Bouleuterion in Antioch rebuilt in 65BC. Indeed, it would remain the single greatest architectural and civic response to a specific natural disasters in Rome until building began on the *Domus Aureus* by Nero in AD64, and stands out as the most carefully and thoughtfully crafted monumental response to a single natural disaster anywhere in the Roman Empire by Augustus himself.

Even though Augustus could never entirely vouchsafe a homogenously positive reaction to his great architectural achievements after the fire of 7BC, he could, and did, employ a multiplicity of classical styles, temple designs, statuary, and art, in an attempt at least to make his presence in Rome appealing to as many Romans and foreigners as possible. Given the longevity of Rome's multiculturalism, Augustus' vision for social cohesion in Rome following the 7BC fire was, to a large degree, a resounding success. However, there were segments of Roman society who became disillusioned with Augustus' bold architectural and nationalistic statements, made as they were after the 7BC fire, when in AD5, and again in AD6 sections of Rome planned an uprising. However, it is revealing as to the overall success of Augustus' self-promotion clothed in nationalistic pride that these uprisings came to a halt before they would ever have the chance to hatch.

The majority of Roman society's lower classes, despite the fire hazards in their deplorable living conditions, remaining largely peacefully in Rome – an external response that belies an internal approval of Augustus' responses to fire as well as the Augustan regime as well, so well promoted by the Augustan Forum. Indeed, so externally happy were many sections of Rome's one million inhabitants, drawn from right across the Roman world that Rome's population continued to grow exponentially under Augustus. However, as we shall explore below, that external happiness could be a cover for a deeper, sense of internal misgivings towards the emperor and life in Rome. Rome may have been the centre of the

³⁵⁴ Diane Favro, 'Making Rome', 251.

empire, but it did not always follow that it was the safest place to live, especially during and after natural disasters there, including the fires of AD4 and AD6, as we shall observe below.

2.9 The AD4 and AD6 Fires of Rome

By the time of the AD4 fire, the *princeps* exhibited no further desire for added constitutional powers at all. Although this fire destroyed Augustus' own residence on the Palatine, there is no mention in the ancient sources that the emperor adopted any new powers of the likes he accrued so many times after natural disasters prior to this, whatsoever.

However, he did manage to enhance his own standing in Rome, nonetheless. Dio states that Augustus rebuilt his palace on a grander, more palatial scale. This new building alone would have impressed. But more was to come. Augustus rebuilt this new palace entirely out of his own funds – a popular move in itself. However, without resting on these laurels, when the building of this new palace was complete, Augustus even decreed parts of it public spaces.³⁵⁵ Clearly, a significant change in attitude had occurred in Augustus – so significant that this had entirely altered his outward, external responses to fire, between the years of 7BC and AD4. And yet, Augustus still felt it incumbent upon him to endear himself to the Roman public as always. We do not have to look far for the precise turning point between 7BC and AD4. In 2BC, the year in which Augustus dedicated his new Forum, Augustus received the title of *pater patriae*, bestowed on him not only by the Senate, but also the *equites* and people of Rome; and with this, the *princeps* had marked as the crescendo of his entire political career in his *Res Gestae*.³⁵⁶ Thus, Augustus needed no further political honours. He had reached the very apex of Roman politics. But even still, now that he was father of the population of Rome, the Roman public still held expectations that Augustus had to meet, the main one being 'the provision of exemplary assistance in disaster situations', as Mischa Meier phrases it, and this lay behind the alterations in the nature of Augustus' responses to fires in Rome between 7BC and AD4.³⁵⁷

However, Augustus' generosity in AD4 should not be put solely down to new political roles. For, whilst it was one thing for Augustus to relish in his new Augustan Forum and its adjoining buildings and spaces thanks to the fire of 7BC, it was quite another to see his new buildings damaged by future fires. Furthermore, Publius Rufus' plebeian uprising was still in the process of fomentation. Arguably, the slowness of this uprising in gaining traction and taking root among the plebeian classes was due to the resounding success of Augustus' monumental forms of coalescence through the metonymic signs in the Augustan Forum, as well as their repeated reiteration through the Forum's ongoing use. But, after one year, Publius Rufus' uprising had at last gained some pace. In AD6 Augustus' hand was forced, and he now had to at least try to address the problem of fire itself. Now that he was *pater patriae*, and now also that he was facing an uprising, Augustus needed to be seen to act on all of

³⁵⁵ Dio. 55. 12.

³⁵⁶ *RG*. 35.

³⁵⁷ Mischa Meier, 'Roman Emperors and 'Natural Disasters' in the First Century A.D.' in Andrea Janku, Gerrit J. Schenk, Franz Mauelshagen (eds.) *Historical Disasters in Context: Science, Religion and Politics* (Routledge, 2012), 16. See also M. Strothmann, *Augustus – Vater der res publica* (Stuttgart, 2000), 73-78.

Rome's behalf in the spirit of *pater patriae*. He had already enfranchised Rome gradually under his own image and regime as one vast imperial bureaucracy – for as we have seen, in 27BC he appointed boards to supervise Tiber flow, and in 7BC he had reformed the *vici* of Rome and established day-time fire-fighting stations in each. But now, in AD6, Dio states, immediately after the fire of AD6, Augustus added to the daytime fire-brigade that he introduced in 7BC, establishing a nocturnal fire-brigade:

Augustus recruited a corps of freedmen consisting of seven divisions to bring help on such occasions, and appointed a knight to command them.³⁵⁸

This corps, comprising of seven divisions, was called by Augustus the Cohortes Vigiles, or Night Watch. It is unclear whether these were each comprised of 500 or 1,000 men. In any event, what is certain is that their main role was to act as firemen at night, sleeping through day, and patrolling the streets of the city of Rome after dark, with each division patrolling two of the fourteen city regions, being based at a barrack house within each.³⁵⁹ Each of these barracks was stored with bronze and leather buckets, axes, and ladders, to equip each division to fight fires should buildings catch alight at night in those city regions.³⁶⁰ According to Dio, the Cohortes Vigiles was initially an experiment trialled by Augustus to see if these might prove effective for fire management in Rome, if at all. But such was their immediate and prolonged success that Dio states Augustus kept them in service; and they would remain in service down to Dio's own day.³⁶¹

The success of the Cohortes Vigiles is to be seen in the writings of the ancient historians in the wake of the AD6 fire – or rather, in what is not seen in their writings – for, from that point on there is no longer any mention of loss of life during night fires throughout Rome in them, even though they often recorded instances of loss of life from other natural disasters throughout the empire. Property was a different story however. For, whilst the new cohorts could warn residents, and help them to evacuate *insulae* and other buildings in the event of fire, they were mostly ineffectual in soundly putting these fires out completely.³⁶² Still, these Cohortes were not entirely without fire-fighting capabilities. For, although they had no fire hoses or water pumps, Agrippa had already supplied Rome well enough with fresh water carried to the city by monumental aqueducts to supply the Cohortes with ample reserves of water to fight fires throughout the whole city. These aqueducts, as we have seen, were maintained under Augustus by a 240-strong crew of slaves established by Agrippa himself in 33BC, and were overseen by a permanent a board of appointees, established by Augustus in 27BC to maintain the water system in Rome. As a result, Agrippa's and Augustus' reforms of 33BC and 27BC respectively, provided reliable sources of fresh water for the Cohortes to draw from at water basins and reservoirs all over Rome, to fight fires all around the city, even

³⁵⁸ Dio. 55. 26. See also Suet. *Aug.* 30.

³⁵⁹ P. K. Baillie Reynolds, *The Vigiles of Imperial Rome*, 22-25; R. Sablayrolles, *Les cohorts de vigils*, 249-252; W. Eck, 'Auf der Suche nach Personen und Persönlichkeiten: Cursus honorum und Biographie', in *Biographie und Prosopographie: Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von A. R. Birley* (Vörsing: Stuttgart, 2005), 53-56; Werner Eck, 'The Administrative Reforms of Augustus', 242.

³⁶⁰ Stephen Dando-Collins, *The Great Fire of Rome*, 57.

³⁶¹ Dio. 55. 26.

³⁶² Stephen Dando-Collins, *The Great Fire of Rome*, 58.

all at once, from AD6 onwards.³⁶³ In other words, what Agrippa and Augustus had begun in 33BC still had much to give to the inhabitants of Rome even after thirty-nine years and beyond. However, without water wagons, hoses, or pumps, the Cohortes were limited in the extreme in their capacities to fight fires. Hence, their primary role was to save lives, not property. In any event, burnt properties continued to be razed, and rebuilt once again by Rome's monetarily opportunistic landlords.³⁶⁴

But as well as fire control, to paraphrase J. Bert Lott, this corps was also established to 'align every level of society and every place in the city with him and his [Augustus] new dynasty' even further.³⁶⁵ As we have already seen in AD4, Augustus no longer felt any need for further constitutional powers. However, after the planned uprisings in AD5 and AD6, Augustus determined that a reaffirmation of his power was sorely required. Thus, although ostensibly a fire-fighting unit, the covert function of the Night Corps was the imposition of Augustus' overarching political order at the micro-level throughout Rome to maintain order and reassert his imperial rule over Rome. In short, the Cohortes Vigiles served Augustus as an intelligence and quasi-policing agency loyal to the emperor alone that undermined Rufus' uprising and all further uprisings that might eventuate. Despite this subtle intrusiveness into the lives of Romans, the new Cohortes proved extremely useful in the restoration of civil accord and political harmony in Rome. Thanks in part to this Night Corps, the plebeian uprising that had been fomenting over the last twelve months was finally checked, and we hear no more of Publius Rufus, who may have even been assassinated by the Night Corps itself while acting under Augustus' orders. Whatever the truth of Rufus' end, it is abundantly clear that Augustus had successfully turned yet another natural disaster to his own political advantage, and despite his advancing age, he showed the world that he still had the ability to at once restore order to the city of Rome and simultaneously re-establish his own position there once again. Nearing death, Augustus may have hoped that the legacy of this display would continue under his chosen successor, Tiberius. Time and again it would be shown that it would indeed continue under him, but Tiberius would respond to natural disasters in Rome somewhat differently to Augustus, as he progressively showed that he was a different kind of ruler and political animal to his more illustrious imperial predecessor.³⁶⁶

2.9.1 Summary

The story of Augustus' tackling of the problem of fire in Rome proved to be a long, gradual process, and one that only saw practicable measures being taken by the *princeps* piecemeal. Eventually, once he found the accruelement of further honours, and self-promotion, redundant after being bestowed the title *pater patriae* in 2BC, Augustus' external responses to the fire of AD4 clearly altered. However, in AD6 Augustus had to realise that as an emperor trying to establish a ruling dynasty over Rome he would never be able discontinue affirming his own political power there. But, rather than accruing honours as he did in the

³⁶³ Stephen Dando-Collins, *The Great Fire of Rome*, 57.

³⁶⁴ Stephen Dando-Collins, *The Great Fire of Rome*, 57-58.

³⁶⁵ J. Bert Lott, 'Regions and Neighbourhoods', in Paul Erdkamp (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*, 171.

³⁶⁶ Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 277.

past, Augustus turned to the welfare of Rome's inhabitants themselves, and met with much more success. He established a Night Watch fire brigade, and as testimony to its successes, it provided a model that would last for centuries. Of course, the Night Watch Cohortes maintained public order as Augustus wished; however, the lesson of the success of this most practical reform was not lost on Augustus' successor, for after Augustus' death, Tiberius' own responses to natural disasters - not only in Rome but throughout the empire - would also exhibit clear practical aspects, and for the duration of his entire principate, as well.

2.10 Fire: Conclusions

The dangers of fire in Rome were very real. Throughout the ancient written and archaeological evidence examined in this chapter, one detects among the population in Rome: a genuine attitude of fear of fire, but also a predominating hope in Augustan propaganda that promised to protect Rome and its people from further harm in the spirit of the new and increased sense of Roman patriotism which culturally endeared more and more Romans under their figurehead, Augustus. With these in mind, one may conclude that, although in 16BC, 14BC, and 12BC, Augustus merely accepted powers and honours bestowed upon him by the Senate, acting on the advice of Rome's priesthods, much to the applause of the plebeians, by 7BC Augustus had decided to exert greater overarching control over the very thoughts and feelings of the inhabitants of Rome.

Through the creation of the Augustan Forum and the erection of its fire-screen wall, Augustus proved that he was performing on a monumental scale to a universal audience with Rome as his centre-stage, and the world could not but help but keep its eyes upon his next act. Augustus' public architecture and art were seen by many Romans as a showcase of Roman strength and the city's ability to rebuild after any natural disaster there in astonishing fashion. Through its repeated use, this architecture came to life, speaking to onlookers on Augustus' greatness, and Rome's resilience even in the face of fire itself.

Thus, immediately after the 7BC fire, Augustus' engineers, artists, and labourers were able to showcase Rome's power as an imperial city that prefigured Nero's own redesign and rebuilding of Rome in AD64. Indeed, to paraphrase Vitruvius, the very nature of Augustus' city planning entailed that the 'majesty of the empire was expressed through the eminent dignity of Rome's buildings'.³⁶⁷ Rome's redesign, therefore, was not only practical, it was also a source of control and power on a more monumental scale than the cityscape of Rome had ever known before.

In Augustus' re-foundation of the *vici* and the very nature of Rome, as advertised in the construction and repeated use of the Augustan Forum, Roman culture became a world culture, and that in turn, encouraged the world to assimilate to Roman dominance. Rebellions still took place on the frontiers, but inside those frontiers the city of Rome indelibly held sway, and Augustus ultimately held sway over the city of Rome. Through the roles played by architecture staged by his fire-screen wall, Augustus succeeded in turning the destruction of a major fire in Rome into an opportunity for greater, monumental power by redesigning

³⁶⁷ Vitr. Preface.

and rebuilding Rome itself, thus providing the main precedent for Nero's re-foundation and recreation of Rome in AD64.

But Augustus would set other precedents for Rome's future beyond simply rebuilding projects. He established day-time fire-fighting stations, and later the Cohortes Vigiles, which proved so extremely successful in preserving Roman life. Indeed, Tiberius saw the expediency that practicable external responses to natural disasters such as these entail, and implemented many similarly practical responses himself in the aftermath of natural disasters but more consistently, and not just in Rome, but also throughout the entire empire.

Thus, we may find that throughout Augustus' principate, there were four sequential stages of external responses to fire by the *princeps* that feature most heavily:

- 1) Firstly, up until after the 12BC fire Augustus was keen to exploit fires in Rome to gain political and religious honours,
- 2) Secondly, from the 7BC fire, the *princeps* sought to redesign and reconstruct Rome and Roman thinking with him at the centre of both,
- 3) Thirdly, from 2BC onwards, Augustus sought to benefit the people of Rome both during and after fire as was demonstrated after the AD4 fire, and
- 4) Fourthly, From AD6 Augustus returned to a reaffirmation of his total power in Rome – a stark reality, but one he needed to remind agitators in Rome of.

Through these four types of external responses to fire in Rome, we may determine that Augustus' own internal responses to fires in Rome developed over many years from: firstly, one heavily focussed upon a need to cement his position in Rome after Actium; then, a desire to direct and control the cosmopolitan and patriotic ethos of Rome; then thirdly, to a realisation of the importance of ensuring the safety of Romans themselves, irrespective of their rank or ability to repay him for the safety he offered them, and lastly, the final realisation that in order to perpetuate his dynastic ambitions, Augustus realised he had to show determination to retain power in Rome at all costs.

In such ways, Augustus' internal journey reflected the political concerns, limitations and freedoms that emerged immediately after Actium – hence his desire for honours and powers decreed on him by the Senate and people. However, by 7BC the *princeps*' vision for Rome and for himself had broadened, and as his position became secure, Augustus could finally put into practice his vision for Rome through the more subtle arts of visual-rhetoric and mind-control. Thereupon, through architecture rather than armed force, Augustus was able to leave his mark as the new founder of Rome – a role the Senate implied it had granted him in 27BC by its conferring of the name of 'Augustus' in that year. But, having secured sufficient power and authority to establish his position and dynasty, as *pater patriae*, Augustus felt it expedient, and safe enough, to turn to the plight of the inhabitants of Rome themselves, and act on their behalf, without any further recourse for added reward. What is admirable in the case of Augustus in this regard, is that he would do this knowing fully that they could offer him no further honours or powers in return – a sign that Augustus felt he had reached a zenith in his power from 2BC-AD4, and that he finally felt that his imperial position, and his

dynasty, were now entirely secure. Or so he might have thought. In fact, there was still work to be done, as the planned uprisings of AD5 and AD6 clearly demonstrate. However, as a final exercise of Augustus' genius, he acknowledged that he still needed to continually re-establish his power over Rome, and if his subjects had no more honours left to give him, he would demand of them their increased allegiance – an allegiance monitored, and indeed enforced, by the Cohortes Vigiles. This allegiance was given, and Augustus would continue to receive it right up to his very death when, in AD14, Augustus' vision for the transition of empire from Augustus to Tiberius was realised and carried out without any large-scale opposition in the city of Augustus' now largely and mostly pacified Rome. The winner of civil war had at last won the peace. Augustus had at last truly conquered Rome totally and completely, and when Tiberius became emperor, Augustus' wishes that he succeed him were duly honoured and respected by the people of Rome.

CHAPTER THREE: EARTHQUAKES, PLAGUES AND FAMINES, IN AUGUSTAN ROME, ITALY, AND THE EMPIRE

3.1 Earthquakes Throughout the Roman Empire

Unlike the cramped metropolis river-city of Rome, where the ancient sources attest to numerous occasions of fire and flooding around the empire thanks to varying geography and city-scapes those sources attest other commonly occurring natural disasters, namely earthquakes, plagues and famines far more frequently than the empire's capital. In fact, the only earthquake activity recorded in Rome during the whole period is that which occurred in 193BC, described in Chapter One, whereas in the provinces seismic events are recorded taking place on multiple occasions, and fire and flooding never, except when implied to be imagined as taking place during earthquakes, especially in the eastern provinces where our sources focus solely with regard to earth tremors, and to a great extent famine and plague.

Generally speaking, Romans adopted one of several theories concerning precisely how earthquakes occurred: either, 1) they were caused by oceans of water upon which the earth floated, or 2) by fire burning and moving underneath the earth's surface by agency of giants at their work, or 3) by moving currents of air trapped under the earth.³⁶⁸ Just as these theories varied according to different degrees of conviction, so too were Roman responses to earthquakes far from uniform. This lack of uniformity continued well into our period and even beyond - comparative data from Dark Age Italy shows that after earthquakes in certain parts of Italy, many Italians simply moved on after their dwellings collapsed, while in other parts most Italians in the area stayed and rebuilt. In fact, urban areas in northern Dark Age Italy were usually acutely reduced in size or else entirely abandoned after an earthquake, whereas urban centres in the south such as Benevento, Capua, and Salerno, actually experienced population expansion following seismic events. Although safety was always a priority, one's comprehension of safety could and did vary from region to region, as individuals either sought to flee the scene of earthquakes altogether, or else sought to rebuild a stronger dwelling places in order to better resist future earth tremors.³⁶⁹ Such diversity pertaining to just how one ought to respond to earthquakes also existed among the Romans, according to their governing attitudes and theoretical principles.

3.1.1 *Seneca and Earthquakes*

The immediate responses by those living in areas affected by seismic events to earthquakes were often a mixture of acute shock, trauma and despair. During earthquakes in the Julio-Claudian period, those who experienced an earthquake often lost touch with usual thinking and behavioural patterns. Seneca, writing shortly after the Campanian earthquake of AD62, reported:

³⁶⁸ Sen. *NQ.* 6. 5. 1 – 24. 1.

³⁶⁹ V. Fumagalli, E. Guidoboni, 'I terremoti nel paesaggio urbano e rurale nei secoli VI-X', in E. Guidoboni (ed.) *I terremoti prima del mille in Italia e nell'area mediterranea. Storia archeologia sismologia* (Bologna, 1989), 264-279; E. Guidoboni, G. Ferrari, 'The Effects of Earthquakes in Historical Cities: The Peculiarity of the Italian Case', in *Annali Di Geofisica*, 43, 4 (2000), 668, 673.

But when there is public alarm through fall of cities, burying of whole nations, and shaking of earth's foundations, what wonder that minds in the distraction of suffering and terror should have wandered forth bereft of sense? It is no easy matter in the midst of overmastering evils [like earthquakes] not to lose one's reason. So it is, as a rule, the feeblest souls that reach such a pitch of dread as to become unhinged.³⁷⁰

As a direct consequence of such momentary lapses of reason, Seneca even noted that when confronted by earthquakes:

...some people run around as though insane or panic stricken.³⁷¹

This kind of disorder was largely the result of the widespread use of inferior building materials and construction methods, as discussed in the previous chapter, especially in urban centres like the city of Rome, for when earthquakes hit an urban centre, the destruction was intensified owing to those inferior structures, which only served to add to the general mayhem. Hence, Seneca states, when earthquakes occur in Rome and elsewhere throughout the empire:

There is panic on the part of all when buildings creak and give signs of falling. Then everybody hurls himself headlong outside, abandons his household possessions and trusts his luck in the outdoors.³⁷²

Yet, these unusual responses often contained a certain logic, for in the main they directly arose out of an internal response to preserve the lives of oneself and one's loved ones. As Seneca explains, during earthquakes Romans often sought this kind of preservation. Thus, as Seneca reflected on this:

The man who fears lightning bolts, earthquakes, and gaping cracks in the ground esteems himself highly.³⁷³

However, not all estimations of preservation found the same forms of outward expression, or as this thesis suggests, not all internal attitudes expressed themselves through the same external responses. For, as Seneca observed, most Romans often outwardly responded to earthquakes in varying ways. Most certainly, in his *Natural Questions*, Seneca noted a common thread of shock and despair during earthquakes, but in that same work he also noted that whereas some Romans often quickly shook off their fears and returned to acting rationally to save themselves and others during earthquake events, others were simply never able to do so. As Seneca reflected:

Generally the most unstable personalities develop such fear that they lose control of themselves. But, in fact, no one undergoes terror without a loss of sanity and whoever is afraid is like a madman. Yet fear brings some back to their senses quickly while it disturbs others greatly and carries them over into insanity.³⁷⁴

³⁷⁰ Sen. *NQ.* 6. 29. 1.

³⁷¹ Sen. *NQ.* 6. 29. 1.

³⁷² Sen. *NQ.* 6. 1. 5.

³⁷³ Sen. *NQ.* 6. 2. 4.

³⁷⁴ Sen. *NQ.* 6. 29. 2.

Although Seneca counselled all Romans to respond to earthquakes by quickly regaining one's senses, his counsel in itself actually took on a nuanced individual flair all of its own, for Seneca encouraged the Romans to do so in accordance with his own Stoic philosophy.

According to Seneca, this produced a sense of resilience even in the face of earthquakes:

All the world is subject to the same fate. If it [one's city of residence] has not yet suffered from earthquake, it may; perchance this spot on which you stand in full security will be rent this night, or even this day before night... We do greatly err if we suppose any quarter of the world wholly exempt from this danger.³⁷⁵

Thus, variations existed from Roman to Roman as to how each one responded to earthquakes. The example of Seneca illustrates that very often these responses were informed to some degree by prevailing cultural beliefs and traditions, such as Stoic philosophy, as well as an accompanying personal interpretation of those same beliefs and traditions.

3.1.2 *Augustus and Earthquakes*

Augustus' responses to earthquakes were far more consistently practical than civic responses under the republic were. Strabo states that in 26BC, two cities in Asia Minor, Tralles and Laodicea, were badly damaged by an especially destructive earthquake, causing the collapse of the gymnasium and other public buildings in Tralles itself. Immediately following this seismic event, Augustus provided substantial practical and logistical aid, as well as comprehensive financial support to rebuild these and other damaged buildings in both cities.³⁷⁶ Agathias Scholasticus records that Augustus also commissioned a board consisting of seven ex-consuls to coordinate the reconstruction of the two cities. Thus, Augustus continued his establishment of boards to oversee the civic natural disaster response, a trend begun the previous year in relation to the flow of the Tiber, as we have already seen in Chapter Two. Tiberius would inherit this legacy when rebuilding the cities of Asia that were severely damaged by the earthquake of AD17.³⁷⁷

Earthquakes would remain a serious problem for the empire, especially in the eastern provinces (see Table 3, below), and Augustus had to provide support for affected cities practically on an ongoing basis throughout his entire principate, both to maintain the semblance his benevolent reputation, and also preserve Asia Minor and the other eastern provinces, so integral as they were to the cultural and economic dynamism of the empire. Thus, in 18BC, Augustus decreed that if any city suffered from either earthquake or any other kind of natural disaster, and was thereby unable to pay its due taxes and tribute, he would personally furnish the difference from his own purse.³⁷⁸ This policy would remain under

³⁷⁵ Sen. *NQ.* 6. 1. 10-11.

³⁷⁶ Strab 12. 8. 18.

³⁷⁷ Agathias 2. 17. 4; see also Engelbert Winter, 'Strukturelle Mechanismen kaiserlicher Hilfsmaßnahmen nach Naturkatastrophen', in Eckart Olshausen, Holger Sonnabend (eds.) *Stuttgarter Kolloquium zur historischen Geographie des Altertums*, 6, 1996 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1998) 147-155; Mischa Meier, 'Roman Emperors and 'Natural Disasters'', 17-18.

³⁷⁸ *RG* 18;

Tiberius, as we shall see in Chapter Four. As a direct result of Augustus' policy, when an earthquake of comparable destructiveness to the 26BC earthquake occurred again in Asia Minor in 12BC, Augustus waived the province's annual tribute, made up the shortfall from his own private purse, and appointed a governor to oversee the reconstruction for two years. The same civic response would find an echo under Tiberius in AD23 when yet another earthquake hit Asia Minor, as explored in more detail in Chapter Five.³⁷⁹

Table 3: Earthquakes Throughout the Empire Under Augustus

Year	Location	Source
26BC	Tralles, Laodicea, Asia Minor	Strabo 12. 8. 18; Agathias 2. 17. 4.
24BC	Cos, Chios	Hieron. 168.
17BC	Rome	Julius Obsequens, 72.
17-11BC	Venafrum, Campania	<i>CIL</i> X. 4842, <i>RG</i> , 'Summary', 4.
15BC	Paphos, Cyprus	Dio 54. 23. 7.
12BC	Asia Minor	Dio 54. 30.
2BC	Naples, Campania	Dio 55. 10.
c.AD1	Carura, Phrygia, Caria	Strab. 12. 8. 17.
AD6-13	Thyatira, Laodicea, Asia Minor	Suet. <i>Tib.</i> 8.

However, despite such financial generosity and political foresight, earth tremors continued to be a major problem in the eastern Aegean region. In 24BC an earthquake destroyed a number of buildings on the Greek islands of Cos and Chios;³⁸⁰ in c. AD1 another earthquake damaged parts of Carura, a region situated between Phrygia and Caria.³⁸¹ Augustus acted promptly and decisively to help all these areas affected by earthquakes to rebuild, but in the last years of his life Augustus' enthusiasm for such tasks at last began to wane.³⁸²

Besides Asia Minor and the Anatolian peninsula, Augustus also provided financial aid to other regions affected by earthquake damage too, such as the city and surrounds of Paphos in Cyprus, which were damaged by seismic activity in 15BC.³⁸³ There, Augustus had Paphos rebuilt and renamed 'Augusta'.³⁸⁴ Closer to Rome, an inscription from nearby Venafrum in Campania also commemorates Augustus' extensive restoration of an aqueduct there in 17-11BC. Although the inscription does not state the reason for that aqueduct's extreme disrepair, given the frequency of earthquakes in the Campanian region, earthquake damage

³⁷⁹ Dio 54. 30.

³⁸⁰ L. Robert, 'Documents d'Asie Mineure', in *BCH*, 102 (1978), 395-408; Nicholas Ambraseys, *Earthquakes in the Mediterranean and Middle East*, 103-104.

³⁸¹ Strab. 12. 8. 17.

³⁸² Suet. *Tib.* 8; Nicholas Ambraseys, *Earthquakes in the Mediterranean and Middle East*, 105.

³⁸³ Dio 54. 23. 7.

³⁸⁴ Dio 54. 23. 17; *IGR* 3. 941-942; Nicholas Ambraseys, *Earthquakes in the Mediterranean and Middle East*, 104.

around the year 17BC was probably the cause.³⁸⁵ Augustus also rebuilt Naples after it was devastated by earthquake and fire around 2BC.³⁸⁶

Entwined with Augustus' responses to earthquake destruction in Italy and the eastern provinces is the important historical issue of emperor-worship, for Augustus often used the occurrences of earthquake activity as opportunities to strengthen his quasi-divine reputation. By 29BC, the cities of Pergamum in Asia Minor and Nicomedia in Bithynia had petitioned Augustus to be allowed to worship him, to which Augustus replied that they were permitted, so long as his cult was maintained in conjunction with ongoing reverence to Roma and the deified Julius Caesar. Thereby, as Dio states, 'he [Augustus] allowed the aliens, under the name of Hellenes, to consecrate precincts to himself' in those cities.³⁸⁷ Temple precincts were promptly dedicated in Nicomedia in 29BC, and in Pergamum in 19BC. Upon the latter occasion, Dio adds, Augustus granted Pergamum the right to hold the Sacred Games there in celebration of that city's new imperial-cult.³⁸⁸ However, Pergamum and Nicomedia were not by any means the only places in the Greek East to offer Augustus cult worship. In the aftermath of the 26BC earthquake in Asia Minor, Augustus ordered the damaged cities Tralles and Laodicea to be rebuilt, and these cities in turn dedicated two inscriptions at Olympia that honour Augustus, as 'saviour and god',³⁸⁹ and 'divine', respectively.³⁹⁰ Such expressions of ruler-cult were not always the initiative of Greeks, as Dio would have us believe.³⁹¹ For, according to another inscription from Asia Minor, dated to 9BC, in conformity with ruler-cult practice in the Greek East, Augustus' birthday was there decreed a festive day of emperor-worship and the new first day of Asia Minor's calendar year, and the name of the official who proposed these cult-honours for Augustus was one Paullus Fabius Maximus, a local politician of Roman extraction.³⁹² Thus, Roman governors clearly did not worship Augustus simply because Greeks did, but rather the reverse was true: they actively encouraged their Greek subjects to worship Augustus as a god because they did so themselves. However, Greeks and Romans were not the only ones to volunteer and encourage the worship of Augustus in the eastern provinces. According to Josephus, the Idumaeen-Jew Herod the Great built 'a vast shrine' in Samaritis to honour Augustus, and another shrine in his honour at the source of the Jordan River at Paneum.³⁹³

According to Dio, Augustus never encouraged emperor-worship in Italy and the western provinces:

In the capital itself and in the rest of Italy no emperor, however worthy of renown he has been, has dared to do this [establish ruler-cult]; still, even these various divine honours are bestowed after their death upon such emperors as have ruled uprightly,

³⁸⁵ *CIL* X. 4842; *RG*, 'Summary', 4.

³⁸⁶ Dio 55. 10.

³⁸⁷ Dio 51. 20.

³⁸⁸ Dio 51. 21; Michael Koortbojian, *The Divinization of Caesar and Augustus: Precedents, Consequences, Implications* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 230-232.

³⁸⁹ I. Olympia 53; Nicholas Ambraseys, *Earthquakes in the Mediterranean and Middle East*, 103.

³⁹⁰ *BCH* 10 (1886) 516. 5; Nicholas Ambraseys, *Earthquakes in the Mediterranean and Middle East*, 103.

³⁹¹ Dio 51. 20; 55. 10.

³⁹² *OGIS* no. 458, lines 30-62.

³⁹³ Joseph. *BJ.*, 1. 403-404.

and, in fact, shrines are built to them.³⁹⁴

However, as Ittai Gradel has shown to be the case, Augustus in reality only shied away from establishing state ruler-cult in Italy in the forms it took in the provinces. Indeed, Augustus not only allowed emperor worship at municipal and private levels, but actively encouraged it, as did many Roman senators.³⁹⁵ In Rome itself, Augustus held perpetual sacred tribunician powers, and his name was included by decree of the Roman Senate among the names of the traditional Roman gods in the Salian Hymn.³⁹⁶ At lower levels of Roman society, Augustus' methods were more subtle. By 12BC the *vicus* of Jupiter Fagutal had begun to join in the worship of the Lares Augusti and the Genius of Augustus at a purpose-built shrine in its centre,³⁹⁷ and by 9BC the *vicus* of Honour and Virtue began to follow suit.³⁹⁸ Augustus probably introduced these cult practice in the two *vici* as a foretaste of his clear and deliberate instigation, in 7BC, of the same form of imperial cult in almost every other *vicus* in Rome – each as part of the emperor's administrative reorganisation of the city's regions and neighbourhoods.³⁹⁹ As well as facilitating the inclusion of various classes of Roman society in Roman religio-civic activity, the introduction of the worship of the Lares and Genius of the emperor was also intended to encourage a progression to ruler-cult in its purest forms. Of the sixteen imperial-cult temples dedicated to Augustus that were built throughout the Italian peninsula, seven are dated to the principate of Augustus, while the others dedicated to him were either posthumously built, or remain undated.⁴⁰⁰ Furthermore, whilst the Augustan temple in Pompeii was dedicated merely to the Genius of Augustus, inscriptions from nearby Naples,⁴⁰¹ and those from further afield in Terracina,⁴⁰² Beneventum,⁴⁰³ Supracuum,⁴⁰⁴ Pisae,⁴⁰⁵ Pola,⁴⁰⁶ and in Ostia, each reveal that in those places temples were actually dedicated to Augustus himself, as well as his Genius, during his own lifetime.⁴⁰⁷

The introduction of the worship of Augustus' Genius and person proved a resounding success for the *princeps*' state cult and divine image. Soon, Italian families began to compete with one another in according divine honours to Augustus. Recently published documents from a money-lending business at Puteoli show that, in intense competition with each other the influential Hordonia and Suetiana families dedicated two separate altars and *chalcidica*

³⁹⁴ Dio 51. 20. 6-8.

³⁹⁵ Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 74-83.

³⁹⁶ RG, 10; Alison E. Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 147-148.

³⁹⁷ CIL VI 452 = ILS 3260.

³⁹⁸ CIL VI 449 = ILS 3617.

³⁹⁹ A. Fraschetti, *Rome et le prince* (Paris, 1994), 133-285; John Scheid, 'To Honour the Princeps and Venerate the Gods: Public Cult, Neighbourhood Cults, and Imperial Cult in Augustan Rome', in Jonathan Edmondson (ed.) *Augustus*, 296-297.

⁴⁰⁰ Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 84.

⁴⁰¹ Olympia V, *Die Inschriften* (1896) n. 56; L. R. Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman emperor* (1931), 215; H. Hänlein-Schäfer, *Veneratio Augusti: Eine Studie zu den Tempeln des Ersten römischen Kaisers* (1985), 128-134.

⁴⁰² CIL X 6305; H. Hänlein-Schäfer, *Veneratio Augusti*, 135-140.

⁴⁰³ CIL IX 1556; H. Hänlein-Schäfer, *Veneratio Augusti*, 141-143.

⁴⁰⁴ AE 1898, n. 79; H. Hänlein-Schäfer, *Veneratio Augusti*, 144-147.

⁴⁰⁵ CIL X 1420-1; H. Hänlein-Schäfer, *Veneratio Augusti*, 148.

⁴⁰⁶ CIL V 18; H. Hänlein-Schäfer, *Veneratio Augusti*, 149-151.

⁴⁰⁷ Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 80-83.

(statue galleries) to Augustus in that city's Forum.⁴⁰⁸ The main reason for this competitive race to establish emperor worship in Italy among native Italian families is, of course, that Augustus' rule had ushered in what seemed to many Romans and Italians an unparalleled divine age of peace and prosperity.⁴⁰⁹ Within a year after the 2BC earthquake in Naples, local Campanians rushed to establish emperor-worship there in celebration of that city's restoration by Augustus, holding sacred contests there in the *princeps*' honour.⁴¹⁰ Although many local Greeks and Hellenes took part in these celebrations, many local Italians did, as well. Dio states that the Neapolitans publically embraced Augustus' perceived divinity following his restoration of their city in 2BC:

...because its inhabitants, alone among the Campanians, aspired to emulate the customs of the Greeks.⁴¹¹

However, within the space of just six years, other Campanian civic bodies, less accustomed to Greek ruler-cult, such as that of Cumae, had also begun to establish festive days in thanksgiving to Augustus in accordance with ruler-cult protocols. One calendar inscription from Cumae, dated to c. AD4-6, proclaims the 23rd and 24th of September as days of thanksgiving for Augustus' birth, complete with a bull sacrifice often associated with male gods of the Roman pantheon.⁴¹² Furthermore, there, the 30th of January each year, the exact date the *Ara Pacis* was dedicated, festive celebrations of thanksgiving were henceforth held in honour of Augustus as the 'guardian of the Roman citizens and of the world'.⁴¹³

The above analysis illustrates, Augustus' triumphed in timely, and effectual, disaster-response in the aftermath of earthquakes throughout Italy and the Greek East. However, in the last years of his life Augustus' enthusiasm for earthquake-response at last began to wane. Still, contingencies were in place, and as this wane progressed, Tiberius and the Roman Senate effectively took over what had once been Augustus' responsibility as benefactor and leader following seismic activity. Yet, to begin with, Tiberius and the Senate found it difficult to determine how to go about such disaster-relief. Thus, in AD6-13 Tiberius debated and pled with the Roman Senate, to formulate plans to grant aid and supplies to Thyatira and Laodicea, after yet another seismic event destroyed many buildings, and killed many victims, there.⁴¹⁴ Still, such were the successes of Augustus' previous responses to earthquake-damaged populations, especially throughout the Greek East and Italy, that Tiberius had ready models to draw inspiration from in responding to the present crisis. These models would continue to inspire Augustus' successor throughout his principate. And, Augustus' imperial temples, altars, shrines, and other cult-sites, remained points of reference not just for those subjects living under his aegis, but also for Tiberius, who would continue imperial worship for both Augustus, and himself.⁴¹⁵

⁴⁰⁸ G. Camodeca, *L'archivio Puteolano dei Sulpicii*, I (1992), 274, s.v. Puteoli; Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 84.

⁴⁰⁹ Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 304-307

⁴¹⁰ Olympia V, *Die Inschriften* (1896) n. 56.

⁴¹¹ Dio 55. 10.

⁴¹² *CIL* X 8375 = Dessau 108.

⁴¹³ *CIL* X 8375 = Dessau 108; see Naphtali Lewis and Meyer Reinhold (eds.) *Roman Civilization*, 626.

⁴¹⁴ Suet. *Tib.* 8; Nicholas Ambraseys, *Earthquakes in the Mediterranean and Middle East*, 105.

⁴¹⁵ John Scheid, 'To Honour the Princeps and Venerate the Gods', 292.

3.1.3 *Augustus, Livy, and Julius Obsequens*

When examining the portents of republican and early principate periods as recorded in late antiquity by Julius Obsequens, one observes that under both eras Romans believed earthquakes required them to placate and appease the gods. According to Obsequens, earthquakes occurred in Rome in 126BC and again in 118BC, then in Lucania and the region of Privernum in 113BC, in Picenum in 100BC, in Pisaurum in 97BC, and throughout the region of Rhegium in 91BC, and then Raete in 76BC.⁴¹⁶ Livy, too, recorded numerous instances of earthquakes throughout the republican period, referring to them simply as ‘ominous signs’ which in 461BC required the consultation of the Sybilline Books and Rome’s priesthoods and tribunes; and which in 436BC caused these priestly bodies to publicly prescribe days of public prayer; and which in 203BC prompted these bodies to prescribe the sacrifice of adult victims. Yet, in each of these instances the Roman priesthoods externally responded in ways to reconcile the Roman state with Rome’s traditional gods.⁴¹⁷

However, a momentous shift began to occur with the deification of Julius Caesar that held far-reaching implications for his adopted son Octavian, the future Augustus. After a comet appeared in the weeks that followed Julius Caesar’s funeral, Octavian pronounced publically that this was a sign sent by the gods indicating Caesar’s divinity, and added an image of the comet to a statue of Caesar in the Roman Forum.⁴¹⁸ And, earthquakes also had their own role to play in Caesar’s deification, and Augustus’ status as his more-than-human son. According to Julius Obsequens, after a number of earth tremors occurred during the periods before and after Caesar’s assassination, as well as during and after his funeral and deification, these were interpreted by the priesthood in Rome as signs sent by Venus herself to confirm the true divine nature of her descendent to Rome, and given that Octavian was Julius’ Caesar’s nephew and adopted son, that same divine nature carried over to him, as well.⁴¹⁹ Hence, in Livy’s *History of Rome* and the evidence presented by Julius Obsequens, every earthquake from Rome’s past very quickly became bound up with Augustus and found fulfilment in him and the imperial family. Therefore, whilst earthquakes were still interpreted as *prodigia* signifying impending catastrophe for Rome, now the health and well-being of that city and its empire became more fully associated with Augustus’ and his family’s standing within the state. Hence, according to Julius Obsequens, when one earthquake occurred at the villa of Livia in 17BC, the Roman priesthood interpreted the event as an ominous warning for the entire empire. Thus, when Rome’s armies suffered a defeat in Germany later that same year, the priesthood announced that this same earthquake had portended this outcome.⁴²⁰

Consequently, as local populations around the empire began to worship the emperor, on their own initiative, this became one means of coming together in a shared, collective,

⁴¹⁶ Rome: Obseq. 29, 35; Lucania and Privernum, 38; Picenum, 45; Pisaurum, 48; Rhegium, 54; Raete, 59.

⁴¹⁷ Liv. 3. 10; 4. 20-21; 30. 2.

⁴¹⁸ Pl. *NH.* 2. 94; Suet. *Jul.* 88; J. T. Ramsey, A. L. Licht, *The Comet of 44 B.C. and Caesar’s Funeral Games* (Atlanta, 1997), 159; Michael Koortbojian, *The Divinization of Caesar and Augustus*, 27.

⁴¹⁹ Obseq. 68.

⁴²⁰ Obseq. 72.

response to the same earthquakes that produced Augustus' own larger-than-life responses to them. Once set in motion, ruler-cult proved itself to be one method that Augustus could use as a unifying element amid widespread diversity, in order to promote the 'presence of Rome and Augustus in a language accessible to all', especially in the aftermath of future seismic events.⁴²¹

3.1.4 Summary

As a result, Romans and other ethnic groups throughout the empire often outwardly expressed their internal responses to earthquakes out of a sense of immediate concern for themselves during episodic seismic events, for the welfare of loved ones during those same events, and for the health of the state under Augustus' aegis when trying to make sense of those seemingly cataclysmically divine events in their short- and long-term aftermaths. This common quest invariably encouraged ruler-cult. Given Augustan propaganda promoted hope under Augustus for all Romans, this was a natural step. However, the driving force at work during earthquake tremors were the same: those of self-preservation. This driving force manifested itself culturally in two main ways. In regard to ordinary Romans, the event of an earthquake they could manifest as a need to save oneself by finding safety outdoors. But, for Augustus and the imperial family, one can discern his behaviour as being aimed at ensuring legitimacy, which in the wake of every major earthquake under his principate, he keenly pursued ensuring. This was lauded with applause among those Romans who would go on to worship to him as a god, driven on by the sincere hope, nurtured by Augustan propaganda, that this would maintain a healthy Roman state – a state increasingly synonymous with Augustus, and a state whose success all Romans had a vested interest in.

PLAGUE

3.2 The Plague of 22BC: Rome and Italy

Immediately after the Tiber flood of 22BC subsided, plague took hold in Rome – an indication that this particular pestilence was water-borne. This was the only plague that swept the Italian peninsula during the period covered in this thesis. But it proved to be highly infectious, and affected the entire Italian peninsula. Among the infected were the vast majority of Italy's agricultural workers, large numbers of whom died from the disease. As Dio states:

The people suffered from both sickness and from famine, for the plague affected the whole of Italy and nobody tilled the land, and I suppose that the same afflictions also prevailed abroad.⁴²²

Dio's description of this plague is all too brief and vague. That it infected Rome and Italy is explicit. However, no solid proof is given of infection around the empire, only conjecture. However, the spread of contamination is at its greatest intensity in densely

⁴²¹ Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 324-326, 330.

⁴²² Dio. 54. 1.

populated areas, and this indicates that the urban centres in the eastern provinces must have suffered worse than those of the western empire. But, the most densely populated urban centre was Rome, and this may account for Dio's emphasis of the plague in Rome and Italy, rather than elsewhere. Thus, Dio was certainly correct in his thinking that the plague indeed 'prevailed abroad', although no doubt in a more heterogeneous fashion than what Dio might have perhaps assumed. Dio records no symptoms of this plague. However, what is clear is that, according to the sequencing in Dio's narrative, the plague of 22BC followed immediately the flood that year.⁴²³ This chronology, and comparative data from around the globe (see following paragraphs), strongly suggests that this plague was exacerbated and quickened as a direct result of this flood, and as its stagnant pools of remaining floodwater, and the carcasses and debris left behind, produced breeding grounds for mosquitoes and rats as hosts.

Three out of a total of twelve different species of mosquito found in Italy carry human diseases, and of these, two prefer to breed in stagnant pools of water like those left by floods. Among the diseases that mosquitoes carry in Italy are malaria and encephalitis. Malaria is believed to have reached swampy regions around the Mediterranean basin by the third century BC. It seems to have reached Italy itself around this time as well, but the Romans did not know the nature nor the specific causes of this disease, understanding it simply in terms of 'bad air'.⁴²⁴ However, they did recognise that stagnant water played a part in this and other diseases' transmission to human beings.⁴²⁵ The number of malaria victims in Rome during the first century was vast. Studies on seasonal deaths in Rome indicate that there were strong peaks in deaths in Rome from August to October annually; precisely the time malaria was most active there.⁴²⁶ Nor did this disease discriminate. Horace observed that the poorer inhabitants who lived in lower lying areas of Rome near the fora, closest to marshy pools left behind by floodwaters, were at highest risk of contracting malaria;⁴²⁷ however, wealthy Romans were also affected during different stages of life. It even appears that Julius Caesar and Augustus themselves suffered from it for some periods.⁴²⁸ Comparative evidence also shows that mosquito-borne malaria would have been common in Rome after floodwaters receded. In modern Rome, malaria is still a problem near the Tiber after flooding,⁴²⁹ and studies in other locations around the world also show this to also be the case in Bolivia, Haiti and Peru.⁴³⁰ Therefore, outbreaks of malaria would have been common after flooding in

⁴²³ Dio. 54. 1.

⁴²⁴ P. A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower: 225BC-AD14* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), appendix III. 18, 611- 624; J. L. Cloudsley-Thompson, *Insects and History* (New York, 1976), 85-93; W. Scheidel, 'Libitina's Bitter Gains: Seasonal Mortality and Endemic Disease in the Ancient City of Rome', in *Ancient Society*, 25 (1993), 151-175; Robert Sallares, *Malaria and Rome: A History of Malaria in Ancient Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁴²⁵ Colum. 1. 5.

⁴²⁶ W. Scheidel, 'Libitina's Bitter Gains'; Brent Shaw, 'Seasons of Death: Aspects of Mortality in Imperial Rome', in *Journal of Roman Studies*, 86 (1996), 100-138; Robert Sallares, *Malaria and Rome*; Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 148.

⁴²⁷ Hor. *Ep.* 1. 7. 8-9.

⁴²⁸ P. A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, 617.

⁴²⁹ Robert Sallares, *Malaria and Rome*; Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 148-149.

⁴³⁰ On malaria spikes after flooding in Bolivia, see A. V. Telleria, 'Health Consequences of the Floods in Bolivia in 1982', in *Disasters*, 10 (1986), 88-106; Keith Smith and Roy Ward, *Floods: Physical Processes and Human Impacts* (New York, 1998), 48. On Haiti, see David Alexander, *Natural Disasters* (New York,

Rome, especially during warmer seasons.⁴³¹

However, mosquitoes were not the only carriers of disease in the aftermath of flooding. Leptospirosis carried by rats can be transmitted to humans through drinking of, or even simple exposure to, rat-contaminated water. When sewer water mixes with drinking water, as happens during times of flooding, outbreaks of leptospirosis can reach epidemic proportions. Comparative data from Brazil, Thailand and the Philippines demonstrates that after flooding in cities, even modern ones, there are often peaks in the number of cases, which can ultimately lead to hundreds, if not thousands, of deaths.⁴³²

The above examples constitute only two types of diseases that can reach plague proportions in a city like ancient Rome, and the plague of 22BC may have been either one. According to Aldrete, hygienic conditions in ancient Rome also exacerbated the mortality rate owing to this plague. These conditions are mostly similar to those in modern developing countries, which means that disease rates among Rome's poor after inundations were probably comparable to those experienced by the poorer classes in certain modern contexts.⁴³³ In terms of comparative data, in Bangladesh, following the floods of 1988, 46,740 patients were seen by doctors, 37.7% of which were suffering from diarrhoea, 20.45% from various diseases, 17.4% from respiratory tract infections, 10.1% from intestinal worms, 5.8% from fever, 5.8% from skin infections, and 5.1% from wound infections, all of which were shown in a study to have been caused as a direct result of remaining pools of contaminated water left behind by flooding.⁴³⁴ Even in milder weather conditions illness caused by flooding can be substantial. Another study has shown that in Pakistan, after one flood there in 1980, 60-75% of all survivors fell sick from a variety of illnesses that occurred as a direct result of its contaminated floodwaters.⁴³⁵ If these figures are equivalent to those experienced in Rome in the aftermath of the 22BC inundation, the death toll in Rome in that year may have run into many tens or hundreds from the velocity of the flood itself, and into the hundreds, or even thousands, as a direct result of the diseases that followed spread by rats and mosquitoes – and the most disastrous of all these diseases was the plague as recorded by Dio, which in light of the above facts was probably also spread by rats and mosquitoes festering in the stagnant pools and debris left by floodwaters.

3.2.1 *The Plague of 22BC: Courses*

Although Dio does not tell us the symptoms of this plague, one thing is certain: efforts to treat it with medicine, religious ritual, or philosophical escapism would have been useless. The total mortality rate of the 22BC plague in Rome and throughout Italy is unclear, but since in 22BC Rome was not shut off from the surrounding countryside as the Athenians were

1993), 527. On Peru, see P. A. Russac, 'Epidemiological Surveillance: Malaria Epidemic Following the Niño Phenomenon', in *Disasters*, 10 (1986), 112-117; Keith Smith and Roy Ward, *Floods*, 48-49.

⁴³¹ Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 149.

⁴³² See Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 150.

⁴³³ Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 150.

⁴³⁴ A. K. Siddique, A. H. Baqui, A. Eusof, K. Zaman, '1988 Floods in Bangladesh: Pattern of Illness and Causes of Death', in *Journal of Diarrhoeal Diseases Research*, 9, 4 (1991), 310-314; Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 150.

⁴³⁵ David Alexander, *Natural Disasters*, 527.

during the Archidamian War, one might conclude that the Romans buried thousands of dead outside Rome's city walls.⁴³⁶

In the past, Gilliam and Birley cast doubt upon the overall importance of plagues during the Roman period, arguing that the ancient sources exaggerated their effects.⁴³⁷ However, there is now consensus among historians that the Roman army alone probably suffered a mortality rate of up to 10% to 15% from the effects of the Antonine plague,⁴³⁸ an estimate around half of the 26% mortality rate suffered by Hagnon's Athenian army during the 430BC plague.⁴³⁹ In any event, the 22BC plague was at its height for only about one year, or perhaps two, which means that it was less aggressive and widespread than they were.

Thus, with farmer numbers depleted in Italy, food supplies could not be received in Rome from throughout the peninsula. The result was famine. This outcome also marks a major point in difference between Athens in 430BC and Rome in 22BC. Although Peloponnesian armies burned Attica annually, Athens could import grain and other supplies from its empire around the perennially sail-worthy Aegean and Black Seas at will. However, the situation in Rome in 22BC was different. There, the city's grain stores had been spoiled by the 22BC flood – an event which, as Dio's chronology demonstrates, probably occurred during winter at the beginning of the calendar year – and then, after the floodwaters subsided, the plague swept the city. Rome was always heavily reliant on supplies from around Italy at this time of year, for as Dio informs us, the wild seasonal winter currents and weather conditions brought influx of grain shipping to Rome to a halt during those months, and only began to flow into Rome again during late spring. Thus, for much of the winter and early to mid-spring in 22BC, owing to the flood and plague, Rome was out of food, as well as any reliable food-source option.⁴⁴⁰

3.2.2 Summary

One invariably finds that there was much suffering and common despair, not to mention death, in the wake of the 22BC plague. Romans who responded to the effects of this plague according to their cultural understanding of disease, generally speaking, only added to their despair. Neither medicine, nor religion, nor philosophy, nor pleasure, slowed the plague's progress or the suffering and death it caused. Although many Roman sufferers no doubt tried all avenues familiar to them to alleviate suffering or escape death, when these avenues invariably failed, they were simply left with an even greater sense of inescapable despair.

Roman responses to this plague, if shaped by prevailing cultural attitudes to disease, as

⁴³⁶ See Thuc. 2. 52; J. D. Hughes, 'Responses to Natural Disasters in the Greek and Roman World', Fig 7. 4, page 117.

⁴³⁷ J. F. Gilliam, 'The Plague Under Marcus Aurelius', 225-231; Anthony Birley, *Marcus Aurelius* (London, 1966), 203.

⁴³⁸ For a detailed discussion on the plague itself, see R. Littman, and M. Littman, 'Galen and the Antonine Plague', in *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol 94, No 3, (1973) 243-255. For mortality rate figures in the Roman army see especially 255. See also R. Duncan-Jones, 'The Impact of the Antonine Plague', *JRA* 9 (1996) 108-136., and C. Bruun, 'La mancanza di prove di un aspetto catastrofico della "peste antonina" (dal 166 d. C. in poi)', in *L'impatto della 'peste antonina'* (Bari: 2012) 123-165.

⁴³⁹ Thuc. 2. 58; J. D. Hughes, 'Responses to Natural Disasters in the Greek and Roman World', 118

⁴⁴⁰ Dio. 60. 11. 1-2.

comparable data from Roman times suggests, would have only compounded the general sense of helplessness. Yet, variations in how Romans responded to this plague also existed, from person to person and from one point in time to another, which demonstrates that preconceived beliefs and attitudes concerning how one ought to respond to plague varied from individual to individual, during the course of plague, in the plague's immediate aftermath, and over following years as Rome and Italy recovered in the face of a new natural disaster in 22BC: that of famine.

FAMINE

3.3 Breakdown in the Empire's Food Supply Network, Famine in Rome

Feeding the inhabitants of Rome stretched the city's supply and distribution systems – production (including urban food production), imports as well as rural- and periurban-urban linkages (processing, storage, assembly, handling, packaging, transport, etc.); wholesale, intra-urban transport, retailing, street food, public eating spaces, etc. – to their limits throughout the early imperial period. Food supply and distribution were involved and laborious activities, not just for Romans, but for their subjects throughout the empire too.

Rome's inhabitants ate mostly quality durum wheat products and the average adult male there consumed up to 200 kilograms of wheat per annum, alongside the cheaper emmer, barley and millet ones. It has even been estimated that total annual consumption of wheat in Rome reached 150 thousand tonnes. Rome's diet was primarily wheat-based due to logistics. Wheat has a high nutritional value and has limited bulk, and is therefore extremely efficient body fuel. Also, it is less perishable than many other types of foodstuffs, which means that it can be transported and stored with little damage and at relatively low cost.⁴⁴¹

3.3.1 *Feeding Rome*

The consumption of foodstuffs for a city like Rome was overtly established on status discrimination. Although Rome's poorer classes lived mostly at a subsistence level, and could afford only their daily supply of wheat, the richer citizens of Rome were able to purchase not just vast quantities of wheat, but also fish, garum, mussels, fowl, eggs, mushrooms, and fruit and vegetables.⁴⁴² As a result, the richer classes of Rome were well insulated from starvation when seasonal crops failed, and when the prices of wheat inflated. But that did not mean that the poorer classes had no value whatsoever in the eyes of elites like Augustus. After all, Augustus sourced grain from all over the empire for their sustenance. Grain and olive oil were sourced from Africa and Spain, and Egypt remained Rome's main granary; and whilst the origins of Rome's dependence upon Egyptian agricultural products

⁴⁴¹ Paul Erdkamp, 'The Food Supply of the Capital', in Paul Erdkamp (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*, 263.

⁴⁴² A. Dalby, *Empire of Pleasures: Luxury and Indulgence in the Roman World* (London, 2002); Paul Erdkamp, 'The Food Supply', 264, 267.

stretched back to the late third century BC, under Augustus grain export to Rome became Egypt's most important industry.⁴⁴³

Supplying Rome with grain from Egypt was a mammoth logistical undertaking. Firstly, the grain had to be grown and harvested, which was usually done on Egyptian properties owned and run by Roman aristocrats.⁴⁴⁴ Then, once harvested, the grain would be transported to Alexandria by Roman-owned transporting firms either by camel or donkey-train along the roads that extended alongside the Nile or by boat over the Nile itself, paying customs duties to Roman owned customs stations in the process.⁴⁴⁵ Once the grain arrived in Alexandria, some grain would be sold for Egyptian consumption, but most was thereupon exported to various parts of the Roman Empire, in particular Rome. Alexandria enjoyed a free market and the steady per-capita growth in personal wealth throughout the first century AD indicates that Egypt was not especially hard-pressed to supply Rome with grain and other foodstuffs.⁴⁴⁶ Nonetheless, Egypt did not profit substantially from supplying Rome with grain. Certainly, many wealthy Romans, including the emperor, invested much time and money into production in Egypt. However, Rome never purchased grain from Egypt. Rather, it was counted as *annona* – a tax levied by Rome on all producing provinces, and therefore tribute.⁴⁴⁷

It is estimated that over 1,692 ships were employed to carry this grain-tribute from Alexandria to Rome – a vast logistical undertaking in itself for Rome never developed a merchant fleet, relying instead upon privately owned Egyptian ships.⁴⁴⁸ Papyrus from Egypt from this time reveals that such ships were commissioned by Rome especially in order to supply Rome, and were protected on their journeys to Rome by naval escorts⁴⁴⁹ – a journey made all the more global considering that these ships were usually constructed from teak beams imported from India via the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.⁴⁵⁰

Ships from Egypt could take up to two months to reach Rome when sailing against

⁴⁴³ David Peacock, 'The Roman Period (30BC-AD395)' in Ian Shaw (ed.) *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 419-420.

⁴⁴⁴ Dennis P. Kehoe, *Management and Investment On Estates in Roman Egypt During the Early Empire* (Bonn, 1992), 1.

⁴⁴⁵ P. J. Sijpesteijn, *Customs Duties in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Zutphen, 1987), 28, 40-44, 51; Colin Adams, *Land Transport in Roman Egypt: A Study of Economics and Administration in a Roman Province* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 21-22.

⁴⁴⁶ G. Woolf, 'Imperialism, Empire and the Integration of the Roman Economy', in *World Archaeology*, 23 (1992), 290; P. Temin, 'A Market Economy in the Early Roman Empire', in *Journal of Roman Studies*, 91 (2001), 169-181; D. W. Rathbone, 'Roman Egypt', in W. Scheidel, I. Morris, R. Saller (eds.) *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 700, 712; Matt Gibbs, 'Manufacture, Trade, and the Economy', in Christina Riggs (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 39.

⁴⁴⁷ David Peacock, 'The Roman Period', 420.

⁴⁴⁸ David J. Mattingly and Gregory S. Aldrete, 'The Feeding of Imperial Rome: The Mechanics of the Food Supply System', in Jon Coulston and Hazel Dodge (eds.) *Ancient Rome: The Archaeology of the Eternal City* (Oxford University School of Archaeology: Monograph 54, 2000), 145, 154.

⁴⁴⁹ *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* (1950), 4: 106-115; Naphtali Lewis, Meyer Reinhold (eds.) *Roman Civilization: Volume 2, Selected Readings, The Empire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 64.

⁴⁵⁰ *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, 36; E. H. Warmington, *The Commerce Between the Roman Empire and India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), 214; Naphtali Lewis, *On Government and Law in Roman Egypt* (Scholars Press, 1995), 77.

prevailing northerly winds during the peak transportation months of May to June.⁴⁵¹ Those winds could make sailing a dangerous venture for sailors, and they could be blown off course and wrecked on Mediterranean coastlines, as the early Christian missionary Paul's own experience aboard one such ill-fated ship from Egypt – a celebrated passage in the *Acts of the Apostles* – illustrates.⁴⁵² According to this passage, after Paul appealed to be heard as a Roman citizen by Nero several years after his arrest in Jerusalem, Paul was assigned to a centurion named Julius, and both embarked together on a trade-ship docked in Caesarea Maritima that was bound for the markets in the province of Asia – the first leg of their journey to Rome. After arriving in Asia, Julius and Paul found an Alexandrian cargo-ship bound for Rome and put to sea again, but near Crete a 'northeaster' storm of hurricane force blew the ship off-course and eventually shipwrecked near Malta. Julius and Paul would have to wait another three months before they could embark on another Alexandrian ship bound for Rome. From Malta it would take another week for Paul and Julius to arrive at Rome safely.⁴⁵³

As a result of such unpredictable dangerous weather patterns, ships from Egypt only made a single return voyage from Egypt to Rome each year, whereas ships from Africa and Spain had things somewhat easier making up to three return voyages to Rome annually. Upon arrival at the Roman ports at Portus and Ostia, grain from these sources would be shipped on barges upstream along the Tiber and its adjoining and associated canal system to Rome – a journey of 32 kilometres that could take up to three days to complete. It is estimated that over 6,000 barge trips to and from Rome per annum supplied Rome in this way.⁴⁵⁴ Once finally making it there the grain would then be hauled from the river docks to nearby depots and storehouses called *horrea*, which generally consisted of open-air courtyards surrounded by small storerooms that could rise several stories. The grander examples of *horrea* such as the *Horrea Galbana* date to the decades that followed Augustus' death.⁴⁵⁵ The customs, unloading and storage process could take several weeks to complete. In a letter written on papyrus by one Irenaeus to his brother Apollinarius in Egypt from the 2nd or 3rd century AD, Irenaeus states that from arrival at Ostia-Portus it took twelve days before unloading was completed by him and his crew, only after which they were allowed to move on to Rome, where grain ship sailors were accommodated before they were discharged.⁴⁵⁶ Finally, from the city's *horrea* the grain itself was transported to the city's market districts for purchase and consumption.⁴⁵⁷

Not surprisingly, when this network of activities supporting food supply was disrupted by nature in the form of the flooding of the Tiber, or by the 22BC plague, there resulted an interruption in the whole system. Although this disruption was often rectified with the fresh arrival of grain cargoes, nevertheless the intervening break produced a sense of acute

⁴⁵¹ David Peacock, 'The Roman Period', 421.

⁴⁵² Acts 27:1 – 28. 10; Paul Erdkamp, 'The Food Supply', 271.

⁴⁵³ Acts 27:1 – 28:16.

⁴⁵⁴ David J. Mattingly and Gregory S. Aldrete, 'The Feeding of Imperial Rome', 149, 155.

⁴⁵⁵ David J. Mattingly and Gregory S. Aldrete, 'The Feeding of Imperial Rome', 146-148.

⁴⁵⁶ Berlin Papyrus No. 27 (= *Select Papyri* No. 113).

⁴⁵⁷ David J. Mattingly and Gregory S. Aldrete, 'The Feeding of Imperial Rome', 147-148, 156-157; Steven L. Tuck, 'The Tiber and River Transport', in Paul Erdkamp (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*, 238-241.

frustration in Rome among the city's poor who believed it was the emperor's duty to safeguard the welfare of Rome's entire population, not just the rich. Thus, unlike other natural, disastrous events like flood and fire, famine was seen by most Romans not only as a *prodigium*, but one that was imbued with implications for the emperor's own legitimate right to rule. Indeed, famines were often seen as a blight on the emperor's own personal abilities, and hence their occurrence required his full attention to appease all classes. These are important facts to keep in mind when approaching Augustus' response to the 22BC famine in Rome.⁴⁵⁸

3.3.2 *The 22BC Famine: Augustus' Civic Responses*

In 23BC, there had been a severe flood in Rome, which spoiled the grain stored in Rome's granaries. After the floodwaters subsided the city's food supplies required replenishing by shipments of grain from further abroad than usual. But the following year, the city experienced another severe flood, and these supplies were also completely spoiled. What resulted was a food crisis that had the potential to cause widespread famine. As a result of water-borne carriers thriving in the stagnant pools left behind by the inundation floodwaters, plague took hold throughout the peninsula, and a depletion in workers and farmers around it caused severe famine.

Notwithstanding Dio's aside – 'I suppose that the same afflictions [plague and food crisis] also prevailed abroad [outside Italy]'⁴⁵⁹ – the 22BC food crisis appears to have only affected Rome and the Italian peninsula, and the ease with which it was resolved suggests that this food crisis did not develop into full blown famine. As noted previously, Dio's statement is far too vague a statement to use to determine whether the food crisis actually did prevail abroad. Moreover, one must bear in mind that the food supply crisis in Rome was resolved in relatively short time owing to imports into the city from Egypt and around the empire in the space of mere months, as is discussed in following paragraphs. Therefore, it is unlikely that the food crisis of 22BC hit the provinces to anywhere near the same degree as it impinged upon Rome and Italy.

Nevertheless, this food crisis was no inconsequential natural disaster.⁴⁶⁰ In fact, Dio states that such was the level of hunger and suffering among the poor in Rome that many of them rioted through the streets of Rome, demanding food and a more competent mediator between Rome and the gods. According to Dio, many Romans interpreted the famine as a *prodigium* that signified a breakdown in the *pax deorum* that required as a *remedium* nothing less than the installation of Augustus to the consulship – a position that he did not fill at that time. Clearly, such a breakdown in the running of the state could only be explained by the people as signifying a breach with the divine, one that required the direct action of a human

⁴⁵⁸ Gregory S. Aldrete, 'Riots', in Paul Erdkamp (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*, 429.

⁴⁵⁹ Dio 54. 1.

⁴⁶⁰ Paul Erdkamp, 'The Food Supply', 267-268; Paul Erdkamp states that 'Famine did not occur in Rome as long as its authorities ruled overseas possessions' and this was normally true. However, flooding in Rome could cause an intense and lasting food shortage in the city and thereby cause famine that could last days or even weeks at a time, or even longer on rare occasions.

saviour.⁴⁶¹

After some time had transpired, mobs besieged the Senate House, and although Augustus was not there, they pleaded for him from outside the Senate House to take control of the food supply out of the Senate's hands and place it in his own as dictator. Augustus declined the offer of the dictatorship, only too aware of the displeasure this would have caused to many Roman senators. However, Augustus clearly saw the genuine need to alleviate this food shortage and opportunity for self-promotion among Rome's masses. Both he and they had come to the realisation that the Senate had been incapable of doing that up to that point on its own – even if, Augustus himself had also done little to alleviate that suffering either. Nonetheless, Augustus took control of the task of feeding the population of Rome personally.⁴⁶²

According to Suetonius, Augustus immediately responded to this food crisis by expelling all slaves, gladiators and foreign residents from Rome, thereby freeing-up access to the food that was left for Rome's citizens there. But, these methods were successful only to a point.⁴⁶³ But then, fittingly for a divinity, Augustus seemingly miraculously sourced and purchased enough grain to feed Rome and resolve the entire food crisis there. The speed with which Augustus achieved this remained a favourite boast of his. As the *Res Gestae* proudly announces:

I did not decline at a time of the greatest scarcity of grain the charge of grain-supply, which I so administered that, within a few days, I freed the entire people, at my own expense, from the fear and danger in which they were.⁴⁶⁴

The speed with which Augustus responded to this food crisis has sparked suspicion among modern historians who, like Walter Eder, suggest that this food crisis might have even been orchestrated by Augustus as an opportunity to display his indispensability to the functions of the Roman state.⁴⁶⁵ However, despite these suspicions, even Augustus himself could never have stopped the gargantuan interconnected phenomenon that was Rome's food supply with its maritime network throughout the Mediterranean, as described above. Indeed, attempting to do so would have equated to virtual political self-destruction, for it was not in Augustus' Romano-centric interests to starve his power base of food and thereby spark civil unrest there that he had always hoped to resolve under his sole rule.

However, it is the line of this thesis that the resolution of the food crisis in 22BC could never have been of Augustus' own devising, despite his proud boasts that it was. For, Dio informs us that the shipping of grain from Egypt to Rome always gained momentum during late spring, and continued throughout the summer months and early autumn, only to be halted in colder seasons for on account of dangerous swells and bad sailing weather.⁴⁶⁶ Going by

⁴⁶¹ Dio 54. 1.

⁴⁶² Dio 54. 1. 2-4.

⁴⁶³ Suet. *Aug.* 42.

⁴⁶⁴ *RG.* 5.

⁴⁶⁵ Walter Eder, 'Augustus and the Power of Tradition', in Karl Galinsky (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, 26.

⁴⁶⁶ Dio 60. 11. 1-2.

Dio's chronological order, given that flooding usually occurred in Rome during winter months and that Dio placed the onset of the 22BC flood at the opening of Book 54, we may safely conclude that: the 22BC flood occurred during winter like most others; and that this was followed by the plague that established itself in Rome after the floodwaters receded and conditions became warmer in the Spring season; and that this was then followed by the famine itself. With all these facts in mind, the 22BC famine must have taken hold in late Spring to early Summer. Thus, by the time Augustus took over the grain supply, it would have been well into the onset of the period in the calendar year when shipments of grain to Rome again began to arrive from Egypt. Thus, it was the onset of this arrival – not Augustus' own abilities, nor indeed any contrived political machinations on the emperor's part – that accounted for the speed with which food relief came to Rome after this famine had begun to set in there.⁴⁶⁷

However, for Augustus, this was not enough. Dio states, to prevent further famines in Rome, Augustus ordered that two men take charge of the grain supply.⁴⁶⁸ However, Dio omits to mention that it was actually the Senate who appointed two senators to take charge of it.⁴⁶⁹ Under normal circumstances, the aediles oversaw the proper conduct of Rome's grain supply – a happy arrangement until Augustus transferred it to the care of two ex-consuls in AD6, and then later to an equestrian *praefectus annonae*. This in itself demonstrates the destructive force of the flood, the scarcity of food there after it, and the seriousness and speed with which Augustus, in concerted effort with the Senate, responded – an external response prompted and driven by internal responses of extreme grades of seriousness and concern that met with this natural disaster.⁴⁷⁰

3.3.3 *Famine in Rome: AD5*

In the aftermath of the 22BC famine, Rome's elite made no serious attempt to relocate Rome's poor, or its food supplies, to higher ground. Thus, when in AD5 the Tiber flooded again, the city centre was only navigable by boat for seven days, causing structural damage to many apartments and grain storehouses throughout Rome.⁴⁷¹ Augustus and the Roman elite must shoulder responsibility for the suffering of Rome's poorer inhabitants that came as a direct result of this flood. In republican times Roman politicians like Gaius Gracchus had at least built and restored public granaries throughout Rome,⁴⁷² but in the lengthy list of public works carried out under Augustus in the *Res Gestae* there is not one mention of the construction of one new granary, nor the improvement or repair of any existing ones,⁴⁷³ and as a result of this carelessness all of Rome's grain stores were water-damaged again in AD5

⁴⁶⁷ See Dio 54. 1.

⁴⁶⁸ Dio 54. 1.

⁴⁶⁹ P. A. Brunt, 'The Role of the Senate in the Augustan Regime', in *Classical Quarterly*, 34 (1984), 439-441; J. W. Rich, *Cassius Dio*, 172.

⁴⁷⁰ Tac. *Ann.* 1. 7. 2; Dio 55. 26. 2; 55. 31. 4; On Rome's grain supply, see H. Pavis d'Escurac, *La Prefecture de l'Annone: service administrative imperial d'Auguste à Constantin* (Paris, 1976), 10-26; P. D. A. Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 232-234, 240; J. W. Rich, *Cassius Dio*, 172.

⁴⁷¹ Dio 55. 22. 3. See also Cassiod. *Chron.* 604.

⁴⁷² Plut. *CGracch.* 3-9.

⁴⁷³ For this list, see RG 19-21.

just as they had been previously in 23BC and 22BC. The result was another food crisis.⁴⁷⁴ Indeed, according to Augustus' own writings as preserved by Suetonius, the main lesson Augustus drew from the 22BC flood and the associated plague and famine of that year was that the grain dole and food supply in Rome were extremely expensive. Indeed, Augustus even considered the grain dole's complete discontinuation, only falling short of putting the thought into action upon the realisation that their reinstatement would prove of inestimable value to any rival populist politician.⁴⁷⁵

During the AD5 flood Augustus tried once again to alleviate suffering, and made many grain distributions funded at his own expense. However, this was seen to be too little too late for many of Rome's poorest inhabitants. The rich, who could afford foodstuffs besides the spoilt grain and who were still well supplied, and generally speaking, their abundant generosity towards the poor extended only as far as Augustus' late token forbidding of public banquets held in honour of his birthday. Not surprisingly the plebeian classes began planning an uprising under the leadership of one Publius Rufus. This uprising, and the riots of 22BC mark an important shift in the nature of uprisings and riots in the city of Rome. During the final years of the republican period, mob riots were at the instigation of Roman politicians, and indeed, we see in 22BC that the mobs sought their leadership in Augustus as an extension of this republican ethos. However, by AD5 all that had changed. For, by that time, to paraphrase Aldrete, 'the typical riot became a request from or protest by the urban plebs directed towards the emperor', not the Senate,⁴⁷⁶ and as the food supply became increasingly seen as the central concern of the emperor, failure to supply Rome with enough food 'quickly aroused the wrath of the city's inhabitants' against him alone.⁴⁷⁷

In response to this threat, Augustus offered rewards for information, and information was received. However, once the famine was finally relieved with the arrival at Rome of much needed grain supplies from abroad, gladiatorial contests were staged for the masses' enjoyment, probably in the amphitheatre of Statilius Taurus, the Roman Forum, and in other temporary amphitheatres constructed throughout Rome for this express purpose;⁴⁷⁸ and these, taken together, appeased the people's anger and the uprising was checked before it could progress any further.⁴⁷⁹ At first glance, one may wonder whether public spectacles such as games really could appease the inhabitants of a city like that of ancient Rome. However, these spectacles were rich in useful symbolism to a regime like that of the Romans. Through such spectacles the state communicated with the people and, in turn, as Cicero noted, it was a means by which the people could participate in the workings of the city of Rome.⁴⁸⁰ In fact, games had to a great extent supplanted popular assemblies and elections by the Early Empire, and thereby provided opportunities for audiences to cheer and applaud the emperor and reinforce the general mood of support for him, thus re-establishing the popular consensus in

⁴⁷⁴ Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 132.

⁴⁷⁵ Suet. *Aug.* 42.

⁴⁷⁶ Gregory S. Aldrete, 'Riots', 427.

⁴⁷⁷ Gregory S. Aldrete, 'Riots', 429.

⁴⁷⁸ Kathleen Coleman, 'Entertaining Rome', in Jon Coulston and Hazel Dodge (eds.) *Ancient Rome*, 228.

⁴⁷⁹ Dio 55. 26-27; Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome*, 132.

⁴⁸⁰ Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal: Sociological Studies in Roman History 2* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 14.

support of the principate.⁴⁸¹ This was done in a thoroughly staged manner where, as Statius and Fronto inform us, the emperor was at the very centre of the audience's relaxed and welcoming attentions.⁴⁸²

Accordingly, both the grain dole and Rome's public games were a dialectic between organisers, players, and the audiences; a dialectic that reinforced a political façade that was used by all emperors to reinforce their legitimacy, all to the public's applause.⁴⁸³ Therefore, 'bread and circuses', as Juvenal calls them, were symbols with cultural and political meaning, given by the emperor to his people. These gifts also required the reciprocation of continual goodwill from the Roman people,⁴⁸⁴ but when such goodwill was indeed reciprocated, Fronto assures us that this in turn comprehensively reasserted the public standing and political power of the emperor.⁴⁸⁵ Thus, Augustus' gladiatorial games in AD5 were indeed an effective means by that emperor could reinforce the legitimacy of his rule after the food and political crisis of that year. The people's food supply was restored once more, and normality slowly returned; and, so long as they remained in place, protests and riots were no longer needed by the people to maintain them.⁴⁸⁶

As a sign of the obvious shortcomings of Rome's food supply, but also Augustus' willingness to make haste only slowly, two years after the food crisis of AD5, Augustus created the equestrian office of *praefectus annonae* to supervise and coordinate Rome's grain supply.⁴⁸⁷ C. Turranius Gracilius in AD7 first filled this office after he had successfully served Augustus as prefect of Egypt the preceding year. His experience in overseeing grain crop production in Egypt for Rome stood him in excellent stead with the *princeps*, and his appointment to this office indicates that in the aftermath of the famine of AD5 Augustus had come to realise that Rome's food supply demanded far more attention than either the Senate or Augustus were able to give. The creation of this office in Augustus' last years, therefore, highlights the theme in this dissertation that any given Roman, even an emperor, could change in their attitude towards natural disasters, and thereby undergo alterations in their internal and external responses to them.⁴⁸⁸

3.3.4 Summary

Perceptions of food supply and famine differed between Roman classes. For Augustus, food supply was necessary to sustain Rome's workers, but also to perpetuate the masses' support for him and his regime. As a result, through external expression in the *Res Gestae* and his responses to famine, it is clear that Augustus made the most of his opportunities for

⁴⁸¹ Cic. *In Defence of Sestius*, 106; Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 14; Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 147.

⁴⁸² Statius, *Silvae*, 1. 6; Fronto, 2. 216; Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 15, 18.

⁴⁸³ Nicholas Purcell, 'Romans, Play On!: City of the Games', in Paul Erdkamp (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*, 444

⁴⁸⁴ Juv. *Sat.* 10. 81; Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 17.

⁴⁸⁵ Fronto 2. 216; Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 17.

⁴⁸⁶ Nicholas Purcell, 'Romans, Play On!', 444.

⁴⁸⁷ Dio 55. 26. 2-3; 55. 31. 4; H. P. D'Escurac, *La Préfecture de l'annone. Service administrative d'Auguste à Constantin* (Paris, 1976), 29-32.

⁴⁸⁸ D'Escurac, *La Préfecture de l'annone*, 317-319.

self-aggrandisement, and that he could, and would, alter his view of famine in Rome and the suffering it could cause there.

As for Rome's wealthier classes, generally speaking, Rome's food supply was less important to them than it was to Rome's poorer classes – a feature externally expressed by Augustus himself in his own responses to famine in Rome until late in his life. For those involved in large-scale Mediterranean trade, supplying Rome with enough food proved a profitable, if dangerous, vocation. The very external expression in pursuing and continuing in this vocation means that the aim of staving off famine in Rome remained an enticing one, and that allegiance to Rome and financial gain were driving factors for many Romans. For the lower classes in Rome itself, however, food supply equated to survival, and thus, when access to grain faltered in Rome, so too did their very lives, and not surprisingly when this occurred they externally expressed themselves in riots and uprisings brought on by distrust of the state whose role it was to supply food to them, and an acceptance that mob violence and uprisings as means of petition to secure food were accepted forms of political remonstrance.

3.4 Conclusions

Taken together, the above analysis shows that changes in one's attitudes to earthquakes, plague, and famines could, and often did, develop and change over a period of one's lifetime. In the midst of natural disasters, most Romans were primarily concerned about preservation of life, even if, from shock, many were at total loss as to the best course of action as a result of the shock and trauma occasioned by such events. At other times, Romans resorted to political demonstrations and rioting in order to pressure Augustus and the Senate into restoring food supply.

Roman responses thus followed certain cultural trends, however such responses were not always entirely uniform. Therefore, with regards to their responses natural disasters, similarities existed between the majority of Romans throughout Italy and the provinces as to their cultural external responses to natural disasters. However, nuances also existed between individual Romans and collective groups of individual Romans, like the Roman elite, as to how cultural beliefs and traditions, whether they be religious, philosophical, or political, were to be outwardly expressed. Indeed, these nuances were also further enhanced since each Roman, over time, had the capacity within himself or herself the inner revision and alteration of their attitudes which could alter their impressions of how they ought to respond to natural disasters, both in theory and in practice, and yet when natural disasters hit, these could be discarded momentarily in the face of shock, and hardship.

CHAPTER FOUR: TIBERIUS: FLOOD, FIRE, EARTHQUAKE, FAMINE

4.1 FLOODS AND FIRES IN ROME UNDER TIBERIUS

Three types of natural disasters characterised the city of Rome and its empire under Tiberius' principate. The first, was that of flooding of the Tiber River. Secondly, there were three particularly destructive fires in Rome; and thirdly, intense earthquake activity and destruction. It should also be noted that there is some potential for identifying a fourth type of natural disaster characterising Tiberius' principate – that of empire-wide famine. Under Tiberius, a brief famine localised to Egypt threatened widespread disaster throughout the entire empire; however, prompt action by Germanicus was able to check it before such a disaster had its chance to eventuate. Each of these natural disasters, both those that eventuated and the famine that threatened to eventuate, are discussed in detail both within this chapter, and within Chapter Five of this dissertation.

4.1.1 *Flooding of the Tiber Under Tiberius*

As we have seen already under Augustus' principate, the inhabitants of Rome lived with flooding on a near constant basis; and yet they continued to suffer loss of life and property due to a lack of wholly effective reforms meant to prevent these floods. Nonetheless, Tiberius greatly improved upon Augustus' rather limited policies towards the Tiber, thus cementing his position as Augustus' imperial heir, and introduced several far more practical and generous measures than Augustus had ever introduced, and these were both preventative and responsive, in order to more effectively alleviate further unnecessary suffering in Rome.

According to Tacitus, in AD15 a major flood inundated Rome. As Tacitus states:

In that same year the Tiber, swollen by persistent rain, flooded low-lying parts of the city. When it receded, much loss of life and buildings were apparent.⁴⁸⁹

As a result of this immense destruction caused to such buildings and property in Rome, people there immediately assumed that the gods must have been angry with the state and Tiberius was the head of the state. Moreover, the very scale of the destruction caused by floods under Tiberius seemed to hint to many that it was of divine propensity and causation. Thus, Cassius Dio states that many in Rome thought this particular flood to have been an omen of immense proportions signifying coming troubles for Rome.⁴⁹⁰ Tacitus states that Asinius Gallus advised Tiberius to consult the Sibylline books after the floodwaters had eventually subsided.⁴⁹¹

Table 4: Flooding of the Tiber Under the Principate of Tiberius.

⁴⁸⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 1. 76.

⁴⁹⁰ Dio. 57. 14. 7.

⁴⁹¹ Tac. *Ann.* 1. 76.

Year	Source
AD15	Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 1. 76; Dio 57. 14. 7.
AD36	Dio 58. 26. 5; Zonaras 11. 3.

However, Tiberius was not content to put on public exhibition just another isolated religious ritual to restore the apparent breach in the *pax deorum* as a singular response to this natural disaster. Rather, the *princeps* implemented a far more broad, constructive approach. Tiberius' principate was still in its early infancy, and there had been calls upon Augustus' death for a change in regime along republican lines. Tiberius, to cement his place as Augustus' successor over others and other forms of government, made sure his response to this flood was comprehensive. A team of five senators, each with sub-teams of advisers, was thereby placed under the leadership of Ateius Capito and Lucius Arruntius. Their express purpose was to find an enduring solution to Tiber flooding.⁴⁹² By these means Tiberius exhibited his characteristic sense of imperial duty, which the responsibilities of his position as emperor implied, to paraphrase Levick.⁴⁹³ In accordance with such dutifulness, Cassius Dio records that Tiberius established this particular body as a permanent one to maintain and regulate Tiber flow, so that:

...it should neither overflow in winter nor fall in summer, but should maintain as even as flow as possible all the time.⁴⁹⁴

However, this visionary reform achieved only limited success: Capito and Arruntius were unsuccessful in diverting the Tiber's upstream tributary waters amidst protests by several Italian towns including Florentia, Raete, and Umbrian Interamna.⁴⁹⁵ Still, both Levick and Seager agree that some successes of Capito and Arruntius certainly existed. That the Tiber would not undergo a major flood again for another twenty-one years is testimony to their successes and Tiberius' overarching measures – already a vast improvement on Augustan policy.⁴⁹⁶

However, when the Tiber did eventually flood again, in AD36, it inundated Rome to such an extent that the low-lying public spaces of Rome were once again navigable by boats for days.⁴⁹⁷ Yet, despite of the destruction of this flood, there is no evidence at all of the same extent of loss of life or property as that which took place in AD15, nor a repeated panicked response among the people of Rome like that which had previously taken place in that year. Later, Tacitus and Suetonius would trace what they perceived to be developments in Rome's eventual moral decline back to Tiberius and his lack of purely religious fervour and zeal in the wake of these floods and other events in Rome.⁴⁹⁸ However, the increased confidence in Tiberius and resultant decrease in public panic in AD36 certainly did not demarcate any decline in Roman national pride. Rather, to the contrary, as Levick points out, generally

⁴⁹² Tac. *Ann.* 1. 76; Dio. 57. 14. 8.

⁴⁹³ Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 122.

⁴⁹⁴ Dio. 57. 14. 8.

⁴⁹⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 1. 76; Dio. 57. 14. 8.

⁴⁹⁶ Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 106; Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, 116.

⁴⁹⁷ Dio. 58. 26. 5; Zon. 11. 3.

⁴⁹⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 3. 64-65; 4. 30-34; Suet. *Tib.* 69.

speaking under Tiberius religion continued to be ‘an integral part of Roman state-craft’, and Tiberius, as Pontifex Maximus, was the state religion’s most senior priest and religious observer.⁴⁹⁹ However, Tiberius was not the same type of religious and political animal that Augustus was. He most certainly was religious and political, but he was also more thorough than Augustus in the extent to which his purpose for practical reform in relation to Tiber floods were firmly established. Admirably, Tiberius’ Tiber regulatory body had succeeded in responding so effectively after the flood of AD15 that by the time the Tiber flood of AD36 hit Rome intense public panic – of the kind that had been witnessed in AD15 – was nowhere near as intense as it had been previously, saving Rome much unnecessary chaos and social upheaval, which showed itself as a sign that the people of Rome had come to accept Tiberius as their stable ruler and the principate as the accepted form of government in increasing measure.⁵⁰⁰

4.1.2 *Fires in Rome*

Like flooding, fires continued to pose a significant threat to property and life under Tiberius’ principate just as it had done under Augustus’ own. Three particularly destructive fires, occurring in AD16, 27 and 36, actually gutted parts of Rome. Yet, Tiberius’ responses to each of these fires served the interests of all levels of Roman society admirably well. This earned Tiberius much respect, particularly outside the Senatorial orders.⁵⁰¹

The first of these fires took place in AD16. Few details about the path of this fire are provided by the ancient sources, apart from the fact that one of the buildings damaged was the Theatre of Pompey, which Tiberius began rebuilding immediately and had rededicated in AD22.⁵⁰² However, although we know little about the fire itself, we do possess various facts regarding Tiberius’ response to it that illuminate the extent of this fire and the damage it caused. We know, for instance, that the imperial family’s response was extremely generous, and this galvanised popular support for the imperial family very early on in Tiberius’ principate.⁵⁰³ According to Cassius Dio, both Tiberius and Livia rendered much monetary and logistical assistance to all victims in Rome. This in itself tells us that the fire was not confined to just the theatre of Pompey. Although explicit evidence is missing in our sources, given that this theatre was located in the Campus Martius, it is entirely possible that the fire damaged inhabited parts of Rome in and around the Campus Martius before or after it progressed to the Theatre of Pompey itself. In any case, what is far more certain is the clear fact that this generosity on the part of Tiberius and Livia extended well beyond Augustus’ purely politically-driven architectural responses. Not surprising, therefore, that Tiberius’ generous response to this natural disasters garnered such goodwill to Livia and himself in Rome.⁵⁰⁴

⁴⁹⁹ Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 102.

⁵⁰⁰ Dio. 57. 14. 8.

⁵⁰¹ Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 122.

⁵⁰² Tac. *Ann.* 3. 72.

⁵⁰³ Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 122.

⁵⁰⁴ Dio. 57. 16. 2.

Table 5: Major Fires in Rome Under the Principate of Tiberius.

Year	Source
AD16	Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 3. 72; Dio 57. 16. 2.
AD27	Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 4. 63-65; Suet. <i>Tib.</i> 48.
AD37	Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 6. 44-46; Dio 58. 26. 5-27.

The path of the fire of AD27 is just as poorly documented as that of AD16; however, thankfully we have a fuller picture of Tiberius' response, and those of other Romans' to it. What we do know about the fire, as told to us by Tacitus, is that this fire gutted the Caelian Hill in Rome. Many in Rome believed this fire to be a terrible omen, sent by the gods as a sign of displeasure over the emperor's recent retirement to the island of Caprae. However, even in his widely believed depraved retirement on Caprae, such was Tiberius' concern for Rome that he took even more generous, practical, and in many ways decisive, steps to help alleviate suffering and political division in the city. Tacitus states:

Tiberius disarmed criticism by distributing money in proportion to losses incurred. This earned him votes of thanks in the Senate by eminent members, and, as the news got round, a feeling of gratitude among the general public, because the donations were made without respecting persons or favouring relatives' petitions: sometimes the beneficiaries were unknown victims applying in response to the emperor's invitation.⁵⁰⁵

As a genuine gesture reflecting the esteem Tiberius was held in Rome, it was proposed that the Caelian Hill be renamed the 'Augustan Hill'. Suetonius would have us believe that it was Tiberius who forced this name change, however there is no evidence in Tacitus or elsewhere to suggest that this was so.⁵⁰⁶ And even if there is some truth to Suetonius' assertion, Tiberius was far from being the only emperor to perform such an act. Augustus had even renamed the entire city of Paphos in Cyprus 'Augusta' after he rebuilt it following an earthquake there.⁵⁰⁷ And, later, Gaius (Caligula) would rename a hill near Antioch 'The Hill of Gaius Caesar' after his engineers had cut an aqueduct to provide its citizens with a new water supply.⁵⁰⁸ Indeed, in comparison to these acts, one finds that the renaming of the Caelian Hill appears less an act of self-aggrandisement than those exhibited by Augustus and Gaius. Still, this was a deliberate move on Tiberius' part to reaffirm his place as Augustus' successor. The Augustan connection served Tiberius' interests, as Augustus would serve as the model, benchmark, and rallying standard for Tiberius' own principate. Thus, with the Theatre of Pompey – perhaps the greatest of all Late Republican buildings – burned down, and the renaming of parts of Rome in Augustus' honour, Rome was transformed and by increments transitioned more wholly from a republican city to an imperial capital under a dynastic family, and by honouring Augustus, in this way and others, Tiberius gave the

⁵⁰⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 4. 63-65.

⁵⁰⁶ Suet. *Tib.* 48.

⁵⁰⁷ See Chapter Three.

⁵⁰⁸ See Chapter Six.

appearance of continuity in himself with Augustus himself.⁵⁰⁹

In AD37 a third fire devastated the Aventine Hill and the Circus Maximus. According to Cassius Dio:

...the vicinity of the Circus and the Aventine was devastated by fire. To the sufferers... Tiberius contributed a hundred million sesterces.⁵¹⁰

Unlike Cicero, Crassus, and even Augustus, who profited from loss of property destroyed by floods and fires, Tiberius used his fame and largesse to provide aid and support for all those affected by this fire. Firstly, Tiberius defrayed the value of destroyed houses and apartment blocks in the basket-making district. Secondly, he then made up the difference out of his own purse to help Romans rebuild faster. This generous policy left him out-of-pocket by one hundred million sesterces. Yet, despite this considerable financial loss, these acts won him inestimable popularity in Rome, even so late on in his principate. Thirdly and finally, Tiberius then appointed a commission made up of the husbands of each of his four granddaughters, Cnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, Lucius Cassius Longinus, Marcus Vinicius, and Gaius Rubellius Blandus, plus one Publius Petronius, who was added to their number.⁵¹¹ This body of five Tiberius established with teams of advisers and workers in their train, to oversee the rebuilding of the properties and lives of all those affected by this fire. But unfortunately for Tiberius, as Tacitus records, the emperor was too close to death by that stage to enjoy the accolades he soon received from the Senate and people in gratitude for long, and died soon afterwards.⁵¹² According to Cassius Dio, many at the time believed that this fire portended Tiberius' approaching death, a logical conclusion given Tiberius' advanced age and imminent death. However, such a conclusion still cannot deny the wisdom and humanity that Tiberius exhibited in his thoroughly generous and thoughtful responses to this and other major fires in Rome; and this wisdom and humanity was put into practice not only to protect Tiberius' own reputation, but also to ensure the wellbeing and safety of all people living in Rome from a place of genuine concern on the part of the *princeps*.⁵¹³

4.2 THE AD17 EARTHQUAKE IN THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF ASIA

4.2.1 Sources

During Tiberius' principate in AD17 a vast and intense earthquake hit the Roman province of Asia. Strabo, writing under Tiberius, surveyed for himself the destruction this earthquake caused there firsthand, and wrote detailed descriptions of it in his *Geography*. In addition, Velleius Paterculus records the horror expressed by Romans at the time toward this event as well as their positive reception of Tiberius' response. Inscriptions which honour Tiberius and commemorate his restorations of numerous cities in Asia are also extant.

⁵⁰⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 4. 63-65.

⁵¹⁰ Dio 58. 26. 5.

⁵¹¹ Tac. *Ann.* 6. 44-46.

⁵¹² Tac. *Ann.* 6. 44-46.

⁵¹³ Dio 58. 26. 5-27; Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 122.

Later literary evidence for this earthquake and the Romans' responses to it include Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* and Seneca's *Natural Questions*. Also extant is Tacitus' description of both the earthquake itself and the responses by Asians and Romans. In addition, Suetonius' *Life of Tiberius* paints for us a valuable, if scandalised, general picture of Tiberius' attitude to destructive natural phenomena and his subjects generally, and Cassius Dio's *Roman History* adds details concerning Tiberius' generosity in funding the rebuilding of Asia.

4.2.2 Tacitus and the AD17 Earthquake

Tied up with any detailed analysis on the AD17 earthquake is the authorship of our main literary source, Tacitus' *Annals*. The following analysis proves the importance of Tacitus' account of the earthquake and Tiberius' response, for it was, as will be shown, written at the time of another major earthquake, that which hit Syria in AD115. Yet, although there are glaring stylistic similarities between Tacitus' account of the AD17 earthquake and Dio's description of the AD115 earthquake in Syrian Antioch (examined in parallel below), Tacitus as a source of information on Tiberius' response to this event are far more historically trustworthy than typical stylised exercises in rhetoric. In fact, Tacitus' account of Tiberius' response, although brief, is a mine's vein of valuable historical information that suits the purposes of this thesis especially and admirably well.

According to Tacitus' *Annals* itself:

In the same year [AD17] twelve famous cities in the province of Asia were overwhelmed by an earthquake. Its occurrence at night increased the surprise and destruction. Open ground – the usual place for refuge on such occasions [i.e. earthquakes] – afforded no escape, because the earth parted and swallowed the fugitives. There are stories of big mountains subsiding, of flat ground rising high in the air, of conflagrations bursting out among the debris. Sardis suffered worst and attracted most sympathy.⁵¹⁴

The method Tacitus employed in finding evidence for these claims is inextricably bound up with the dating of composition of the *Annals* itself. Until the mid-20th century, modern historians generally recognised that Tacitus published the *Annals* under Trajan in AD116. But, as to the methods Tacitus used to compose the *Annals*, and over what period of time it was written, were both deemed unknowable and was therefore largely passed over in silence. In 1957, all one historian, Clarence W. Mendell, wrote about the composition of the *Annals* in his book *Tacitus: The Man and His Work*, was simply that:

The *Annals* were probably “published” in 116, the last of the works of Tacitus to appear.⁵¹⁵

But, other than that, Mendell provided no further explanation.

But this uniformity was dismantled one year after Mendell's book was published, when

⁵¹⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 2. 47.

⁵¹⁵ Clarence W. Mendell, *Tacitus: The Man and His Work* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 225.

Syme published his two-volume work, entitled *Tacitus*. In that ground-breaking work, Syme argued that the *Annals* were not written under Trajan at all, but under Trajan's successor, Hadrian. This explains why, Syme put forward, the *Annals* is so negative towards Tiberius' military policy of non-aggression along the frontiers. That negative attitude was a veiled criticism of Hadrian's own policy to halt all further wars of Roman conquest. This also explained, Syme went on, why the *Annals* has so many descriptions of battles between Roman and Parthian armies in the Julio-Claudian period. Surely, Syme posited, Tacitus would never have devoted so much time and space in the *Annals* to these wars under the last years of Trajan's reign, when Trajan's own Parthian War, a war Trajan waged from 115, had proven such a spectacular failure, and one that ended only with Trajan's death in 117. Syme's answer to this was a resounding 'No'. However, Tacitus might have included his accounts of those wars, if he aimed to use them as rhetorical exercises, to encourage Hadrian to forget all about his Tiberius-like non-aggression policy, and emulate other, more exciting Roman generals in the *Annals*, like Corbulo, and launch a new war of conquest against the Parthians one more fitting to Rome's military reputation.⁵¹⁶

Over his lifetime, Syme would revise this theory, and in 1970, in his work *Ten Studies in Tacitus*, Syme hypothesised that given Tacitus' remark in *Annals* 2. 61, that at the time of writing it the Roman Empire extended to the 'Red Sea' or rather, the 'Persian Gulf' – an issue we shall turn to in following paragraphs – Tacitus' account of Tiberius' principate had to have been completed in AD116, but that later books in the *Annals*, especially those that deal with Nero had to have been written later on, with Hadrian in mind.⁵¹⁷ But then, in 1974, Syme altered this theory as well, arguing that since Suetonius' and Cassius Dio's portrayals of Tiberius are so similar to Tacitus' own, his portrayal of Tiberius' reign must be historical, and not a diatribe against either Trajan or Hadrian at all, and are not be political diatribes aimed at any contemporary emperor.⁵¹⁸

Today, there is consensus among historians that Syme's second theory discussed above, which argues to the effect that Tacitus began composing the *Annals* under Trajan, and finished them under Hadrian, is the more accurate appraisal.⁵¹⁹ However, the period of research for the *Annals* that Tacitus employed stretched back much further than Trajan's principate. According to Suetonius, Domitian modelled himself on Tiberius' personal notes and memoirs, a fact that Syme argued is reflected in the similar characteristics between the two emperors' principates.⁵²⁰ Drawing inspiration from Suetonius and Syme, Martin reiterated that by the time of the assassination of Domitian in 96, Tacitus had already long learnt the lessons of imperial concealment and intrigue so prominent throughout Tacitus'

⁵¹⁶ Ronald Syme, *Tacitus, Volume 2* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 746-782.

⁵¹⁷ Ronald Syme, *Ten Studies in Tacitus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 129.

⁵¹⁸ Ronald Syme, 'History or Biography: The Case of Tiberius Caesar', in *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 23, 4 (1974), 481-496.

⁵¹⁹ Dylan Sailor, *Writing and Empire in Tacitus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 256; Ronald Mellor, *Tacitus' Annals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 20; Herbert W. Benario, 'The Annals', in Victoria Emma Pagán (ed.) *A Companion to Tacitus* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 101-104; Victoria Emma Pagán, *Tacitus* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2017), 9.

⁵²⁰ Suet. *Dom.* 20; R. Syme, *Tacitus, Volume 1*, 422.

Tiberian books.⁵²¹ Then, in 1993 Bowersock demonstrated that Tacitus' accounts of events in Asia Minor under Tiberius were heavily influenced not only by his term as proconsul in that province in 112/113, but also by political events over the course of several decades leading up to 112/113, meaning that the historian could have written up those events in Asia Minor that appear in the Tiberian books of his *Annals* anytime from the completion of his previous work the *Histories* in 109 right through to 113/114, using personal notes dating back to the Flavian era.⁵²²

This thesis accepts and corroborates the above consensus. Yet, in spite of the lengthy period of time Tacitus took to write the *Annals*, this did not detract from his efforts to compose a single cohesive work – in fact, it appears to have proved helpful. For, O’Gorman has pointed out that Tiberius’s accession and the death of Nero constitute beginning and ending points of historical ideas in the *Annals* that reflect Tacitus’ own independent thoughts which transcend mere Trajanic or Hadrianic story-telling.⁵²³ Ash also reminds us that Tacitus was no court historian, intent on merely condemning his subjects to condemn contemporary imperial rulers. If anything, the *Annals* as a whole set forth the gradual decline of the Julio-Claudians that prequel the civil wars that open the *Histories*, in like-fashion to a Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, or even a Josephus, each of whom spent time composing lengthy preludes to the wars each intended to narrate.⁵²⁴ This view was endorsed by Gowing who in 2009 noted that the *Annals* were never simply a plain promotion or condemnation of either Trajan nor Hadrian,⁵²⁵ and Woodman in the same year suggested that far from being plain affirmation or condemnation, Tacitus’ *Annals* reflect interactions with Trajan that are not entirely positive or negative, but nuanced and deeply engaging, expanding upon Trajan’s ‘Restored Coinage’ of 112, which depicted those emperors that Trajan considered ‘good’ – emperors that included Julius Caesar, Augustus, Claudius, and Tiberius as well. Tacitus’ Tiberius would have two sides like a coin too, but while arguably one such side would be positive, the other would turn out overly stern, corrupted, and even scandalous, at times.⁵²⁶

In relation to Tacitus’ portrayal of the AD17 earthquake, the picture Tacitus paints is clearly unhistorical. An explanation for why Tacitus resorted to stylistic fiction may be found in the timing of its completion in AD116, in the months following the AD115 earthquake that hit Syrian Antioch. Observation of this timing holds important ramifications, for by cross- referencing Tacitus’ description of the AD17 earthquake with Dio’s account of the AD115 earthquake, it certainly appears that Tacitus drew most of his inspiration for the AD17

⁵²¹ Ronald Martin, *Tacitus* (London: Batsford, 1981), 31.

⁵²² G. W. Bowersock, ‘Tacitus and the Province of Asia’, in T. J. Luce, A. J. Woodman (eds.) *Tacitus and the Tacitean Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 3-10.

⁵²³ Ellen O’Gorman, *Irony and Misreading in the Annals of Tacitus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 126-127.

⁵²⁴ Rhiannon Ash, *Tacitus* (Bristol Classical Press, 2006), 79.

⁵²⁵ A. M. Gowing, ‘From the Annalists to the Annales: Latin Historiography Before Tacitus’, in A. J. Woodman (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Tacitus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 17-30, esp. 26.

⁵²⁶ A. J. Woodman, ‘Tacitus and the Contemporary Scene’ in A. J. Woodman (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Tacitus*, 31-43, esp. 42. On the ‘Restored Coinage’, see H. Mattingly, ‘The Restored Coins of Trajan’, in *NC*, 61 (1926), 232-278; H. Komnick, *Die Testitationsmünzen der frühen Kaiserzeit* (Berlin, 2001), 127; G. Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians. Herrschaftsdarstellung im Principat* (Stuttgart, 2004), 413-419.

earthquake not from events in AD17, but from this more recent earthquake that occurred only months earlier while the historian was still in the process of writing Book 2 of the *Annals*. Tacitus' description of the Asia Minor earthquake itself holds four important clues that that historian gained most of his information for that event, in 115, as set forth in the following table. Through comparison of Tacitus' and Dio's accounts, and especially by cross-referencing those words that appear in italics in both columns, it becomes abundantly clear that Tacitus lifted the conditions occasioned by this far more contemporary, and therefore far more topical, Syrian earthquake in 115, and transposed it into an AD17 context in Asia Minor, no doubt to stimulate a dramatic response in his immediate audience, which knew all about the 115 Syrian earthquake, but little about the AD17 Asia Minor earthquake itself.

Table 6: Parallels Between the Earthquake of AD17 in Tac. Ann. 2. 47, and the Earthquake of AD115 in Dio 68. 24. 1 – 25. 6.

Tac. Ann. 2. 47.

Its occurrence at night increased the *surprise* (graviorque) and destruction...

Open ground (solitum)– the usual refuge on such occasions afforded no escape, because the *swallowed* (hauriebantur) the fugitives...

There are stories of *big mountains subsiding*, (sedisse immensos montis) of flat ground *rising high in the air* (visa in arduo quae plana fuerint)...

Sardis suffered worst and attracted *most sympathy* (eosdem misericordiae traxit)...

Dio 68. 24. 1 – 25. 6.

And as Heaven continued the earthquake for several days and nights, the people were in *dire straits* (ἀμυχάνους)... (25. 2)

As for the people, many even who were *outside the houses* (ἐκτὸς τῶν οἰκιῶν) were hurt, being parted and *snatched up* (ἐπώνησαν)... (24. 4)

Even Mt. Casius itself was so shaken that its peaks seemed to lean over... *Other hills also settled* (ὅρη τε ἄλλα ὑφίζησε)... (25. 6)

The whole earth was up- heaved, and buildings *leaped into the air* (ἔπειτα βρασμὸς ἐπ' βραιότατος ἐπεγένετο)... (24. 3)

Antioch was the most *unfortunate of all* (ἐδυστύχησεν) ... (24. 1)

Of course, Cassius Dio wrote a century after Tacitus did. Thus, one might ponder whether Dio borrowed from Tacitus, rather than Tacitus borrowing from an event recorded by Dio a century later. But the answer seems 'unlikely'. In the manuscripts and epitomes of Dio's history there is no description of the AD17 Asia Minor earthquake, and if Dio believed Tacitus' account reliable, or if there were other good sources for that event, Dio would have at least attempted to describe it in some depth, as he does the 115 earthquake in Syria so near in style to the AD17 earthquake of the *Annals*. But it is worth noting that the only sources Tacitus admits to using for the Asia Minor earthquake, are the "stories" of "big mountains subsiding, of flat ground rising high into the air, of conflagrations bursting out among the debris". No doubt, Tacitus could have gotten some of his information about these events from interviews during his term as proconsul in Asia Minor. But that's where Tacitus' sources,

and indeed Dio's sources, dry up.⁵²⁷

This paucity of sources can be accounted for. As we shall see in the next section of this chapter, after the AD17 earthquake, the emperor Tiberius rebuilt Asia Minor from the ground up. Nearly a hundred years had transpired between this significant natural disaster and the writing of the *Annals* – no eye-witnesses were alive, and a new civic age had begun since then in Asia which bore no trace of earthquake damage, thanks largely to Tiberius' extensive reconstructive work throughout that province. Tacitus had to look elsewhere for information on what such an earthquake might have been like. When the earthquake occurred in AD115, Tacitus would have found a ready mine of information to underpin his narrative of events in Asia Minor dating to AD17. This line of argument is supported by Martin and Woodman's incisive observation that Tacitus' description of Rome's defensive network in the eastern provinces (*Annals* 4.5) emphasises Rome's exercise of power through cooperation with its Iberian and Albanian allies, and other satellite states. This simple statement is illuminating, for Iberia and Albania had been allies to Rome throughout the Flavian period, and their importance was heightened in the summer of AD114, when Trajan, at the summit at Elegeia in Armenia, installed a new king over Albania there, and received formal submission from the Iberians there too, as well as that of the Sarmatians from beyond the Caucasus. Thus, it seems, just as with respect to Tacitus' portrayal of Rome's eastern policy, so too in the case of Tacitus' portrayal of events in Asia Minor the historian derived inspiration from historical events stretching back into the Flavian period, but gained material for his *Annals* from far more recent, contemporary events under Trajan, for eventual composition in AD115.⁵²⁸

Now, we have seen that Trajan's Parthian War eventually proved a dismal failure, but it is also true that up until AD116 the campaign had actually progressed remarkably well. According to Dio, Trajan led his armies into Mesopotamia, and, in AD116, after taking the Parthian capital Ctesiphon, the *princeps* marched on to Messene to survey the Persian Gulf.⁵²⁹ Throughout the early twentieth century, many historians doubted Dio's testimony. However, that all changed when a Trajanic milestone dated to AD115/116 was discovered near Singara in northern-central Mesopotamia,⁵³⁰ and the ruins of a triumphal arch dating to AD116 were found at Dura-Europos on the mid-Euphrates, and that arch still featured a Latin inscription bearing the name Trajan.⁵³¹ These discoveries indicate that Trajan had begun to turn the region into a Roman province by that time.⁵³² Revealingly, Ash and Woodman note that the *Annals* do appear to have been composed with Trajan's successes up to that point in mind – given that there are no less than thirteen occasions on which Tacitus turns to Parthian affairs, which follow no strict history, their purpose appears to have been to animate in Tacitus'

⁵²⁷ See Table 7; Tac. *Ann.* 2. 47.

⁵²⁸ R. H. Martin, A. J. Woodman, *Tacitus: Annals Book IV* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 102. See also A. B. Bosworth, 'Arrian and the Alani', in *HSCP*, 81 (1977), 227 with note 41.

⁵²⁹ Dio. 68. 26-29.

⁵³⁰ *AE* 1927. 161; D. Oates, 'East Against West: 1. Rome and Parthia', in *Studies in the Ancient History of Northern Iraq* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 71-72.

⁵³¹ C. Hopkins, *The Discovery of Dura-Europos* (London: Yale University Press, 1979), 68.

⁵³² Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East: 31BC-AD337* (London: Harvard University Press, 1993), 101; J. Bennett, *Trajan: Optimus Princeps* (London: Routledge, 1997), 196, see note 67.

audience's imaginations the fighting conditions Trajan might have encountered in the East.⁵³³ Indeed, when we turn to the context for Tacitus' statement in the *Annals*, that at the time of its finishing touches the Roman Empire extended to the 'Red Sea' or the 'Persian Gulf', there are strong historical grounds for dating that particular statement, if not others in the *Annals*, to AD116.⁵³⁴ It is true that in the Roman period today's Red Sea, Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, were all considered parts of the 'Red Sea' as understood by Romans.⁵³⁵ However, a statement by Pliny the Elder, a source Tacitus relied heavily upon in the writing of the *Annals* and the *Histories*, reveals that it was common practice by the end of the first century to call the 'Persian Gulf' itself the 'Red Sea', and vice versa.⁵³⁶ As Pliny states:

'The Persians have always lived on the shore of the Red Sea, which is the reason why it is called the Persian Gulf... Finally they [Tigris and Euphrates] flow across Babylonia up to the Red Sea [the modern-day Persian Gulf]'.⁵³⁷

As for Gawlikowski's imaginative theory, that for many years after Trajan's death, Messene, a state on the Persian Gulf roughly equivalent in size and geographical location to modern-day Kuwait, remained a vassal state under Rome's overlordship;⁵³⁸ that theory is debunked by the simple historical fact that in a matter of days, or even hours, as Birley suggests, immediately after Trajan's death, Hadrian evacuated all Roman forces from Messene, Babylonia, and Mesopotamia. To quote the *Historia Augusta*:

...He [Hadrian] therefore gave up everything beyond the Euphrates and Tigris.⁵³⁹

In other words, whilst many Romans successfully traded in markets in Messene after Trajan, Messene was not a Roman province, nor part of the Roman Empire. Therefore, Tacitus' designation of the frontier of the empire as what we now call the Persian Gulf must have been written and published in AD116.

Taken together, given that Pliny the Elder was an important source for Tacitus, and given the Parthian context, and given the similarities that exist between Tacitus' description of the AD17 earthquake and the earthquake of 115, and given also that it appears Tacitus busily composed other parts of his treatment on Tiberius throughout much of 115 and into 116, the evidence clearly shows that Tacitus must have written his stylised portrait of the AD17 earthquake in Asia Minor in light of events in AD115, most notably the Syrian earthquake of that same year. Therefore, it is an unhistorical portrait borrowed not from the geographical setting of Asia Minor, nor events in AD17, but from an entirely separate place and time. Soon after he composed his portrait of the AD17 earthquake, Tacitus published his Tiberian books

⁵³³ See Tac. *Ann.* 2. 1-4, 50-60; 6. 14, 31-37, 41-44; 11. 8-10; 12. 10-14, 44-51; 13.6-9, 34-41; 14. 23-26; 15. 1-18, 24-31; R. Ash, 'An Exemplary Conflict: Tacitus' Parthian Battle Narrative (*Annals* 6. 34-35)', in *Phoenix*, 53 (1999), 114-135; A. J. Woodman, 'Tacitus and the Contemporary Scene', 41.

⁵³⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 2. 61.

⁵³⁵ Liv. 36. 17. 15; 42. 52. 14; 45. 9. 3-6; Strab. 17. 1. 25; 11. 13. 9; 17. 1. 6; Pl. *NH.* 2. 56; 2. 173; 2. 183; 6. 106; 6. 124; Stat. *Theb.* 4. 387-389; Plut. *Crassus.* 2.

⁵³⁶ On Tacitus' use of Pliny as an historical source, see Tac. *Ann.* 1. 69; 13. 20; 15. 53; *Hist.* 3. 28; A. M. Gowing, 'From the Annalists to the Annales', 17, 27.

⁵³⁷ Pl. *NH.* 6. 115.

⁵³⁸ M. Gawlikowski, 'Palmyra as a Trading Centre', in *Iraq*, 56 (1994), 27-33.

⁵³⁹ *HA, Hadrian*, 5. 3; On the brevity of time it might have taken for Hadrian to make this decision, see Anthony Birley, *Hadrian: The Restless Emperor* (London: Routledge, 1997), 78.

not long after also having learned that Trajan had surveyed the Persian Gulf from Messene in 116. As for Sailor's suggestion that Tacitus used Tiberius not as a veiled criticism of Hadrian, but rather as a rhetorical device to enhance Hadrian's positive differences to Tiberius,⁵⁴⁰ the same formula may be applied no less to Trajan. In fact, Tacitus may have deliberately sought to highlight Trajan's own contemporary military greatness, the unmentioned and unmentionable elephant in the room in AD116, over the lacklustre non-aggression policy of Tiberius – a contrast placed in sharp relief against the realism of Tacitus' accounts of Romano-Parthian conflicts in the *Annals*. However, by AD117, Trajan was dead and his Parthian War had come to nothing. It is often observed how little Tacitus' Tiberian books are used in later historical works including that of Cassius Dio. Perhaps the ultimate failure of the Parthian War – a war that those books seem to commemorate – proved to be the catalyst for the *Annals*' own demise.⁵⁴¹ However, there would be nothing unhistorical or misplaced about Tacitus' description of Tiberius' response to the AD17 earthquake, as the following section will demonstrate.

4.2.3 *Tiberius' Response to the AD17 Earthquake*

According to Tacitus, in AD17, when Asia was hit by the especially destructive earthquake:

...twelve famous cities in the province of Asia were overwhelmed by an earthquake... Tiberius promised it [Sardis] ten million sesterces and remitted all taxation by the Treasury or its imperially controlled branches for five years.

Magnesia-by-Sipylus came next, in damage and compensation. Exemptions from direct taxation were also authorised for Temnus, Philadelphia, Aegeae, Apollonis, Mostene (the Macedonian Hyrcanians), Hierocaesarea, Myrina, Cyme, and Tmolus. It was decided to send a senatorial inspector to rehabilitate the sufferers. The choice fell on an ex-praetor, Marcus Aletius. The governor of Asia was a former consul, so the embarrassments of rivalry between equals was avoided.⁵⁴²

Two important historical facts reflect the intensity and extent of the AD17 earthquake. Tacitus states that 'twelve famous cities' in Asia were 'overwhelmed' by the earthquake of AD17. He then lists eleven cities that he claims Tiberius 'also' exempted from direct taxation. These two categories of cities are not synonymous, nor are they interchangeable. Strabo, who was writing at the time of this earthquake, lists the twelve famous cities of Asia, otherwise known as the *koinon*, or commonwealth of cities, and that list is entirely different to Tacitus' eleven.⁵⁴³ In his list, Strabo includes Ephesus, Miletus, Myus, Lebedus, Colophon, Priene, Teos, Erythrae, Phocaea, Clazomenae, and the island *poleis* of Chios and Samos.⁵⁴⁴ These places, Strabo informs us, were all situated along the busy maritime coastline of Lydia and

⁵⁴⁰ Dylan Sailor, *Writing and Empire in Tacitus*, 256.

⁵⁴¹ Ronald Mellor, *Tacitus' Annals*, 126-127.

⁵⁴² Tac. *Ann.* 2. 47.

⁵⁴³ Strab. 14. 1. 3-4.

⁵⁴⁴ Strab. 14. 1. 3-4.

northwest Caria in the province of Asia.⁵⁴⁵ However, in Tacitus' list of eleven as quoted above, none of these 'famous' cities feature at all, and the eleven cities he lists were all located much further inland from the coast and centred around Sardis. Most likely, Tacitus mentions that the *koinon poleis* were damaged by this earthquake precisely because they were famous and well-known to his Roman audience. However, by stating that those cities in his list of eleven were 'also' exempted from direct taxation, and by the very act of listing them in full, Tacitus indicates that these eleven cities suffered most out of all Asian cities. Indeed, given the central location of Sardis amongst these eleven cities, and given also that Tacitus states that 'Sardis suffered worst', it is probable that the epicentre of this earthquake was very near that city. Indeed, Strabo states that 'many of its [Sardis'] buildings' were 'lost' through the earthquake.⁵⁴⁶ Moreover, Strabo was even of the opinion that the cult of Poseidon was so popular around Sardis, Philadelphia, Apameia, and Magnesia, due to the sheer frequency of earthquakes, like the AD17 earthquake, in that relatively small area.⁵⁴⁷

By calculation, these twelve famous cities, and Tacitus' list of eleven, when added together, attest to twenty-three cities that were damaged, eleven of them damaged most seriously. However, even that amount was not the total of the cities affected. An honorific inscription found at Puteoli, dated to AD30, commemorates Tiberius' 'restoration' of fourteen cities in Asia: including the eleven cities Tacitus lists; Ephesus, one of the *koinon* cities; and Cibyra and Hyrcania, two cities that do not appear in Strabo's list of twelve or Tacitus' list of eleven.⁵⁴⁸ James S. Murray puts this down to these cities dishonourably adding themselves to inscriptions on public monuments to gain greater fame and sympathy.⁵⁴⁹ However, given the geographical extent of this earthquake, it is to be expected that these two cities, were impacted by this earthquake, and may well have received help from the emperor Tiberius. Indeed, many smaller towns, villages, and hamlets throughout Asia were helped in the rebuilding process by Tiberius. Evidence exists that the village of Choriani, near Hierocaesarea,⁵⁵⁰ and the village of Gök Kaya, near Sardis, had also been seriously damaged by the earthquake and that both had also been generously rebuilt under Tiberius' orders, as well.⁵⁵¹

Thus, we have clear evidence of 25 whole cities that sustained earthquake damage in the province of Asia in AD17, together with several towns, and there may have been many more. However, it should not surprise the reader that Tacitus passed over mention of other cities, towns, and locations in Asia affected by this earthquake, By way of comparison, in Tacitus' brief reference to the Campanian earthquake of AD62, the historian mentions only that many

⁵⁴⁵ Strab. 8. 7. 1.

⁵⁴⁶ Strab. 13. 4. 8.

⁵⁴⁷ Strab. 12. 8. 18.

⁵⁴⁸ *ILS* I 156 = *CIL* X 1624; James S. Murray, 'The Urban Earthquake Imagery and Divine Judgement in John's Apocalypse', in *Novum Testamentum*, 47, 2 (2005), 53.

⁵⁴⁹ James S. Murray, 'The Urban Earthquake', 155.

⁵⁵⁰ *IGRP* 4. 1304 = *KP* 1. 113; Tac. *Ann.* 2. 47; 3. 62; Thomas Robert Shannon Broughton, 'Roman Landholding in Asia Minor', in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 65 (1934), 216.

⁵⁵¹ *IGRP* 4. 1348 = *KP* 1. 13, nos. 22-24; Tac. *Ann.* 1. 73; Thomas Robert Shannon Broughton, 'Roman Landholding', 216.

buildings in Pompeii sustained damage.⁵⁵² Of course, this is partly correct: modern scholarship provides consistent testimony to the fact that there are, even today, many signs at Pompeii of prolonged repair to buildings and other physical structures after sustaining earthquake damage in AD62.⁵⁵³ However, what Tacitus failed to mention is that many other cities in Campania were also damaged by the AD62 earthquake. Seneca, in his lengthy treatise on earthquakes, written within about a year after the Campanian earthquake of AD62, states that Naples, Herculaneum, Nuceria, and various other cities and towns throughout Campania were also damaged by that particular seismic event – testimony corroborated by an inscription in Herculaneum commemorating Vespasian’s restoration of the temple of the Mother of the Gods there, ‘that had fallen down through earthquake’ - a reflection of the extent of earthquake damage to public buildings in that city in AD62.⁵⁵⁴

Therefore, it should come to us as no surprise that Tacitus should not record every single instance of those Asian cities that had sustained damage from the AD17 earthquake. There were, in any case, too many to record in full in a work such as Tacitus’ *Annals*, which explains why Tacitus refers only to the most famous cities hit, and those ones hardest-hit. Little wonder, therefore, that Velleius Paterculus also provided no number of the cities damaged by the earthquake, nor the number for those that Tiberius restored. There were too many to list in a compendium such as his. Rather, he simply remarks with an inclusiveness of all the damaged cities in Asia in collective, general, terms:

The cities of Asia have been restored, the provinces have been freed from the oppression of their magistrates.⁵⁵⁵

Of course, Tacitus genuinely believed that the praises of the likes of Velleius for Tiberius were ‘fictitious’, ‘for fear of the consequences’, while accounts written after Tiberius’ death were ‘influenced by still raging animosities’. However, the scale of the natural disaster that was the earthquake of AD17, and Tiberius’ comprehensive and generous response to so many cities, towns, and villages throughout Asia, appears to have warranted a genuine and sincere

⁵⁵² Tac. *Ann.* 15. 22.

⁵⁵³ Ray Laurence, *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society* (London: Routledge, 1994), 4, 35; Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 98, 122-123; Alison E. Cooley, M. G. L. Cooley, *Pompeii: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2004), plates 3. 1 and 3. 2; Alex Butterworth, Ray Laurence, *Pompeii: The Living City* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2005), 156-162, 174-176, 180-182, 188, 205; R. Ling, *Pompeii: History, Life and Afterlife* (Stroud: Tempus, 2005), 88-95; Jean-Paul Descoeudres, ‘History and Historical Sources’, in John J. Dobbins, Pedar W. Foss (eds.) *The World of Pompeii* (London: Routledge, 2007), 18-19; Haraldur Sigurdsson, ‘The Environmental and Geomorphological Context of the Volcano’, in John J. Dobbins, Pedar W. Foss (eds.) *The World of Pompeii*, 49-50; Jean-Pierre Adam, ‘Building Materials, Construction Techniques and Chronologies’, in John J. Dobbins, Pedar W. Foss (eds.) *The World of Pompeii*, 108-109; Roger Ling, ‘Development of Pompeii’s Public Landscape in the Roman Period’, in John J. Dobbins, Pedar W. Foss (eds.) *The World of Pompeii*, 125-126; John J. Dobbins, ‘The Forum and its Dependencies’, in John J. Dobbins, Pedar W. Foss (eds.) *The World of Pompeii*, 173-175; Rick Jones, Damian Robinson, ‘Intensification, Heterogeneity and Power in the Development of Insula VI. I’, in John J. Dobbins, Pedar W. Foss (eds.) *The World of Pompeii*, 401-403.

However, in opposition to this broad consensus, Mary Beard advocates that much of the earthquake damage still visible at Pompeii was caused by the less destructive, but prolonged, seismic activity leading up to the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD79. See Mary Beard, *The Fires of Vesuvius: Pompeii Lost and Found* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 13-15, 118-119.

⁵⁵⁴ Sen. *NQ.* 6. 1. 1-3; *CIL* X 1406 = MN inv. 3708; Alex Butterworth, Ray Laurence, *Pompeii*, 156-157.

⁵⁵⁵ Vell. *Pat.* 2. 126. 4.

admiration on Velleius' part, meaning that his praise for Tiberius in this case does become more understandable and less contrived than Tacitus might have wished readers to believe.⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 1. 1; R. Syme, *Tacitus, Volume I*, 367-368.

Table 7: All Attested Cities Damaged By the AD17 Earthquake

Strabo 14. 1. 3-4	Tac. Ann. 2. 47	ILS I 156 = CIL X 1624
<i>Ephesus</i>	Sardis	Sardis
<i>Miletus</i>	Magnesia-by-Sipylus	Magnesia-by-Sipylus
<i>Myus</i>	Temnus	Temnus
<i>Lebedus</i>	Philadelphia	Philadelphia
<i>Colophon</i>	Aegeae	Aegeae
<i>Priene</i>	Apollonis	Apollonis
<i>Teos</i>	Mostene	Mostene
<i>Erythrae</i>	Hierocaesarea	Hierocaesarea
<i>Phocaea</i>	Myrina	Myrina
<i>Clazomenae</i>	Cyme	Cyme
<i>Chios</i>	Tmolus	Tmolus
<i>Samos</i>		<i>Ephesus</i>
		Cibyra
		Hyrkania

Key:

Plain – Feature in Tac. Ann. 2. 47.

Italics – Feature in Strabo 14. 1. 3-4.

Bold – Feature in neither Tac. Ann. 2. 47 nor Strabo 14. 1. 3-4.

However, Velleius' endorsement for Tiberius was not shared by all Romans at the time. Suetonius drew upon senatorial sources contemporary and hostile to Tiberius, whose memoirs made Suetonius himself believe that Tiberius was 'close-fisted to the point of miserliness' with regard to disaster aid.⁵⁵⁷ Indeed, Suetonius records only grudging senatorial praise for Tiberius's response to the AD17 earthquake:

The only free money grant any province got from him [Tiberius] was when an earthquake destroyed some cities in Asia Minor.⁵⁵⁸

Thus, Tacitus and his sources were not alone in their negative assessment of Tiberius' qualities as a ruler. Suetonius and his sources may be added to them.

These negative portrayals of Tiberius mean that the generosity of his response to the earthquake of AD17 appears somewhat out of character. Certainly, other earthquake-stricken

⁵⁵⁷ Suet. Tib. 46.

⁵⁵⁸ Suet. Tib. 48.

regions comparable in size to the province of Asia, such as southern Italy and Sicily, and Thessaly, most certainly received financial and logistic support, but not on the scale of that received by Asia following the AD17 earthquake – even despite that fact that each experienced earthquakes of similar magnitude to Asia's. However, unlike those earthquakes, this seismic event damaged numerous wealthy cities with large urban layouts in the province of Asia, while those in less populated and less wealthy regions in Italy, Thessaly and Judea caused far less structural and economic damage to the empire. Thus, together with the other factors discussed in turn below, it was in fact acutely economically expedient to rebuild the densely populated and wealthy cities of Asia as lavishly as Tiberius did.⁵⁵⁹

Tiberius rebuilt the central cities of Lydia in Asia on a lavish and vast scale. Archaeologists have unearthed traces of Tiberius' post-earthquake rebuilding of Sardis, and the sheer scale of the gymnasium that Tiberius had built there after the AD17 earthquake, with its monumental size and classic Roman style and symmetry, tells us much about the scale, the grandeur, and the importance of these cities in Tiberius' vision for the province following this earthquake, and belief that this would ensure he remain politically relevant to Rome and its provinces for years to follow.⁵⁶⁰ Besides the gymnasium at Sardis, archaeologists have found that the street network was rebuilt at precisely this time, and that a new water supply was installed. In addition, it seems that earthquake resistant building methods were experimented with in Asia Minor at this time as well. All this indicates that Aletius re-established Sardis with long-term guidelines upon Tiberius' instructions.⁵⁶¹

However, although many of Rome's senators saw the sense in rebuilding Asia on a grand scale, most begrudged Tiberius' personal oversight of that enterprise. Not only had Tiberius intervened in a senatorial province, effectively robbing senators of the chance to make their personal mark in Asia, but Tiberius did so with his own grandiose plans to the fore, *and* on an ostentatiously vast scale. Senators responded by condemnation of Tiberius' prioritisation of construction in Asia over Rome. Channelling senatorial sources hostile to Tiberius,⁵⁶² Suetonius observes:

No magnificent public works marked his [Tiberius'] reign: his only two undertakings, the erection of Augustus' Temple and the restoration of Pompey's Theatre, still remained uncompleted at the end of all those years.⁵⁶³

Another less pressing reason for Tiberius' enthusiasm in rebuilding Asia was his renowned philhellenism.⁵⁶⁴ Tiberius was heavily influenced by Greek culture ever since his

⁵⁵⁹ On Italy and Thessaly, see Chapter Five of this thesis. On the wealth and importance of the cities of Asia, see B. M. Levick, 'Greece (Including Crete and Cyprus) and Asia Minor from 43 B.C. to A. D. 69', in *CAH* X², 641-675, esp. 672-675.

⁵⁶⁰ G. Hanfmann, *From Croesus to Constantine* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1975), 42; James S. Murray, 'The Urban Earthquake', 153.

⁵⁶¹ George M. A. Hanfmann, *Sardes from Prehistoric to Roman Times* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 141-144; Peter Herrmann, 'Sardes zur Zeit der iulisch-claudischen Kaiser', in Elmar Schwertheim (ed.) *Forschungen in Lydien*. Asia Minor Studien 17 (Habelt, 1995), 29; Mischa Meier, 'Roman Emperors and "Natural Disasters" in the First Century A.D.', 19.

⁵⁶² Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius*, 63-64.

⁵⁶³ Suet. *Tib.* 47.

⁵⁶⁴ Suet. *Tib.* 70-71.

youth, and Rutledge argues that such philhellenism contributed to his decision to respond to this earthquake as he did.⁵⁶⁵ But this philhellenism extended only so far. Tiberius would not respond with anywhere near the same generosity after other earthquakes took place later in the province of Asia, nor did he respond to the cities of Greece with the same kindness and determination when they suffered earthquake damage.⁵⁶⁶

However, economic concern and philhellenism paled before Tiberius' primary motivation for rebuilding Lydia and the wider Asian region from the ground up, that of political exhibitionism, as the vast grandeur of his restored Asian cities showed.⁵⁶⁷ Tiberius had contended for power with Rome's senators ever since succeeding Augustus, and his intervention in the senatorial province of Asia beacons that Tiberius would tolerate no rival. According to Tacitus, the succession had not unfolded smoothly. There was talk in Rome of impending civil war, and rumours among Romans that Agrippa Postumus or Germanicus, who controlled the eight Rhine legions and who would flout and show contempt for Tiberius' imperial policy by illegally touring Egypt, were themselves considered potential successors by Augustus. That one or the other might make a worthy emperor further added to instability.⁵⁶⁸ Such expressions of internal dissent were not constrained to the lower levels of society either. Upon his accession, only after Tiberius had secured the allegiance of the consuls, the Praetorian Guard in Rome, and control of the corn supply in Egypt, thus gaining an unassailable strategic power-base throughout the empire, did he finally receive the promise of allegiance by the Senate.⁵⁶⁹ Then, in order to maintain control and public order, Tiberius punished the senators Gaius Asinius Gallus and Lucius Arruntius who had offended him.⁵⁷⁰ But such harshness served only to aggravate civil unrest, which in turn, only served to aggravate the emperor. As a result, in AD16 Tiberius embarked upon the first of his notorious years-long string of treason trials, and condemned Marcus Scribonius Libo Drusus to death for looking into astrological predictions concerning Tiberius' future, and presumably, the conditions surrounding his death. As a sign of internal submission, sincere or contrived, Rome's senators expressed their support for the *princeps* by declaring holidays of public thanksgiving for his escape from possible assassination.⁵⁷¹

Tiberius' harshness then gave rise to an attempted coup when, on the island of Planasia, a slave named Clemens disguised himself as the deceased Agrippa Postumus and made for Rome. There he would make a bid for the principate, and a number of senators, equites, and some members of Tiberius' own palatial court advised and subsidised him with funds in order to rid themselves of Tiberius. However, upon learning of these plots, Tiberius had his guards capture Clemens, and bring him secretly to the palace, whereupon the *princeps* had him executed.⁵⁷²

⁵⁶⁵ Steven H. Rutledge, 'Tiberius' Philhellenism', in *The Classical World*, 101, 4 (2008), 454-455, 467.

⁵⁶⁶ See Chapter Five.

⁵⁶⁷ B. Levick, 'Greece (Including Crete and Cyprus) and Asia Minor from 43 B.C. to A.D. 69', in *CAH X2*, 648.

⁵⁶⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 1. 1-6.

⁵⁶⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 1. 6-7.

⁵⁷⁰ Tac. *Ann.* 1. 11-13.

⁵⁷¹ Tac. *Ann.* 2. 26-31.

⁵⁷² Tac. *Ann.* 2. 38-40.

Eventually discerning that such an aggressive policy was not serving his own interests entirely well, Tiberius embarked upon a different course. In order to regain popularity in Rome, in early AD17 Tiberius decreed Germanicus a triumph through the city. Although Germanicus' war against the Germans had not yet been brought to a completion, Tiberius decreed it terminated,⁵⁷³ believing that more could be achieved in Germany through diplomacy rather than war.⁵⁷⁴ But, once the triumph was over and public concord restored, Tiberius immediately commissioned Germanicus and Cnaeus Calpurnius Piso to the eastern provinces.⁵⁷⁵

Debate still rages as to Tiberius' motives for deploying Germanicus and Piso to the East together. Tacitus states that Piso was commissioned by the emperor to be Germanicus' adviser in order to undermine the prince at every turn, whereas some modern historians argue that the purpose of Germanicus' commission to the East was to monitor Piso, who had opposed Tiberius openly on several occasions and had been given Syria as a province by the *princeps* to secure the support of the Senate.⁵⁷⁶ No doubt, such considerations had a part to play in the final decision, but clearly, Tiberius' prime intension was to remove these two powerful figures from Rome.⁵⁷⁷ By removing Piso, who had shown open dissent, and Rome's darling Germanicus – grandson of the *triumvir* Marc Antony, the political rival of Tiberius' own imperial predecessor – with the lure of a glorious commission in the eastern provinces, Tiberius made an emphatic statement to Rome's senators that he would not be trifled with any longer. Loyalty would secure them glorious provincial commissions, but disloyalty would result in the likes of their most famous members, like Piso, having to endure the public disgrace and humiliation of taking orders from a young and inexperienced imperial commander such as Germanicus, whose imperium depended entirely upon Tiberius.⁵⁷⁸

It was at that point that Tiberius announced he would rebuild the twelve cities of Asia. Seen in its historical and political contexts, therefore, the timing of this announcement stands this rebuilding endeavour as an external response by the emperor not only to the destructiveness of the earthquake in Asia, but as a fresh public display by Tiberius of his own power through magnanimous imperial benevolence, and these actions were clearly intended to remind senators that it was Tiberius alone who had the power to intervene in any part of the empire, even the senatorial province of Asia itself, if so ever, and whenever, he might wish.⁵⁷⁹ Thus, as Barbara Levick notes, Tiberius needed desperately to cement his 'reputation' and 'serviceability to the state' in the eyes of his provincial subjects after Augustus' death, and thereby reinforce his claim 'to merit as the highest authority in the whole Roman world'. By responding to the AD17 earthquake as he did on such a grand scale,

⁵⁷³ Tac. *Ann.* 2. 40.

⁵⁷⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 2. 24-26.

⁵⁷⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 2. 42-44.

⁵⁷⁶ E. S. Beesley, *Catiline, Clodius, and Tiberius* (Chapman and Hall, 1924), 125-126; Terence T. Rapke, 'Tiberius, Piso, and Germanicus', in *Acta Classica*, 25 (1982), 62-64; Fred K. Drogula, 'Who Was Watching Whom? A Reassessment of the Conflict Between Germanicus and Piso', in *The American Journal of Philology*, 136, 1 (2015), 123-124, 130, 141, 146, 150.

⁵⁷⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 2. 42-44.

⁵⁷⁸ See Fred K. Drogula 'Who Was Watching Whom?', 123-124, 130, 141, 146, 150.

⁵⁷⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 2. 41-47.

Tiberius effectively achieved that end.⁵⁸⁰ Up until this point, Tiberius' own legitimacy as rightful emperor rested largely upon Augustus' own dynastic accomplishments, military achievements, and fame. However, if Tiberius would not touch the Rome that Augustus rebuilt and had effectively re-founded, Tiberius would nevertheless attempt to equal or even surpass Augustus in other ways and by other means, in this case by rebuilding and effectively becoming re-founder not just of one city in Italy, but of many cities of Asia on a similarly massive scale to Augustus' architectural achievements in Rome itself.⁵⁸¹

And yet, despite Tiberius' display of power over Asia and other parts of the empire, Asia was a senatorial province in which senators were accustomed to leaving their own imprint through political patronage. For this reason, Tiberius' interference there proved extremely unpopular among Rome's senators. If Tiberius had sought to dispel all sense of rivalry between senators and himself, he failed, adding weight to Tiberius' comment, recorded by Suetonius, that the running of the Roman state with its traditional ruling body – the Senate – was like holding 'a wolf by the ears'.⁵⁸²

Romans, like Pliny the Elder, who was alive at the time of the AD17 earthquake, believed that the AD17 earthquake and all other earthquakes were *prodigia* signifying the gods' displeasure with the state, which in this case was personified in Tiberius. As the Elder Pliny put it:

An earthquake does not represent a simple disaster, nor is the danger confined to the earthquake itself, but equally, or more so, it is dangerous as an omen for the future. The city of Rome never experienced an earthquake without this being forewarning that something was about to happen.⁵⁸³

For Tacitus, the earthquake portended a gradual decline he detected in the Julio-Claudian dynasty, even from AD17 at the very beginning on Tiberius' principate – a decline that would slowly contribute to the civil wars of AD69. However, in AD17, those civil wars were not foreseen, and nor were they even yet expected. In fact, it is simply true to conclude only that in AD17 Tiberius made the best out of a most destructive of earthquakes in Asia with little thought for any decline in either his, or Rome's, fortunes.

4.2.4 *The Restoration of the Asian Cities: The Roles of Slave Workers and Slave Masters*

The Roman response to the AD17 earthquake was not solely limited to Tiberius and the Senate. In fact, it would see the mobilisation of vast workforces drawn from Rome, Italy, and across the empire. All levels of Roman society were conscripted into the rebuilding of the Asian cities, levels whose contributions to this disaster relief effort are set forth in the sections that follow, and may be followed as a rough rule in most of the cases of imperial natural disaster relief responses included within this thesis. Among those conscripted, at the most basic and lowest levels of Roman society, were the slaves. Most of the slaves used by Aletius

⁵⁸⁰ Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician* (Croom Helm Ltd., 1976), 87, 89.

⁵⁸¹ Tac. *Ann.* 1. 77; 4. 37; A. J. Woodman, R. H. Martin, *The Annals of Tacitus, Book 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), section *Ann.* 3. 56. 3; B. Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 82-83.

⁵⁸² For this quote, see Suet. *Tib.* 25.

⁵⁸³ Pl. *NH.* 2. 200.

to carry out the physically demanding and laborious tasks in rebuilding the twelve Asian cities would have been familiar with conditions in Asia Minor, as most were either originally from there, or their ancestors from previous generations were. Asia Minor already had a history in slave trade long before the Roman period, and there existed a thriving slave-market centre in Ephesus. Local slaves during the pre-Roman period were usually sold in Ephesus to the slave-traders from Sardis, and these would then be transported into the Asian interior for service. In Roman times these practices were maintained, although the nationality of the purchasers of local slaves underwent considerable change with an influx of high numbers of Romans; and since slaves from Asia Minor were often considered the most highly prized of all slaves by the majority of Romans, even more slaves from Asia Minor were purchased from local free Greek merchants and freedmen agents by their Roman masters.⁵⁸⁴

The slaves deployed to rebuild the twelve cities performed a range of tasks. While the vast majority of slaves performed only the most menial tasks like those in mines, others with useful skills or an education served as overseers (*vilici*) who kept watch over the unskilled workforce, and made sure they worked efficiently.⁵⁸⁵ Other slaves with skills and learning included: slave architects (*architecti*), marble cutters (*marmorarii*), masons (*fabri*), and smiths (*servi arte fabrica periti*) directed the work of the raw slave manpower, and that manpower's basic needs were also met by female 'housekeepers' (*focarii*), water carriers (*aquarii*), bread bakers (*pistori*), provisions keepers (*promi*), and storekeepers (*cellarii*). This vast workforce's clothing was supplied and mended by weavers (*lanificae*) and menders (*sarcinatori*).⁵⁸⁶

These slaves were generally forced to perform their roles in the rebuilding of the Asian cities by a carrot-and-stick approach on behalf of their masters. To garner their obedience, slaves could earn certain freedoms bestowed by their Roman masters for good behaviour. Thus many were, according to Columella, well-clothed, well-fed and bathed, and allowed to marry.⁵⁸⁷ Moreover, according to other sources many slaves were even allowed to enjoy official holidays, and papyri from Egypt even refers to instances where slaves could take extended holiday breaks.⁵⁸⁸ Furthermore, if a slave served a master well, then such a slave could theoretically, and in practice, be granted manumission, effectively making them

⁵⁸⁴ M. L. Gordon, 'The Nationality of Slaves Under the Early Roman Empire', in *Journal of Roman Studies*, 14 (1924), 93, 99, 104; M. I. Finley (ed.) *Slavery in Classical Antiquity: Views and Controversies* (Barnes and Noble, 1968), 171-172, 177, 182.

⁵⁸⁵ Leonhard Schumacher, 'On the Status of Private Actores, Dispensatores and Vilici', in Ulrike Roth (ed.) *By the Sweat of Your Brow: Roman Slavery in Its Socio-Economic Setting* (Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, 2010), 41.

⁵⁸⁶ Digest, 33. 7; Keith Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome* (Cambridge University Press, 1996) 59-60, 63, Tables 1, 2, and 4.

⁵⁸⁷ Columella, *R. R.* 1. 6. 3; 1. 6. 19-20; 1. 8. 5, 9, 15, 19; 11. 1. 21; 12. 1. 6; 12. 3. 7; K. R. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control* (Oxford University Press, 1987), 21-22.

⁵⁸⁸ Matronalia: Macrobian *Sat.* 1. 12. 7; Lydus, *De Mens.* 3. 22; Fors Fortuna: Cic. *De Fin.* 5. 70; Ov. *F.* 6. 771-780; August 13: Plut. *QR.* 100; Festus, *De Verb Signif.* Saturnalia: Sen. *Ep.* 47. 14; Ath. 14. 639b; Iust. 43. 1. 4; Dio. 60. 19. 3; Compitalia: D. H. 4. 14. 3-4; Extended holiday breaks: *P. Oxy.* 725, 1647, 2586, 2971; *P. Fouad* 37; On slaves and holidays generally, see J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatverwaltung, III* (Leipzig, 1878), 197-200, 548-554, 562-564; K. Latte, *Römische Religionsgeschichte* (Munich, 1960), 254; J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*³ Part VI, *The Scapegoat* (London, 1966), 306-308; G. Dumézil, *Archaic Roman Religion* (Chicago, 1970, II, 618; K. R. Bradley, 'Holidays for Slaves', in *SO*, 54 (1979) 111-113; K. R. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters*, 40.

potential heirs to their former master's property.⁵⁸⁹ To illustrate the frequency of this phenomenon, out of all the known Roman epitaphs that mention slaves used for building projects, not unlike those used throughout the period of duration of the rebuilding of the twelve cities of Asia between AD17-22, 7.6 percent state that they had actually been manumitted.⁵⁹⁰ And, in certain families this figure was often much higher. For instance, in the Columbaria of the elite Roman family Statilii, near the Porta Maggiore, with its three large chambers and 427 inscriptions, of all the slaves mentioned in them up to 32 percent were freedmen; and in the Columbaria of the Volusii family, near the Via Appia, 46 percent of the 191 inscriptions there record instances of manumitted slaves.⁵⁹¹ Once manumitted, ex-slaves could then seek to earn Roman citizenship, that is, if they could bring themselves to embrace the prevailing Roman ideal of achieved status – an ideal that promised achievements, but only in a rigidly tiered, hierarchical empire – but an ideal nonetheless that if embraced could deliver considerable improvements in living conditions as well as a renewed sense of personal and familial dignity.⁵⁹²

As for slave masters, like those who owned the slaves who were employed in Asia in AD17-22 these varied in the extent they would exhibit to their enslaved labourers. Still, many Romans who had slaves, such as Varro, Cicero, Cato, Seneca, and Dio Chrysostom did famously advocate that slaves should be treated thus well in order that they work more productively.⁵⁹³ However, when these methods were not successful, masters often reverted to blunt force. This is why the Apostle Paul, Jesus' disciple Peter, and other Christian leaders of the first century encouraged Christian slaves to obey their masters with fear for their own safety,⁵⁹⁴ for, as Seneca testifies to with disdain, especially harsh punishments were dealt to slaves by many Roman masters, which included beatings, whippings and chained imprisonment, and these punishments often exacerbated intense fear in slaves, as reflected throughout the theatrical plays of the Roman playwright, Plautus.⁵⁹⁵

These are the types of conditions maintained for slaves and their slave masters throughout the rebuilding process of the twelve cities of Asia. However, whilst it seems –

⁵⁸⁹ Natalie Boymel Kampen, 'Slaves and Liberti in the Roman Army', in Michele George (ed.) *Roman Slavery and Roman Material Culture* (University of Toronto Press, 2013), 191.

⁵⁹⁰ S. R. Joshel, *Work, Identity and Legal Status at Rome* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 127, Table 5. 2; Sandra R. Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) 188, 190.

⁵⁹¹ Henrik Mouritsen, 'Slavery and Manumission in the Roman Elite: A Study of the Columbaria of the Volusii and the Statilii', in Michele George (ed.) *Roman Slavery and Roman Material Culture*, 44-46.

⁵⁹² Ulrike Roth, 'Peculium, Freedom, Citizenship: Golden Triangle or Vicious Circle? An Act in Two Parts', in Ulrike Roth (ed.) *By the Sweat of Your Brow*, 94, 115-116, 118, 120.

⁵⁹³ Varro, *R. R.* 1. 17. 5-7; Cicero, *On Dut.* 1. 13; Cato, *De Ag.* 5. 2., 4, 6; Sen. *Ep.* 47. 4; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 14. 10; On Varro and slavery, see E. Maróti, 'The Vilicus and the Villa-System in Ancient Italy', in *Oikumene*, 1 (1976), 109-124, esp. 120. On Seneca and slavery, see P. A. Milani, *La schiavitù nel pensiero politico dei greci al basso medio evo* (Milan, 1972), 212-214; M. T. Griffin, *Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford University Press, 1976), 256-258; On Dio Chrysostom and slavery, see P. Creția, 'Dion de Pruse et l'esclavage', in *StudClas*, 3 (1961), 369-375; P. A. Brunt, 'Aspects of the Social Thought of Dio Chrysostom and of the Stoics', in *PCPhS*, 19² (1973), 9-34. See also K. R. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters*, 23-25. On the use of the fair treatment of slaves for greater productivity, see M. I. Finley, 'A Peculiar Institution?', in *Times Literary Supplement* (1976), 819-821, see esp. 819; 108, 111; K. R. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters*, 25.

⁵⁹⁴ Eph. 6:5; 1 Pet. 2: 18; Did 4:11; Barn. 19. 7.

⁵⁹⁵ Sen. *Dialogue 5: On Anger*, 3. 24; Plaut. *Amph.* 291-310; *Pseud.* 11-3-1120; *Most.* 859-870; Thomas Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman Slavery*, 179; Michele George, 'Cupid Punished: Reflections on a Roman Genre Scene', in Michele George (ed.) *Roman Slavery and Roman Material Culture*, 173.

given the speed of the work involved and its successful conclusion in five years - that many slaves must have worked especially diligently on the rebuilding these cities, it is also clear that there were many slaves who shirked labour altogether. Resistance to work was a feature among slaves under the Roman Empire, but in some cases slaves might actually fight back and either do physical harm to their masters or even attempt to escape from them altogether.⁵⁹⁶ Although there is no evidence for the former during the restoration of the twelve cities of Asia, there is, however, solid proof that the latter did take place during this restoration or soon thereafter: one inscription from Cibyra states that after an earthquake around this time – presumably either that of AD17 or AD23 – up to one hundred and seven publically owned slaves escaped their masters and fled the city altogether. Clearly, they preferred freedom to brutality from their masters during Cibyra’s rebuilding, and if they had once come from Asia Minor, which was where most of the slaves restoring the twelve cities were from, they may have even used their knowledge of the terrain, culture, and language to hide and sustain themselves while they absconded. However, their freedom was short-lived, for not only had rewards been put in place by the Roman state for the return of runaway slaves, but it was also Roman law that all Romans, regardless of their station or opinions on slavery, were obligated to return all absconded slaves to their masters.⁵⁹⁷ Not surprisingly then, this same inscription concludes by assuring its readers that all of these 107 slaves were soon recaptured and forcibly repatriated. Thereupon, these were duly punished, and put to use in Cibyra’s rebuilding once again, if not to use in the rebuilding of the other Asian cities, as well.⁵⁹⁸

4.2.5 *The Role of Rome’s Legions in the Restoration of Asia*

As for the on-the-ground leading roles in the rebuilding process of the Asian cities following the AD17 earthquake, these honours fell largely to Rome’s military officers and legions, just as they did in the aftermaths of most of the large-scale natural disasters that occurred throughout the provinces of the Roman Empire. Some modern historians actually dispute this fact on their premise that the rebuilding of a town or city affected by natural disasters such as earthquakes generally fell to the local familial duty and local social structures,⁵⁹⁹ and without doubt, this is a correct assessment in many cases of localised troubles around the empire. However, in all examples of ancient descriptions of military responses to natural disasters, these reveal that with regard to large-scale disasters, such as the AD17 earthquake, the Roman army and navy did, in fact, take the leading roles in disaster relief efforts. Hence, as Pliny the Younger famously recorded, during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, it was his uncle Pliny the Elder, who as the naval commander stations across the Bay of Naples at Misenum, responded by launching rescue missions with his naval fleet stationed there specifically to help the victims of the eruption’s fallout.⁶⁰⁰ Furthermore, as Tacitus relates, in the aftermath of the AD64 fire in Rome, it was the Roman army which took the leading role in sourcing better water supplies for Rome to douse fires there in the

⁵⁹⁶ Pl. *Ep.* 3. 14; Thomas Wiedmann, *Greek and Roman Slavery*, 188.

⁵⁹⁷ *Digest.* 11. 4. 1; Ulpian, *On the Edict*, 1; Thomas Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman Slavery*, 190.

⁵⁹⁸ *IGR* 4. 914; Jerry Toner, *Roman Disasters*, 38.

⁵⁹⁹ Jerry Toner, *Roman Disasters*, 45, 47, 49, 52.

⁶⁰⁰ Pl. *Ep.* 6. 16. 1-21.

future.⁶⁰¹ Needless to say, though, a high level of cooperation and liaison certainly must have existed between the Roman army and local officials in Asia on the ground in that province between AD17-22 in order for the work there to have been carried through so remarkably successfully, and in such a short space of time. Moreover, in relation to the army's role in the restoration of Asia, besides being leaders in the chain of command, engineers employed by Rome's legions took charge of building works, the transport of materials, and architectural design, and often used the legions as their workforce. For, Roman armies constructed roads, bridges, forts and fortresses all over the empire, and some even diverted and widened streams and excavated mines – and all this under the watchful direction of Rome's military engineers.⁶⁰²

4.2.6 *Imperial and Local Overseers*

Notwithstanding the army's presence, there are also examples of supervisors and engineers from outside the army also taking leading roles in the rebuilding of Lydia and the rest of Asia, both at the local and imperial levels, as in the cases of other natural disaster rebuilding efforts. The larger cities of Asia Minor, like those among the twelve cities, employed professional supervisors who oversaw the building of impressive monuments in their respective cities, as did other large cities of the empire, especially in the West. Even those cities which were smaller could usually only afford to employ such supervisors for more humble edifices, such as a city centre. The importance of such professions reached its apogee in the second century AD.⁶⁰³ The cities of Asia Minor also employed magistrates of public security (*paraphylakia*), and magistrates of public order (*eirenarchia*), who played a leading part in the chaos of the aftermath of the AD17 earthquake in the supervision of the behaviour of the many thousands of slaves who did the bulk of work in the rebuilding process there, just as they did after other earthquakes that occurred there in this period.⁶⁰⁴

Tacitus records that many types of public works overseers and architects were employed by the *princeps* in the aftermath of natural disasters. Nero, for one, had his own court engineers and architects at hand, whom he employed to rebuild Rome and construct his Golden Palace in the aftermath of the fire of AD64.⁶⁰⁵ And, given the monumental scale of the gymnasium at Sardis built following the AD17 earthquake, the vast challenge to build it must also have been more akin to the scale of rebuilding in Rome in AD64 than what the

⁶⁰¹ Tac. *Ann.* 15. 42-43.

⁶⁰² Tac. *Ann.* 11. 20; Pat Southern, *The Roman Army: A Social and Institutional History* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 102-103.

⁶⁰³ M. Wörrle, *Stadt und Fest in kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien. Studien zu einer agonistischen Stiftung aus Oinoanda* (Vestigia 39, Munich, 1988); S. Mitchell, 'Festivals, Games, and Civic Life in Roman Asia Minor', in *Journal of Roman Studies*, 80 (1990), 183-193; A. –V. Pont, *Orner la cite. Enjeux culturels et politiques du paysage urbain dans l'Asie gréco-romaine* (Bordeaux, 2010); Christof Schuler, 'Local Elites in the Greek East', in Christe Bruun, Jonathan Edmondson (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Epigraphy* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 257.

⁶⁰⁴ C. Brélaz, *La sécurité publique en Asie Mineure sous le Principat (Ier-IIIe s. ap. J. –C.) Institutions municipales et institutions impériales dans l'Orient romain* (Basel, 2005), 90-145; P. Sängler, 'Zur Organisation des Sicherheitswesens im kaiserzeitlichen und Ägypten. Rezension eines neuen Buches und Komparative Studie zur Eirenarchie', in *Tyche*, 25 (2010), 99-122; Christof Schuler, 'Local Elites in the Greek East', 257.

⁶⁰⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 15. 41-42.

twelve cities' own local architects were capable of performing and directing. Indeed, given that those cities' new designs were far greater after the AD17 earthquake than before it, the new architectural structures built at Sardis and the other cities of Asia were probably designed using plans by Tiberius' own court architects, using only somewhat limited local architectural input. Thus, Aletius must have used the engineering skills, and the architectural guidance, of Tiberius' very own court engineers and architects, who at the behest of Tiberius' own monumental and political visions, utilised the headstrong leadership skills of the Roman army, and a vast slave labour workforce, in order to achieve that vision in tangible, physical form. Although Tiberius would only give allowance for this mammoth restoration project for five years – to the credit of Aletius, his engineers, his architects, his legions, and indeed also to his majority of his slave labourers, that period of time actually proved more than sufficient to successfully restore all the damaged cities of Lydia, Caria, and the other affected parts of Asia Minor, and even on a grander scale than that which the locals there in each city would ever have imagined possible for those cities prior to the AD17 earthquake. Thus what by its nature tried to destroy the architectural achievements of Asia Minor, only served as the catalyst for even greater and more abundant architectural achievements there, and all under the *aegis* of the emperor Tiberius.⁶⁰⁶

4.2.7 *Responses in the Province of Asia to Tiberius's Restorations There*

In addition to the responses of Tiberius, his engineers and architects, the Roman army military, and Rome's stratified workforces that included many slaves, the responses to the earthquake by the locals in the province of Asia itself both to the earthquake and to Tiberius' restoration of that province are particularly revealing, and add much to our knowledge as to how the cities there worked together in order to honour the *princeps*' benevolence there. For, indeed, they fill in the picture of just how important Tiberius' response to this particular natural disasters was to the inhabitants of Asia. And by appreciating this more complete picture, we as historians can better understand to impact of Tiberius' restoration of Asia to the people of the Roman Empire in general, and those Roman citizens and subjects who lived in Asia in particular.

But bringing together such a vast Roman workforce as this, Tiberius' reputation as their apex ruler was enhance. Moreover, the *princeps* much popular approval in the province of Asia as well – so much so, in fact, that Tiberius would go on to continue drawing upon the fame of this dutifulness repeatedly for the rest of his principate, in order to evoke similar sentiments of approval. Two inscriptions that once adorned honorary monuments dedicated to Tiberius – the one from Puteoli, which is dated to AD30; and another from Mostene, one of the cities affected by this earthquake itself, dated to AD31/32 – both commemorate Tiberius' vast response to the earthquake in virtually identical terms some thirteen to fifteen years after the AD17 earthquake itself, and clearly reveal a deep level of coordination between these two cities in their public praise for Tiberius. Remarkable, given Puteoli's distance from Asia. Clearly, Tiberius' restoration of that Roman province had an impact on people's sympathies not just in Asia and the city of Rome. This praise was no doubt directed

⁶⁰⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 15.41-42.

and endorsed by the Roman Senate, and especially by Tiberius himself, but it was willing praise, nonetheless. Indeed, these two inscriptions also reveal a deep level of collaboration between some fourteen cities of Asia, some like Ephesus, of the *koinon*, in their collective efforts to coordinate public honours for the *princeps*. The inscription from Puteoli reads:

To Tiberius Caesar Augustus, son of the divine Augustus, grandson of the divine Julius, pontifex maximus, consul four times, emperor eight times, in his 32nd year of tribunician power. Restored by the state. Henia Sardis ulluron – Magnesia – Philadelphia – Tmolus – Cyme – Temnus – Cibyra – Myrina – Ephesus – Apollonis – Hyrcanis – Mostene – Aegae – Hierocaesarea.⁶⁰⁷

The inscription from Mostene in Asia uses the same conventions for describing Tiberius' titles as the Puteoli inscription, but adds one special extra honour – in compliance with Tiberius' open ambitions to become the re-founder of the twelve *koinon* cities in Asia, and thus equal Augustus' achievements as re-founder of the city of Rome – that of 'founder of the twelve cities simultaneously'. It is of special note that Mostene was not actually one of the twelve *koinon* cities, which demonstrates the deep connections that existed between all of the cities mentioned in the inscription and the *koinon* cities together, simply in order to make this particular honour on this particular inscription at all possible. As the inscription reads:

Tiberius Caesar Augustus, son of the divine Augustus, grandson of the divine Julius, pontifex maximus, in his 33rd year of tribunician power, emperor eight times, consul four times, founder of twelve cities simultaneously, founded the city.⁶⁰⁸

Neither are these inscriptions the only ones that the inhabitants of Asia dedicated to Tiberius for his benevolence in the wake of the AD17 earthquake. Three other inscriptions, virtually identical to the above examples, have also been discovered in two other cities affected by the AD17 earthquake: one in Latin found has been found in Aegae,⁶⁰⁹ and another two Greek inscriptions have also been found in Cibyra.⁶¹⁰ This shows that not only did the cities of Asia work together in honouring Tiberius after the earthquake, but they did so through inscriptions in a thoroughly generous manner. But, the cities of Asia also honoured the emperor in other ways, as well. Sardis, Mostene, Hycania, and probably also Cyme, assumed the title 'Caesarea', while Philadelphia adopted the new name, 'Neocaesarea'.⁶¹¹ Honours for Tiberius and Roma were also decreed in the countryside regions of Asia. An inscription from the village of Choriani, near Hierocaesarea, commemorates the dedication of an altar to Rome and Augustus, of whose cult Tiberius was chief priest, and it was set up there at precisely around the same time that the above inscriptions were dedicated,⁶¹² and at

⁶⁰⁷ *ILS* I. 156 = *CIL* 10. 1624.

⁶⁰⁸ *ILS* II². 8785.

⁶⁰⁹ *CIL* 3. 7096.

⁶¹⁰ *IGR* 4. 914, 915.

⁶¹¹ D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor: To the End of the Third Century After Christ* (Princeton University Press, 1950), 500; James S. Murray, 'The Urban Earthquake Imagery and Divine Judgement in John's Apocalypse' in *Novum Testamentum*, 47, 2 (2005), 153.

⁶¹² *IGRP* 4. 1304 = *KP* 1. 113; Tac. *Ann.* 2. 47; 3. 62; Thomas Robert Shannon Broughton, 'Roman Landholding in Asia Minor', in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 65

Gök Kaya, near Sardis, another inscription shows that a sacred society called the Caesariastae was also formed in honour of Augustus, with Tiberius as its supreme earthly leader, at this time, as well.⁶¹³ These honorific names and inscriptions tell us much about the shift in politics under Tiberius. Although it is often difficult to penetrate the largely uniform facades of epigraphic formulae, in the case of the above inscriptions one can, nevertheless, deduce the power of Tiberius' *aegis* over Asia that prompted all these cities and towns to dedicate all of these inscriptions and honours to him.⁶¹⁴ Each city certainly had Boule representatives that spoke on behalf of each, and as a collective whole confirmed all these honours happily – the partial result of a cultural trend that gave precedent to the Roman state over all other that had been developing in the eastern provinces during the first century BC, and also that of voluntary, overwhelming, gratitude.⁶¹⁵ Thus, these inscriptions are not just visible sources of information, but constitute evidence of emotionally charged civic action, and political change, and denote Tiberius' power and influence over all the Boule governing bodies of the cities of Asia Minor that had arisen to greater heights as a direct result of the restoration of those cities following the AD17 earthquake, for it effectively meant the resurrection and the re-foundation of the entire shattered province of Asia.⁶¹⁶ Thus, whilst they are memorial in nature, rather than historically documentary, their memorialisation of Tiberius himself in place the office holders of the respective Asian cities – a rarity in all inscriptions of the Roman Empire – betokens a genuine esteem that each city held the emperor in after the restoration of that province.⁶¹⁷

However, the formulae of these honorific inscriptions were clearly designed to meet with Tiberius' approval; for in Rome, already immediately after the five-year rebuilding period had come to a conclusion in AD22, an honorific monument with inscriptions similar to those described above was dedicated to Tiberius in the Roman Forum by the restored Asian cities, as recorded by Apollonius the Grammarian.⁶¹⁸ An inscription from Sardis also preserves a

(1934), 216.

⁶¹³ *IGRP* 4. 1348 = *KP* 1. 13, nos. 22-24; Tac. *Ann.* 1. 73; Thomas Robert Shannon Broughton, 'Roman Landholding', 216.

⁶¹⁴ F. Quass, *Die Honoratiorenschrift in den Städten des griechischen Ostens. Untersuchungen zur politischen und sozialen Entwicklung in hellenistischer und römischen Zeit* (Stuttgart, 1993), 373-421; Christof Schuler, 'Local Elites in the Greek East', 254.

⁶¹⁵ F. Quass, *Die Honoratiorenschrift*, 382-394; H. W. Pleket, 'Political Culture and Political Practice in the Cities of Asia Minor in the Roman Empire', in W. Schuller (ed.) *Politische Theorie und Praxis im Altertum* (Darm Stadt, 1998), 205-210; P. Hamon 'Le conseil et la participation des citoyens: les mutations de la basse époque hellénistique', in P. Fröhlich, C. Müller (eds.) *Citoyenneté et participation à la basse époque hellénistique* (Geneva, 2005), 121-144; P. Hamon, 'Élites dirigeantes et processus d'aristocratisation à l'époque hellénistique', in H. –L. Fernoux, C. Stein (eds.) *Aristocratie Antique: Modèles et exemplarité sociale* (Dijon, 2007), 79-100; Christof Schuler, 'Local Elites in the Greek East', 253.

⁶¹⁶ James Rives, 'Civic and Religious Life', in John Bodel (ed.) *Epigraphic Evidence: Ancient History From Inscriptions* (Routledge, 2001), 136.

⁶¹⁷ J. –L. Ferrary, 'La gravure de documents publics de la Rome républicaine et ses motivations', in R. Haensch (ed.) *Selbstdarstellung und Kommunikation: die Veröffentlichung staatlicher Urkunden auf Stein und Bronze in der römischen Welt* (Vestigia 61, Beck, 2009), 59-74; A. E. Cooley, 'History and Inscriptions, Rome' in A. Feldherr, G. Hardy (eds.) *The Oxford History of Historical Writing: Vol 1, Beginnings to AD600* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 244-264; Alison E. Cooley, *The Cambridge Manual of Latin Epigraphy* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 221-222, 225.

⁶¹⁸ Apollonius the Grammarian, in Phlegon of Tralles, F 36 XIII, *FGrH* II. 1182.

fragmented part of the civil decree enacted there to erect this monument.⁶¹⁹ And the very site of the placement of this monument reflects the great importance Tiberius invested not only in his re-foundation of the twelve cities, but also of how he wished to be honoured for it. The Forum was the centre of imperial business, and given this monument with its inscription was placed there, rather than on the Capitol, where the vast majority of inscriptions by non-Roman peoples were placed, tells us that this monument and its inscription was of singular importance to Tiberius. Thus it would serve as a very public memorial indeed, to his leading imperial role in the rebuilding of the commercial and business hub that was the province of Asia, and at the same time signified the maintenance of Roman commerce through it, and indeed the restoration of the empire's economy as a direct result of that rebuilding process, as well. However, that is not to say that Tiberius dictated an epigraphic formulae by which he would be praised by the Asian cities. But rather, the Boule representatives from the Asian cities themselves, out of honour and respect for Tiberius's obvious epigraphic tastes, simply reproduced their similar inscriptions, in Asia, and Puteoli, according to those tastes; not out of compulsion, but out of added respect and gratitude.⁶²⁰

In any event, as what would become part of Tiberius continued reminder to all Romans spread throughout the empire concerning the benevolence and dutifulness he displayed in AD17, in AD22 the *princeps* had begun issuing commemorative coins in Rome bearing the legend CIVITATIBVS ASIAE RESTITVTIS ('the cities of Asia restored'). Clearly the emperor was ready, and indeed eager to garner support for his principate and public image as a dutiful ruler, ever-necessary to Rome and the empire. And it was in response partly to this eagerness of Tiberius', and also partly out of their own sense of genuine gratitude to him, that the cities of Asia were prompted, albeit some eight years later, to honour the *princeps* in such concrete epigraphic and titular forms as they did. However, the very fact that it took them up to eight years to do so is evidence that strict compulsion to make them do so simply did not exist. For Asia had profited so immeasurably, and it owed its restoration, and indeed its very existence, to Tiberius' overarching agency and intervention, between AD17 and 22, and as a result, its highly urbanised cities and towns were only too willing and eager to congratulate, and indeed further encourage, this kind of benevolent imperial favour, especially when directed toward themselves.⁶²¹ However, as the following chapter (Five) reveals, Tiberius was actually willing and able to provide relief and benevolent support to the cities of Asia following other earthquakes there, regardless of the late honours accorded to him there, however heartfelt or otherwise. For, as explored above, Tiberius had imperative driving economic, and cultural, and especially political motives in helping Asia in the wake of the repeated earthquakes that occurred there, and he would consistently address each one in his responses to each seismic event in that culturally and financially wealthy, and politically strategic, Roman province.

⁶¹⁹ *CIL* 3450.

⁶²⁰ A. E. Cooley, 'Inscribing History at Rome', in A. E. Cooley (ed.) *The Afterlife of Inscriptions* (BICS Supplement 75, 2000), 7-20; M. Corbier, *Donner à voir, donner à live: mémoire et communication dans la Rome ancienne* (CRNS Editions, 2006), 65; Alison E. Cooley, *The Cambridge Manual of Latin Epigraphy*, 223- 224.

⁶²¹ *BMC* Tiberius 70; *RIC* Tiberius 48.

4.3 AVOIDANCE OF FAMINE UNDER TIBERIUS

In what follows is an analysis of Germanicus' speeded response that effectively checked the onset of famine starting from Egypt in AD19 and which threatened the continuance of food supply for Rome and the empire. But with Germanicus' swift action, he was able to halt the famine at its budding stage and saved many Romans and Roman subjects throughout the empire from starvation.

Like Augustus, Tiberius had a personal interest in the grain supply in Egypt, crucial as it was to the sustenance of Rome and its entire empire, maintaining its governance through *equites* answerable to the *princeps* alone. Tacitus states that:

Levies of grain, indirect taxation, and other revenues belonging to the state [under Tiberius] were managed by associations of Roman knights... [Tiberius] spared neither money nor labour in combating bad harvests [i.e. in Egypt] and stormy seas.⁶²²

However, neither money nor labour could spare Egypt from potentially catastrophic famine in the fifth year of Tiberius' principate, as at other times throughout the course of the period examined in this thesis (See especially Chapter Six). But Germanicus, commissioned by Tiberius with command of the eastern provinces at the time, was able to intervene in-person on Tiberius' behalf in Egypt. However, he made the dire mistake of doing so without consulting Tiberius first.⁶²³ Thus, in Suetonius' words, upon hearing of this immanent famine:

...Germanicus hurried to Alexandria and there relieved a sudden disastrous famine, without consulting him [Tiberius].⁶²⁴

This brief statement portrays Germanicus in somewhat remarkably simple, but heroic, fashion. However, Tacitus' more detailed presentation of Germanicus showcases the young Caesar's naivety and inexperience.⁶²⁵ Tacitus states that Germanicus was not concerned so much about imminent famine as he was to sight-see Egypt, thus:

Germanicus went to Egypt to look at the antiquities. His ostensible object, however, was the country's welfare; by opening the public granaries he lowered the price of corn. His behaviour was generally popular. He walked about without guards, in sandalled feet and Greek clothes, imitating Scipio Africanus, who is said to have done likewise in Sicily though the Second Punic War was still raging.⁶²⁶

However, despite Tacitus' abilities as an historian, there is no doubt that Tacitus' detailed description of Germanicus' sight-seeing tour was used by the historian mostly for stylistic purposes. Through it Tacitus added weight to his thematic patriotic comparison of the Roman Germanicus and the Macedonian king Alexander III ('the Great') who was immensely far

⁶²² Tac. *Ann* 4. 7; Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, 116.

⁶²³ D. G. Weingärtner, *Die Ägyptenreise des Germanicus* (Bonn, 1969), 44-45; D. Henning, 'Zur Ägyptenreise des Germanicus', in *Chiron*, 2 (1972), 355-359.

⁶²⁴ Suet. *Tib.* 52.

⁶²⁵ Linda W. Rutland, 'The Tacitean Germanicus: Suggestions for a Re-Evaluation', in *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, 130, 2 (1987), 161, 164.

⁶²⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 2. 67-68.

more famous and able as a military leader,⁶²⁷ and through that comparison Tacitus was able to employ it as a reminder of the transient nature of tyranny and royal dynastic achievements, including those embodied by these two different famous historical figures.⁶²⁸ Furthermore, Tacitus used the relationship between Tiberius and his nephew Germanicus as a heavily stylised mirror that he held up in the same way as he did Inguiomerus' mirroring of his nephew Arminius.⁶²⁹ These subtle innuendoes of parallels of Tacitus' add to the stylistic tension between the emperor and Germanicus, thus making Germanicus to be the antithesis of Tiberius', and therefore of the institution of the principate itself.⁶³⁰

Germanicus' visit to Egypt brought frank and bitter reprimand from the *princeps*. Tiberius, after the emergent angst among senators after his AD17 intervention in Asia, would tolerate no model to encourage rivalry for power. Thus, he sent an official imperial letter of complaint to the Roman Senate,⁶³¹ and he criticised Germanicus repeatedly and spitefully in public forums for infringing Augustus' ruling after Actium, which banned any senator or equites from entering Egypt without his permission, since given that Egypt supplied Rome with most of its grain, whoever controlled Egypt could starve Rome into submission. Germanicus was not yet a public enemy, but from this point he seems an enemy to Tiberius to some extent.⁶³² But whilst Seager argues that Germanicus aspired to Tiberius' own power and that he secretly welcomed hails of emperor to his person, whilst openly protesting against them,⁶³³ Weingärtner and Levick point out that there is no ancient proof to suggest that Germanicus had formed any decision to deliberately seize power from Tiberius - indeed, quite the opposite in fact, for when the Rhine legions had made moves to march against Rome with Germanicus as their leader, Germanicus dismantled these moves completely by refusing to lead them against any enemy except the Germans.⁶³⁴ In the case of Egypt there is also no reason to doubt that his behaviour was consistent with this loyal policy. One papyrus from Egypt from this period actually records Germanicus' decree that he should not be worshipped as a god there, but that Tiberius and Livia must be, without any veiled agenda, thus:

Germanicus Caesar, son of Augustus and grandson of the deified Augustus, proconsul, declares: Your good will, which you always display when you see me, I acknowledge, but your acclamations, which are odious to me and such as are accorded to the gods, I altogether

⁶²⁷ G. J. D. Aalders, 'Germanicus und Alexander der Grosse', in *Historia*, 10 (1961), 384; S. Borzsák, 'Das Germanicusbild des Tacitus', in *Latomus*, 28 (1969), 588-600; J. A. P. Gissel, 'Germanicus as an Alexander Figure', in *C&M*, 52 (2001), 277-301; D. Spencer, *The Roman Alexander: Reading a Cultural Myth* (Exeter, 2002), 191-193; A. B. Bosworth, 'Mountain and Molehill? Cornelius Tacitus and Quintus Curtius', in *The Classical Quarterly*, 54 (2004), 563; F. Santoro L'hoir, *Tragedy, Rhetoric and the Historiography of Tacitus* (Ann Arbor, 2006), 202-204.

⁶²⁸ Benjamin Kelly, 'Tacitus, Germanicus and the Kings of Egypt (Tac. Ann. 2. 59-61)', in *The Classical Quarterly*, 60, 1 (2010), 222, 227, 231, 233, 236.

⁶²⁹ E. Koestermann, *Cornelius Tacitus: Annalen* (Heidelberg, 1963-68), Volume 1, 201; F. R. D. Goodyear, *The Annales of Tacitus. Volume 2. Annals 1. 55-81 and Annals 2* (Cambridge University Press, 1981), 447; Christopher Pelling, 'Tacitus and Germanicus', in T. J. Luce (ed.) *Tacitus and the Tacitean Tradition*, 80.

⁶³⁰ D. O. Ross, 'The Tacitean Germanicus', in *YCIS*, 23 (1973), 209-227; Christopher Pelling, 'Tacitus and Germanicus', 59-85.

⁶³¹ Suet. *Tib.* 52.

⁶³² Tac. *Ann.* 2. 67-68.

⁶³³ Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, 220.

⁶³⁴ See Tac. *Ann.* 1. 30-48; See also D. G. Weingärtner, *Die Ägyptenreise*, 111-116; Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 148.

deprecate. For they are appropriate only to him who is really the saviour and benefactor of the whole human race, my father, and to his mother, my grandmother. But my position is [but a reflection?] of their divinity, so that if you do not obey me, you will compel me not to show myself to you often.⁶³⁵

Therefore, Germanicus did not conspire to overthrow, or even equal Tiberius as emperor whilst in Egypt. His intervention there however, was rushed and without thought for the prerogative of Tiberius in all such matters. Tiberius would take that very personally.

However, Germanicus did not visit Egypt just to intervene there simply to check the onset of famine. In fact, grouped with this motivating factor, he also had other sentimental and familial reasons for visiting Egypt: his sight-seeing endeavours had a family connection through his grandfather Marcus Antonius, the triumvir. Indeed, this connection only served to promote Germanicus' popularity in Egypt. Seen in this light, just as Pompey repaired public buildings in Antioch that had been damaged by earthquakes in order to serve his overarching strategic purposes, Germanicus' response to the impending famine in Egypt was actually secondary to his own greater political purposes. But unlike Pompey's greater purpose, Germanicus' purpose in this case were not a military one. Rather, he was making a royal tour of a nostalgic and exotic land once ruled by his own forebears to promote his and Rome's fame there.⁶³⁶

However, Tiberius regarded Germanicus' actions in Egypt as an affront to his imperial position, given that Egypt was an imperial province, not a senatorial one, and therefore a sign of the emergence of a threat to his own power-base in Egypt. Put simply, the presence of another Antony in Egypt was a step too far for the imperial successor to Antony's enemy at Actium - whether Germanicus was simply guilty of being naive or not. Hence Tiberius' bitter complaints about Germanicus' breach of protocol to the young commander's elderly adviser and the emperor's confidant, Cnaeus Calpurnius Piso, and his instructions to him to confront Germanicus with those complaints upon his return to Syria.⁶³⁷ According to Tacitus, this was a major development in Germanicus' eventual spectacular downfall,⁶³⁸ a downfall Tiberius clearly helped encourage, or at the very least facilitate; but it was a downfall that in Tacitus' view seemed wise for Tiberius to bring about at that time, even though Germanicus, the darling of Rome was the victim of that downfall, for after all, the palace was 'full of Caesars' entirely loyal to the emperor, at the time, to replace Germanicus with.⁶³⁹

4.3.1 Summary

Therefore, on the basis of the evidence presented above, it may be argued that Tiberius did not actually wish to have Germanicus rectify conditions in Egypt, at least not without his express wishes and order, even despite the very fact that a calamitous famine for Rome and

⁶³⁵ Wilken, no. 413, lines 31-45 (= *Select Papyri* no. 211)

⁶³⁶ Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 154-155.

⁶³⁷ Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 155.

⁶³⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 2. 67-83.

⁶³⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 4. 2; Garrett G. Fagan, *The Roman Imperial Succession Under the Julio-Claudians, 23BC-AD69* (M. Litt. Dissertation; London: Trinity College, 1987), 56.

the empire was becoming imminent there, for he genuinely felt threatened by Germanicus' very unsanctioned presence there. One may wonder what Tiberius himself might have done for Egypt had not Germanicus intervened there. Certainly, the grain supply was of crucial importance to Tiberius, as it was to all Romans. But Tiberius was notorious for his slowness in coming to decisions to act,⁶⁴⁰ and this slowness on Tiberius' part to an impending major famine, starting in Egypt, famines of the like which Chapter Six of this dissertation demonstrates could have disastrous consequences for the entire Roman Empire, must have been the driving force that inspired in Germanicus in his decision to act swiftly – at least far more swiftly than Tiberius might. Regardless, Tiberius, the restorer of Asia, the pacifier of the Tiber, and the object of praise in Rome for his concerted actions following floods and fires there, must have wished in great frustration for the chance to respond to Egypt's plight himself in order to once again display his humanity and generosity to the people of Rome – but that was a chance that Germanicus had stolen from him much to his misfortune, and leading to his eventual fall.

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

Tiberius' generous responses to natural disasters in Rome always went appreciated by the majority of Rome's inhabitants, if not always by a Senate that resented Tiberius' fame, power, and popularity which always came at a cost of theirs. Tiberius was far more benevolent than Augustus had been in the aftermath of floods and fires in Rome, and far more practical, too. But if Tiberius made one political error, it was that he did not advertise his power enough in physical form in Rome as Augustus had after fires and floods swept through Rome, for the Senate never quite altogether embraced Tiberius' achievements in the aftermath of natural disasters, even despite the fact that Tiberius exhibited more ability in responding to them on a practical level than any other *princeps*, or any other Roman political leader, in the entire period covered by this thesis. Thus, Tiberius never captured the goodwill of the Senate as well or effectively as Augustus did, whose physical presence in Rome was everywhere enhanced and heightened after natural disasters there, especially fires. Instead, Tiberius chose to simply honour Augustus' memory in order to further promote his own. Had he, however, chosen to leave a more monumental impression on Rome, then Rome's senators may have been cajoled, or at least more successfully won over. But it was Augustus who had so famously refounded Rome. For Tiberius to have refounded it all over again would have meant he would be denying the very origins and foundation of his own powerbase altogether, and that might have spelt complete disaster for the continuity of his principate and the continued primacy of the Julio-Claudian dynasty itself – the two things that Tiberius was above all thoroughly eager to preserve at all costs.

Strabo effectively captured something of the mood in Rome immediately following the earthquake of AD17 among both those Romans and those provincials who lived there at the time, a mood that entailed deep sympathy for the plight of one of Rome's wealthiest provinces so thoroughly destroyed. And so, if Tiberius had wished to garner support in Rome in the face of the consistent opposition he faced from the Senate, then addressing such interest

⁶⁴⁰ Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 90.

and sympathy was indeed the perfect place to begin. No doubt this was the inspiration behind most of Tiberius' responses to floods and fires in Rome throughout his principate. Yet, it is commendable that in meeting the popular mood Tiberius would consistently strive to outdo and outshine his predecessor, Augustus, in sheer practical and logistical terms and scale.

The degree of sympathy in Asia on the part of Tiberius was enhanced by Tiberius' own sense of philhellenism, to be sure. However, greater forces were at play that shaped Tiberius' generous response. Firstly, there was Asia's wealth. One of the richest provinces of the empire, Asia demanded financial help from the state that far outweighed financial help for other provinces likewise affected by earthquakes. Secondly, by intervening in Asia Tiberius undermined senatorial power while buttressing his own in the east. That was important, for Tiberius had only just commissioned Piso and Germanicus to commands in the east and needed to accompany their presence there with his own increased influence in the eastern provinces as well. The sheer scale of the rebuilt cities reflects Tiberius' intention to increase his influence there, too. For, the twelve cities were granted huge sums of money to rebuild them on a monumental, grand, scale. Not surprisingly, the local councils and local inhabitants of Asia were thrilled at Tiberius' response, and honoured him accordingly throughout the province.

Together with the inhabitants of Asia, many in Rome were equally glowing in their appreciation for Tiberius' extreme generosity in this case. Tiberius' own contemporaries Velleius Paterculus and Strabo sympathised deeply with the Asians and praised the *princeps*' response to their plight and suffering. That their laudatory attitudes towards the emperor is a true reflection of feelings in Rome is also supported by the pages of Tacitus' *Annals*, which reports Tiberius' response to this earthquake in glowing fashion, even despite the fact that Tacitus, a senator, openly admitted that he believed all sources that were contemporary to Tiberius only ever praised him out of fear rather than any genuine admiration. Thus Tacitus, a thorough and sober researcher who was, in general, hostile to Tiberius, could not help but record the AD17 earthquake and Tiberius' response to it in a glowing fashion that no doubt reflects an acceptance of the genuine warm sentiments felt in Rome towards that emperor during the period immediately following the AD17 natural disaster – and these sentiments even Tacitus himself clearly adopted.

Thus, Tiberius sought to undermine the Senate and bolster his own legitimacy as sole-ruler, but also sought to provide strong leadership and constructive help in the restoration of the cities of Lydia, Caria, and Asia more broadly in their hour of need. That would prove a highly successful move on Tiberius; part in that it proved extremely popular among many Romans and provincials alike – so popular, in fact, that Tiberius would draw upon it as political leverage for the duration of the rest of his principate. The political advantages of such a deliberate policy were clear, even if their implications were naively ignored by Germanicus when trying to deactivate the threat of an imminent famine in Egypt without Tiberius' sanction. Indeed, that very naivety and ignorance on Germanicus' part may have been the catalyst for Tiberius' perceived stern indifference to Germanicus' premature death in Syria, not long after. Still, the merits of Tiberius' generally generous policy towards those affected by natural disasters would eventually move senators, over generations, including

Tacitus himself, to admire this emperor's strong action and deliberate monopoly over all imperial natural disaster responses. Thus, what had originally been a deliberate counter-measure against the Senate in AD17 would eventually become cause for celebration, commemoration and genuine admiration, for the emperor's abilities as leader of the Roman Empire, and this was so even among some of Rome's senators. Sensing that he was making great gains in this respect, in AD23 Tiberius would again respond to two less destructive earthquakes, one in Asia and one in Greece, with comparable comprehensive generosity – and this generosity, as Chapter Five sets forth, would result in Tiberius being worshiped in Asia as a god, just as his great predecessor, Augustus, had been in his own lifetime.

CHAPTER FIVE: EARTHQUAKES IN ASIA, ITALY, GREECE AND THESSALY UNDER TIBERIUS

5.1 Earthquakes in Asia

Many earthquakes took place around the empire throughout Tiberius' principate. Indeed, the AD17 seismic event was not even the only one of its kind to occur in the province of Asia. According to Strabo, Asia was frequented by numerous tremors and earthquakes on a near ever-constant basis. There, Strabo states:

...the inhabitants are continually attentive to the disturbances in the earth and plan all structures with a view to their occurrence.⁶⁴¹

Indeed, Strabo adds that certain parts of Asia were more prone to many seismic activity than others, especially the environs surrounding Philadelphia:

In Philadelphia, the city... not even the walls are safe, but in a sense are shaken and caused to crack every day.⁶⁴²

In Laodicea and Caria too, earthquakes occurred there in such frequency, that Strabo states:

...the country is full of holes and subject to earthquakes; for if any other country is subject to earthquakes, Laodicea is, and so is Caria in the neighbouring country.⁶⁴³

As a result, Tiberius' response, although the imperial response to earthquake events *par excellence*, was by its very nature rather limited in its capacity to safeguard the inhabitants of Asia entirely from seismic disruptions.

5.2 The AD23 Earthquakes in Asia and Greece

After the Asian AD17 earthquake, the two best attested earthquakes of Tiberius' principate were two that occurred in AD23 – the first of which hit Cibyra in the province of Asia, while the second hit Aegium in the province of Achaëa.⁶⁴⁴ Once again, Tiberius' response was extremely benevolent and generous, but not nearly to the extent as that of AD17. For, with the ultimate demise of Germanicus and Piso in the eastern provinces, Tiberius needed no large-scale exhibitionism of his previous politically-charged response of AD17. Nonetheless, in AD23, Tiberius still employed disaster responses with political acumen, regardless of the reduced political necessity, quashing senatorial hopes of resurgence and revealing his ongoing willingness to show real support to his empire in the wake of earthquakes. Since AD17, Tiberius had advanced in power exponentially, which

⁶⁴¹ Strab. 12. 8. 18.

⁶⁴² Strab. 12. 8. 18.

⁶⁴³ Strab. 12. 8. 16.

⁶⁴⁴ Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, 146.

served to make his continued benevolence and generosity to all those who suffered from earthquakes all the more impressive. He had expanded the treason law to include penalties of exile or execution for those who levelled insults against Augustus and Livia,⁶⁴⁵ and, riding on the back of Germanicus' imperial lineage and fame, the emperor had no misapprehensions in progressively isolating and condemning Piso during his trial.⁶⁴⁶ Senatorial responses to this encroachment of power were mixed. When Germanicus died, Cnaeus Sentius Saturninus took over Syria as governor in opposition to Piso who he regarded as an enemy of Germanicus, and therefore the emperor as well. Sentius' actions, thus represent an act of solidarity with the emperor.⁶⁴⁷ However, other senators were not so supportive. In the wake of Germanicus' death, universal sorrow for the darling of Rome led the Senate to include him in the Salian Hymn, dedicate him curule chairs, and crown his effigies with oak- wreaths. As a veiled swipe at Tiberius' Claudian lineage, the Senate voted that only members of the Julian family could fill Germanicus' priesthood.⁶⁴⁸ Although Tiberius was, of course, a Julian by adoption, the first three chapters of Suetonius' biography of that emperor amply illustrates that Tiberius was above all considered 'doubly a Claudian' throughout the empire, and not a true Julian.⁶⁴⁹

In response, the emperor succeeded in turning the Senate's public display of fondness for Germanicus against its own self, thus neutralising any beacon of hope his intervention in the imperial province of Egypt in AD19 might have been to hostile senators, promoting Nero Caesar, Germanicus' son, to quaestor, the Board of Twenty, and the Pontifical Order, even though he was of an extremely young age. Tiberius explained that this was following Augustan precedent, but nevertheless, this earned Tiberius reactions of laughter and ridicule among senators.⁶⁵⁰ Thereupon, Tiberius promoted Sejanus, leader of the Praetorian Guard, who thereupon began to have influence over the conduct and actions of the Senate, despite the fact that he was not from the senatorial ranks.⁶⁵¹ Tiberius also then allowed Sejanus the honour of assembling his Guard in a camp just outside Rome to keep watch over Rome.⁶⁵² Finally, Tiberius began to take delight in belittling senators – both collectively and individually - reprimanding them for so haplessly referring all important decisions of state to him, but then throwing them into utter confusion by commanding the Senate to elect the governor of Africa by his choosing, not the Senate's.⁶⁵³

Meanwhile, in the provinces, dissatisfaction with Rome sowed the 'seeds of rebellion'. Parts of Thrace, the Balkans, Gaul, revolted and the ongoing war in Africa, led by Tacfarinas, was rekindled. Although each of these regions were swiftly pacified,⁶⁵⁴ provincial mistrust of the basis of Roman power remained. Even Romans took part, and Carsidius Sacerdos and

⁶⁴⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 2. 48-49.

⁶⁴⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 2. 74 – 3. 15.

⁶⁴⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 2. 79.

⁶⁴⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 2. 83.

⁶⁴⁹ Suet. *Tib.* 1-3.

⁶⁵⁰ Tac. *Ann.* 3. 29-30.

⁶⁵¹ Tac. *Ann.* 3. 29-30, 35-36, 66-67, 72; Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician* (Croom Helm, 1986), 135.

⁶⁵² Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 121.

⁶⁵³ Tac. *Ann.* 3. 35-36.

⁶⁵⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 3. 19-21, 37-47.

Gaius Sempronius Gracchus were charged by the Senate for having thrown their support behind Tacfarinas.⁶⁵⁵ In response, in AD22 after Quintus Junius Blaesus had eventually defeated Tacfarinas, Tiberius awarded him a triumph through Rome - a shrewd move by Tiberius aimed at enhancing Roman imperial might and renewing a fresh sense of patriotic loyalty to the Tiberian regime in Rome and the provinces. But even in this move presented the senate with another insult – for Blaesus was Sejanus’ uncle, and the emperor often stated that this triumph was meant as a compliment to Sejanus. Thus the emperor at once succeeded in undermining the institution of the Roman triumphal procession that had been such an important part of Rome’s senatorial identity and past, as well.⁶⁵⁶

It was at this point, in AD23, that Tiberius showed senators he was not to be trifled with, and the rest of the empire his magnanimity, dutifulness, and benevolence as their ruler through his responses to the two earthquakes that had hit Cibyra and Aegium. This magnanimity once more took the logistical and power structure forms that had been applied in AD17, but on a much smaller scale. But underlying this show of benevolent kindness was tactical politics, for Tiberius pressured the Senate to ratify his restoration measures; and ‘it would be a naïve man who would fail to recognise the effect’ Tiberius’ suggestions had on diminishing senatorial powers and morale, to quote Levick.⁶⁵⁷ Thus, the Senate’s humiliation as a nominal power was complete and placed on display to the whole empire. Thus, to quote Tacitus:

On his initiative, the Senate decreed three years’ remission of tribute to two cities ruined by earthquakes, Cibyra and Aegium.⁶⁵⁸

Tiberius’ response to the welfare of these two cities was far more localised than in AD17. That was due to the less intense nature of this earthquake and reduced scale of damage in those parts. Clearly, Tiberius’ new buildings weathered earthquake damage remarkably well. All the same, Tiberius’ second intervention in the senatorial province of Asia did show off his sense of *fides* (loyalty) to an Asian community and to the empire at large,⁶⁵⁹ thus at once restoring peace throughout the empire provinces, and also undercutting the Senate’s power once again, thereby enhancing his own.⁶⁶⁰ Already, in the years leading up to AD23, Tiberius nurtured his serviceability to the public,⁶⁶¹ as the prominence of *clementia*, *moderatio* and *iustitia* on coinage between AD19-22 indicate.⁶⁶² However, even though Tiberius had sought only to enhance his own power at the expense of the Senate’s, in AD23 the Senate was still eager to cooperate with Tiberius to help rebuild Cibyra and Aegium rebuild. However, its own ideas as to how to improve on the AD17 earthquake response were ignored by Tiberius intent on monopolising power and popularity. Thus, although the Senate was in agreement with Tiberius that Asia and Greece required assistance, every form that it suggested that that

⁶⁵⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 4. 13.

⁶⁵⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 3. 72

⁶⁵⁷ Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 93.

⁶⁵⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 4. 13.

⁶⁵⁹ Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 140.

⁶⁶⁰ Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 137.

⁶⁶¹ Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 87.

⁶⁶² Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, 87-91.

assistance take was discarded by Tiberius, who chose instead to use the Senate to merely ratify of his own plans. Consequently, the statement of Suetonius' concerning the nature of the early years of Tiberius' principate apply equally to the progression under his rule from AD17 to AD23:

Very gradually Tiberius showed that he was the real ruler of the Empire ...though at first his policy was not always consistent.⁶⁶³

Notwithstanding these political manoeuvres, Tiberius' response in AD23 proved wholly popular throughout the provinces, being regarded by the inhabitants of Achaëa and Asia as entirely helpful and beneficial. One inscription from Cibyra, dated to AD24/25, indicate that such was Tiberius' support there that Cibyra had reset its civic calendar that year naming it the 'year of the founder' in Tiberius' honour.⁶⁶⁴ Immediately after the *princeps*' three-year remission of tribute for Cibyra and Aegium came to an end, eleven cities from the Roman province of Asia sent deputations to Rome requesting the honour to establish emperor worship in their public spaces. Tacitus states that Tiberius spent several days listening to these deputations' claims and counter- claims. Four cities, Hypaëpa, Tralles, Laodicea, and Magnesia, were deemed too unimportant for such an honour. In addition, Ilium and Halicarnassus – cities, which had close political ties to Rome – were also denied. Furthermore, Pergamum was discounted as Tiberius believed it had honour enough from its temple of Augustus; and Ephesus, which had been especially affected by the AD17 earthquake, and Miletus were also denied since they well already occupied with the state cults of Diana and Apollo, respectively. Eventually, the candidates were narrowed to two, Sardis and Smyrna, and Tiberius condescended final choice to the Senate. Forced into his service, the Senate nervously gave Smyrna the honour to establish emperor-worship in honour of Tiberius there.⁶⁶⁵ Then, according to Tacitus, the Senate deliberated upon the structural nature of the cult in Smyrna:

It was proposed by Gaius Vibius Marsus that the governor of Asia, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, should be allotted a supernumerary official in charge of the new temple. As the governor modestly declined to make the choice himself, lots were cast and a former praetor, Valerius Naso, was appointed.⁶⁶⁶

By these provincial moves, entirely welcomed and encouraged by the emperor, Tiberius gained an upper hand over less than divine senators. However, if this was a high-point for Tiberius' public image as an effective ruler, over and above that of Rome's senators, it would also prove to be the last high-point for his public image, because not long after the decision to establish emperor-worship in Smyrna was enacted, Tiberius retired to Caprae in Campania, and with that, much of his enthusiasm to rule.⁶⁶⁷ Ostensibly, Tacitus states, Tiberius journeyed there to dedicate at temple to Jupiter in Capua, and a temple to Augustus at Nola. However, Tacitus adds, the emperor's retirement was actually Sejanus' suggestion; and thus

⁶⁶³ Suet. *Tib.* 33.

⁶⁶⁴ *IGR* 4. 915; James S. Murray, 'The Urban Earthquake', 155.

⁶⁶⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 4. 53-56.

⁶⁶⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 4. 56-57.

⁶⁶⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 4. 56-57.

the aging Tiberius made up his mind to stay away from the hustle and bustle of Rome, and reside instead on the quiet and picturesque island of Caprae, while Sejanus exercised control in the capital on the emperor's behalf.⁶⁶⁸

5.3 Earthquakes in Italy

Italy is the product of plate tectonic movements that produce earthquakes. Situated over the Neogen-Quaternary North-South convergence between Africa and Asia, the Apennine mountain range is itself the result of seismic and volcanic ruptures, with Sicily's Mount Etna the most recent geological addition to the Italian peninsula.⁶⁶⁹ Indeed, Pliny the Elder observed such seismic activity throughout the entirety of Italy, stating:

I have discovered that tremors have quite often been registered in the Alps and Apennines.⁶⁷⁰

One particularly destructive earthquake took place in Sicily and Reggio Calabria during the principate of Tiberius.⁶⁷¹ Although this earthquake is not as well documented as other earthquakes in Tiberius' principate, archaeologists have found evidence of its destruction at the necropolis of ancient site of Abakainon. This necropolis, measures 2,000 meters squared, and contains 152 tombs dated to the end of the 4th century BC to the 2nd century BC – the time when it was abandoned. Crucially, this necropolis has numerous collapsed columns lying horizontal and parallel in a NE-SW direction, indicating they were toppled in a single, seismic event.⁶⁷² As to when that event took place, Optically Stimulated Luminescence Dating (OSL), which measures light-sensitive signals in the crystalline inclusions contained in sedimentary deposits, has been applied recently to the undersides of the columns to pinpoint the length of time since their last period of exposure to sunlight. Using this method, archaeologists date the earthquake which toppled these columns to the ground to 40BC-AD150 – in other words, overlapping with Tiberius' principate.⁶⁷³ Other archaeological results narrow in on a more precise Tiberian date for the earthquake. Archaeologists excavating the Roman villa of Terme Vigliatore and the ancient site of Tyndaris, have found evidence there of major building reconstructions, the kind that took place following an earthquake in Roman times, and the period of this reconstruction has been dated to the early

⁶⁶⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 4. 56-57.

⁶⁶⁹ F. Lentini, S. Corbone, P. Guarnieri, 'Collosional and Postcollisional Tectonics of the Apennine-Maghrebien Orogen (Southern Italy)', in Y. Dilek, S. Pavlides (eds.) *Post-Collisional Tectonics and Magnetism in the Mediterranean Region and Asia* (Geological Society of America Special Paper 409, 2006), 57-81; C. Bottari, M. Barbano, C. Pirrotta, R. Azzaro, H. Ristuccia, A. Gueli, 'Archaeological Evidence For a Possible First- Century AD Earthquake in the Necropolis of Abakainon (NE Sicily)', in *Quaternary International*, 316 (2013), 190.

⁶⁷⁰ Pl. *NH.* 2. 194.

⁶⁷¹ F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker*, Volume 1, B1 (Zeitgeschichte, 1962) part 2, 257; C. Bottari, et al., 'Archaeological Evidence', 190.

⁶⁷² G. Bacci, P. Coppolino, *La Necropoli di Abakainon: Primi Dati* (Edas, 2009); C. Bottari, et al., 'Archaeological Evidence', 190.

⁶⁷³ M. J. Aitken, *An Introduction to Optical Dating. The Dating of Quaternary Sediments By the Use of Photon- Stimulated Luminescence* (Oxford Science Publication, 1998); C. Bottari, et al., 'Archaeological Evidence', 190-199.

first century AD.⁶⁷⁴ But that is not all. Archaeologists working at the Roman farmstead near the village of Oppido in Southern Calabria have also discovered signs there of structural damage resulting from seismic activity dated to the early 1st century AD.⁶⁷⁵ However, apart from these scientific and archaeological discoveries, it is the ancient literary evidence itself that points most clearly to the finding that this large earthquake that hit Abakainon and the regions of Northeast Sicily and Reggio Calabria did, in fact, take place under Tiberius' principate. For, Phlegon himself recorded that such an earthquake of this magnitude hit Sicily and southern Italy during the principate of Tiberius.⁶⁷⁶ And, moreover, Pliny the Elder stated in his *Natural History* that it was a well-known fact among Mediterranean sailors that tsunamis often accompanied earthquakes there in southern Italy. In his own words, Pliny states:

Sailors can also predict with a high degree of certainty that an earthquake will occur when a wave suddenly swells up without a wind or a shock wave shakes their ship.⁶⁷⁷

Critically, deposits from a tsunami produced by a large earthquake have been found at Capo Peloro in Toor degli Inglesi in the northern parts of the Sicilian Messina Straits, and are dated to the early 1st century AD – in the same area and period of Phlegon's earthquake. If this earthquake was indeed accompanied by a tsunami, which seems highly likely given Pliny's statement that this was a typical occurrence after coastal seismic activity, then what Pliny had recorded may in fact be an oral tradition circulated among Roman sailors that stems back to this seismic event.⁶⁷⁸

Taken together, the weight of evidence for widespread damage in the Sicilian-Southern-Italy region is overwhelming, and it implies great loss to life and property as a consequence of earthquake and its resulting tsunami damage. Indeed, seismic events of similar intensity to this have occurred in this region in modern times, and these have measured as high as M7, resulting in considerable structural damage to properties and even loss of life. If the earthquake that hit that region under Tiberius was, indeed, comparable in its intensity to these, the destruction it caused had to have been considerable and severe, precisely as the archaeological evidence suggests.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁴ C. Bottari, *Unknown Earthquakes in Sicily and Calabria Before AD1000* (PhD. Diss.: Messina University, 2003); G. Tigano, L. Borrello, A. L. Lionettis, 'Terme Vigliatore – S. Biagio' in *Regione Siciliana, Assessorato dei beni culturali, ambientali e della pubblica istruzione, Villa romana* (Palermo, 2008); C. Bottari, S. Stiros, A. Teramo, 'Archaeological Evidence for Destructive Earthquakes in Sicily Between 400BC and AD600' in *Geoarchaeology*, 24 (2009), 147-175; C. Bottari, et al., 'Archaeological Evidence', 190-199.

⁶⁷⁵ P. Galli, V. Bosi, 'Paleoseismology Along the Gittanova Fault: Implications for Seismotectonics and Earthquake Recurrence in Calabria (Southern Italy)', in *The Journal of Geophysical Research*, 107 (2002), 1-19.

⁶⁷⁶ Phlegon Trallensis, in F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente*, Volume 1, B1, Part 2, 257.

⁶⁷⁷ Pl. *NH*. 2. 196.

⁶⁷⁸ D. Pantosti, M. S. Barbano, A. Smedile, P. M. Martini, G. Tigano, 'Geological Evidence of Paleotsunamis at Torre degli Inglesi (Northeast Sicily)', in *Geophysical Research Letters*, 35 (2008), L05311.

⁶⁷⁹ R. Azzaro, M. S. Barbano, R. Rigano, B. Antichi, 'Contributo alla revisione delle zone sismogenetiche della Sicilia', in F. Galadini, C. Meletti, A. Rebez (eds.) *Le ricerche del GNDT nel campo dello pericolosità sismica* (CNR, Gruppo Nazionale per la Difesa dai Terremoti, 2000), 31-38; R. Basili, G. Valensise, P. Vannoli, P. Burrato, V. Fracassi, S. Mariano, M. M. Tiberti, E. Boschi, 'The Database of Individual Seismogenic Sources (DISS), Version 3: Summarizing 20 Years of Research on Italy's Earthquake Geology',

Yet, despite this destruction, there is no evidence from the period of rebuilding. That is not to say that none took place under Tiberius' auspices. Most likely there was rebuilding under Tiberius of some kind. However, it is possible that the local population took a greater role in the rebuilding than that of Asia in AD17 and AD23. Southern Italy was of far less importance in the wake of natural disasters to other more illustrious provinces, such as Greece and especially Asia, however comparative data shows that rebuilding by locals often took place there.⁶⁸⁰ Local initiatives to rebuild after earthquakes in southern Italy had been a cultural feature of the inhabitants there for centuries, and would continue to be so for many centuries to come after the first century. This comparative data from southern Italy from the 5th century AD indicates that after seismic events there, locals often rebuilt their cities and towns implementing changes to town planning across the board to minimise future destruction from earthquakes. In fact, in 5th century AD Benevento, Capua and Salerno, earthquakes actually stimulated the local economies while these cities rebuilt and expanded as they took in refugees from the countryside to do the reconstruction work.⁶⁸¹ These responses stand in stark contrast to northern Italy in the same period, where earthquakes often depleted city and town populations.⁶⁸²

5.4 Earthquakes in Greece and Thessaly

Greece and Thessaly are regions characterised by diffuse seismic activity. Seven major fault lines run North-South, and NW-SE, each characterised by moderate to strong earthquakes up to 6.5 to 7 in magnitude.⁶⁸³ Seismologists agree that Greece, Thessaly, and the Aegean Sea are together one of the most seismically active areas of the Mediterranean realm.⁶⁸⁴ Moreover, seismic activity throughout the Aegean region has been well documented by historians over the last 2,500 years, making it one of the best-documented regions for seismic events anywhere in the world.⁶⁸⁵ Moreover, since instrumental seismic measurement began in the early twentieth century, seismologists have further discovered that earthquake events can have a magnitude of 6.5 to 7 on the Greek mainland and offshore,⁶⁸⁶ and that these magnitude events extend as far back as the Late Pleistocene to Holocene eras.⁶⁸⁷

in *Tectonophysics*, 453 (2008), 20-43.

⁶⁸⁰ C. Bottari, et al., 'Archaeological Evidence', 190-199.

⁶⁸¹ Emanuela Guidoboni, Graziano Ferrari, 'The Effects of Earthquakes in Historical Cities: The Peculiarity of the Italian Case', in *Annali Di Geofisica*, 43, 4 (2000), 668, 673.

⁶⁸² V. Fumagalli, E. Guidoboni, 'I terremoti nel paesaggio urbano e rurale nei secoli VI-X', in E. Guidoboni (ed.) *terremoti prima del mille in Italia e nell'area mediterranea. Storia archaeologia sismologia* (Bologna, 1989), 264-279; Emanuela Guidoboni, Graziano Ferrari, 'The Effects of Earthquakes', 673.

⁶⁸³ Riccardo Caputo, Bruno Helly, 'Archaeological Evidences of the Earthquakes: A Contribution to the Sha of Thessaly, Central Greece', in *The Journal of Earthquake Engineering*, 9, 2 (2005), 201-202.

⁶⁸⁴ Riccardo Caputo, Bruno Helly, 'Archaeological Evidences', 199.

⁶⁸⁵ E. Guidoboni, *I terremoti prima del mille in Italia nell'area Mediterranea* (Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica, 1986), 765; B. Papazachos, C. Papazachou, *The Earthquakes of Greece* (Editions ZITI, 1997), 304-306.

⁶⁸⁶ NOA (National Observatory of Athens) *Annales de l'Observatoire National d'Athenes* (Athens, 7, 1916); Riccardo Caputo, Bruno Helly, 'Archaeological Evidences', 199-200.

⁶⁸⁷ R. Caputo, *Geological and Structural Study of the Recent and Active Brittle Deformation of the Neogene-Quaternary Basins of Thessaly (Greece) Scientific Annals*, 12 (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 1990) Vol 2, 5 encl., 252; R. Caputo, 'Influence of a Seismic Gap from Geological Data: Thessaly (Central Greece) as a Case Study', in *Annals Geofisica*, 38, 1, 1-19.

There is bountiful evidence that earthquakes occurred frequently under the Roman rule. We have already observed something of the earthquake that hit Aegium in Achaia in AD23, and considered at length the motives and workings of Tiberius' generous response to that city.⁶⁸⁸ But, in other parts of Thessaly and Greece, Tiberius also helped cities there rebuild following other earthquakes, and, as in Asia, localised independent movements emerged in those places that sought to establish emperor worship following earthquake damage. At Larissa in Thessaly archaeologists have discovered evidence for seismic activity. There, after an especially destructive earthquake in the mid-1st century BC, locals had used stone blocks from former buildings to reconstruct grave-steles, just as they had used bricks and stones from the 'Great Theatre' of Larissa, in the 3rd century BC after it was damaged by an earthquake, in order to build a new 'Minor Theatre' nearby it. However, sometime in the last ten years of the 1st century BC, another earthquake hit this town, resulting in damage to the 'Minor Theatre', as well as most other parts of the city. Its restoration took many decades to complete. To initiate the restoration of Larissa, Augustus did commission a party of engineers, architects, and workers to do the task, but the mark they ended up leaving on the site was limited. Although the orchestra was reconfigured for gladiatorial shows, little else was done there; and nor was his successor Tiberius concerned for the town. An inscription discovered in the Minor Theatre by archaeologists in the late 1970s reveals that it took over four decades to complete the restoration of the site, firstly under 'Augustus', and then under 'Tiberius', and 'Germanicus' (i.e. Gaius 'Caligula'), each of whom were honoured by the township as 'benefactors and founders'. Tiberius gave little attention to the rebuilding and restoration of this area of the Roman Empire, in stark contrast to the considerable he gave to those more culturally and economically relevant regions of Achaia and Asia.

5.5 Roman Attitudes to Earthquakes Under Tiberius

Prevailing attitudes to earthquakes during Roman times, often took on cultural placement in the religious and political spheres. However, even within these spheres attitudes could and did often change, as was the case in the centurion and the guards themselves, as explored throughout this section. Not all Romans believed that earthquakes were *prodigia* sent by the gods. Publius Nigidius Figulus, who followed the Etruscan religion, in the mid-first century BC composed his *Brontosopic Calendar*, throughout which earthquakes are presented not as divinely sent portents, but rather as the divine punishment itself for the Roman state's lack of respect for the gods – punishment that was usually forewarned by prodigious thunderings. Thus, for Figulus and others who followed Etruscan belief, earthquakes were an end result, not the forewarning of a worse outcome, as Roman religion taught.⁶⁸⁹ The influence of these teachings were predominant throughout Roman society even if some preferred a more Etruscan way of life. That is why Livy invested such great importance in the reception of earthquakes as prodigies, and listing so many at the start of every account of each year of his *History of Rome*, describing how each one was responded to by consuls during the Middle Republic.⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 4. 13.

⁶⁸⁹ Publius Nigidius Figulus, *Brontosopic Calendar*, October 8, in Johannes Lydus, *De Ostentis*, 27-38.

⁶⁹⁰ D. S. Levene, *Religion in Livy* (Brill, 1993), 35.

By Late Antiquity, Julius Obsequens had provided a list of portents under Republican and Augustan times that included an assortment of earthquakes that occurred in Rome in 126BC and 118BC, in Lucania and the region of Privernum in 113BC, in Picenum in 100BC, Pisaurum in 97BC, the region of Rhegium in 91BC, and Raete in 76BC. Like all other *prodigia* in the Republican period, each of these earthquakes required and received ritualised reconciliation between the Roman state and the traditional Roman pantheon.⁶⁹¹ Similar lists of prodigies that had taken place under Augustus were also provided by Dio, which demonstrates the fact that prodigies were topical events discussed and debated widely among Romans living not only under Augustus, but also into the principate of Tiberius, and indeed right up to Dio's time in the third century and beyond into Late Antiquity.⁶⁹² Although relatively few unusual naturally occurring phenomena were ever accepted by the Senate as official *prodigia*, close scrutiny and debate over prodigious earthquake events, like that characterised Roman legal practice, thrived among Romans right up until Late Antiquity.

5.6 Conclusions

From AD23, Tiberius' external responses to earthquakes invariably took on fresh importance as political manoeuvres. In AD23, Tiberius was eager to outdo to the Senate he had to consistently vie with since becoming emperor, through the public display to the entire empire of his sole prerogative and unique abilities as benevolent ruler in opposition to an increasingly benign senatorial order whose powers had been eroded by Augustus, and by Tiberius himself. That erosion resulted in the exclusion of all except Julians by the Senate from the priesthoods of Germanicus' cult worship, and thereupon Tiberius' counter-response in the form of the promotion of Sejanus. For his generosity to the inhabitants of Greece and Asia affected by the earthquakes there of AD23, Tiberius was according many divine honours in those parts, and even ruler cult, however this proved the final true high-point of his principate, and soon thereafter the emperor retired to Caprae, deferring authority in Rome to Sejanus.

No longer interested in political contests with an already broken Senate, Tiberius lost much of his previous interest in providing support throughout parts of the empire damaged by seismic activity. In Southern Italy and Thessaly – two regions of far less importance to Rome than Greece and Asia in any case – Tiberius lost no time in not helping distraught locals in their rebuilding efforts in those parts, although in Larissa Tiberius did employ at least some restorative support, if not enough to see its restoration completed under his principate.

⁶⁹¹ Rome: Julius Obsequens, *Book of Prodigies After the 505th Year of Rome*, 29, 35; Lucania and Privernum, 38; Picenum, 45; Pisaurum, 48; Rhegium, 54; Raete, 59.

⁶⁹² J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford University Press, 1979), 57-58; B. McBain, *Prodigy and Expiation: A Study in Religion and Politics in Republican Rome* (Brussels, 1982), 80-81; D. S. Levene, *Religion in Livy*, 4.

CHAPTER SIX: THE PRINCIPATES OF GAIUS, CLAUDIUS, AND NERO, AND THE GREAT FAMINE

THE PRINCIPATE OF GAIUS

6.1 Natural Disasters Under Gaius (Caligula)

6.1.1 *Fire in Rome, Earthquake in Antioch*

During his brief principate, Gaius responded to a number of natural disasters in outstanding fashion. Early in his principate, one particularly devastating fire burnt parts of Rome. To cement public perception as a generous ruler in the eyes of as many Romans as possible, and thus his political position so early on in his principate, Gaius paid compensation from his own purse to all those whose houses had been damaged by it. We are not told through which parts this fire swept, nor indeed how extensive was the damage to Rome. However, Suetonius states that it burnt and destroyed many houses specifically, and not Rome's *insulae* specifically, indicating that its sweep was through far less impoverished districts of the city. The plebeian area atop and surrounding the Aventine Hill, or one of Rome's other largely plebeian hill areas are the mostly likely designated options as to this fire's location. Still, even in these hilled districts the fire-fighting techniques, methods, and equipment were the same as those of the *insulae* districts, which means that during this fire all that locals who owned or rented houses in them could do was run for their lives as their properties burned just as those renting in *insulae* would have done. The fact that 'a great many people' as Suetonius relates needed compensation in order just to survive in the aftermath of this natural disaster, further reveals that the level of damage done to these areas was that of near total destruction. Indeed, to quote Suetonius, after this fire had died out, Gaius:

...paid compensation to a great many people whose houses had been damaged by fire.⁶⁹³

Other natural disasters hit the empire outside of Rome during Gaius' principate also. According to Malalas, on the 23rd of the month of Dystrus, or the 9th of April, AD37, one destructive earthquake hit Syrian Antioch damaging both it and much of its surrounds. In response to this natural disaster, Gaius responded by dispensing extremely benevolent largesse. Malalas states:

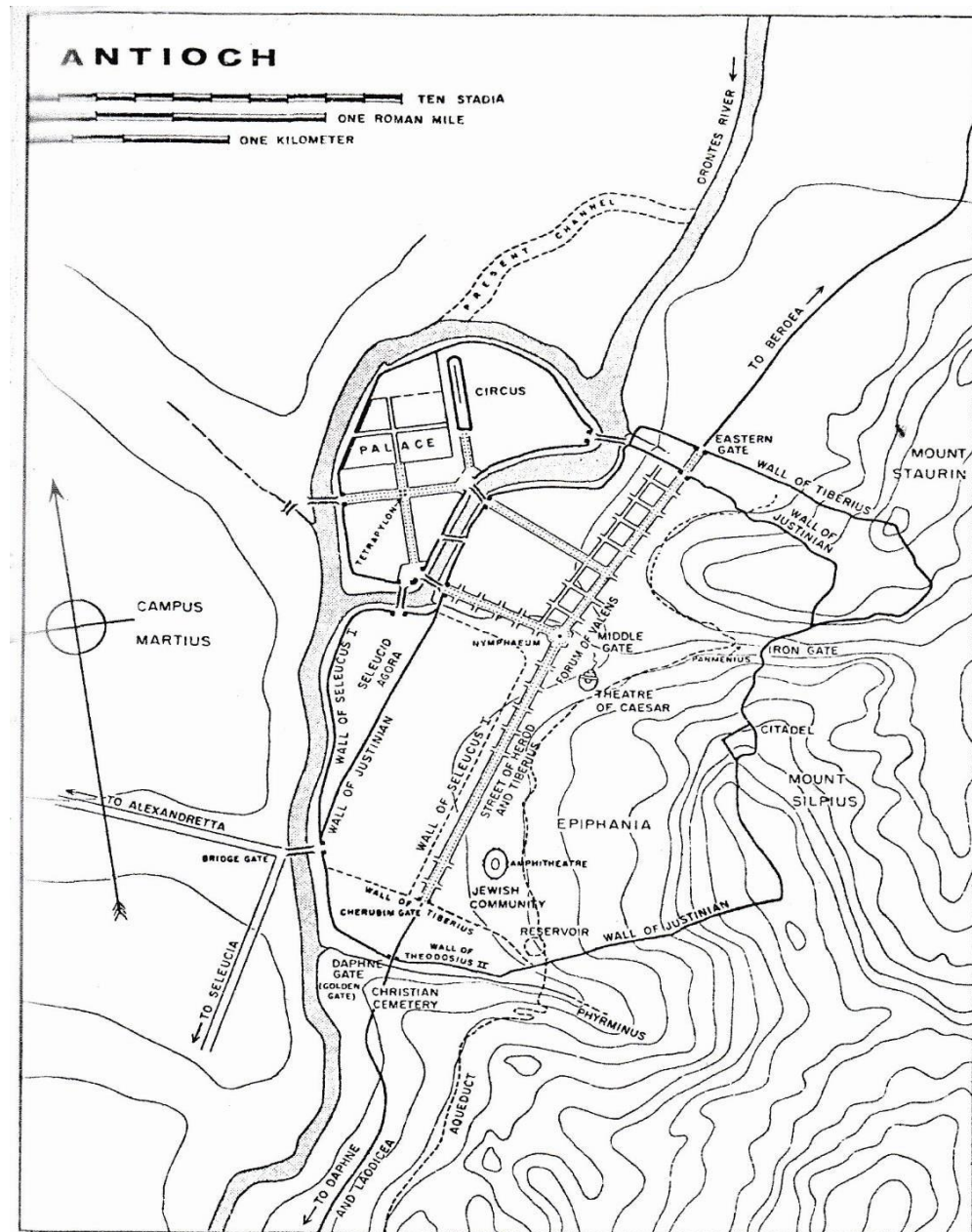
In the first year of his [Gaius'] reign, Antioch the great suffered under divine wrath on the 23rd of the month of Dystrus and March about dawn... the district of Daphne also suffered. Gaius gave much money to the city and to the surviving citizens.⁶⁹⁴

Malalas also states that following this earthquake had subsided, Gaius repaired and restored the entire city of Antioch which serves as an indication of the extent of his

⁶⁹³ Suet. *Cal.* 16.

⁶⁹⁴ Malalas, 243/372; Nicholas Ambraseys, *Earthquakes in the Mediterranean and the Middle East*, 111.

benevolence throughout this response. In conjunction with this extensive and handsomely funded restoration of one of the empire's premier cities, Gaius also appointed the prefect Salius to build a vast aqueduct all the way from Mount Daphne to the south to Antioch itself, which brought a new supply of running water to Antioch's new Baths that Gaius also commissioned Salius to construct there.⁶⁹⁵



Topographical map of ancient Antioch, with the course of Gaius' massive aqueduct meandering from the northern wall of Tiberius south on its concourse to Mount Daphne. Source: G. Downey, *Ancient Antioch*, figure 3.

One part of this aqueduct passes along a rock-cut tunnel through a nearby mountain. The aqueduct ensured a ready supply of fresh running water in the event of earthquake for locals, as well as lifting their spirits as they watched their city's suffering being responded to on such a monumental scale by Rome's emperor. After construction of the aqueduct was

⁶⁹⁵ Malalas, 243/372.

completed, the mountain through which the aqueduct passed was named the ‘hill of Gaius Caesar’.⁶⁹⁶

Gaius’ architectural accomplishments in Antioch added to the monument there of past illustrious Roman leaders. Julius Caesar built a basilica (the Kaisareion), a theatre, an aqueduct, and baths there.⁶⁹⁷ Marcus Agrippa added a new quarter,⁶⁹⁸ and Tiberius contributed a tetrapylon, a large gateway on the road to Beroea, a temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, a temple to Dionysus, and more baths.⁶⁹⁹ Thus Antioch was an important location for monumental building to Rome’s emperors. Capital of the Asiatic East, and possessing almost unequalled wealth for a provincial city, Antioch was lavishly adorned in added succession by Rome’s emperors who sought to court and thereby command through its beautification the city’s loyalty and riches, and Gaius’ vast aqueduct and baths continued this trend, thus cementing his popularity in Syria and the provinces early in his principate.⁷⁰⁰

Following the success and fame that these responses to natural disasters in both Rome and Antioch, Gaius started to welcome the event of natural disasters. For he discovered that each one presented him with opportunities to advertise to the empire his relevance to each citizen and subject, which so early on in his principate proved useful in terms of ensuring legitimacy. Thereafter, Gaius would often be seen about his palace asking the gods for more natural disasters in Rome and throughout the empire, so that his future benevolent responses to them, like those he previously enacted on exhibition to the world, would increase the memorable lustre of his time as emperor. As Suetonius states:

...he often prayed for a great military catastrophe, or for some famine, plague, fire, or earthquake.⁷⁰¹

However, although Gaius had learnt from his own experience as emperor, the repeated benevolent responses to natural disasters by his predecessor Tiberius, which had earned that emperor such increased prestige and worship throughout the Roman world, had clearly left Gaius with an undeniable mark that highlighted that benevolent imperial responses to natural disasters could often become highly effective ways to for an emperor to ensure his survival and buttress his position as *princeps*. Thus, Gaius had responded to these two natural disasters so benevolently as he did in the early stages of his principate entirely in emulation of Tiberius, but having experienced the honours and fame these responses accrued him for himself, Gaius welcomed these and other such future natural disasters with greater depth and appreciation for their opportunistic values to enhance his popularity and thereby further cement his position as emperor. Unfortunately for Gaius, and his visions for ever increasing legitimacy, honour and glory for himself all for the sake of private self-indulgence, a vision that depended

⁶⁹⁶ Malalas, 243/372.

⁶⁹⁷ Mal 9. 216; On Julius Caesar’s architectural achievements at Antioch, see John Malalas, *The Chronicle of John Malalas* (Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986), 114 (9. 216), 216-217, 222, 234; G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria: From Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 154-156.

⁶⁹⁸ On Marcus Agrippa, see Mal 9. 222; G. Downey, *History of Antioch*, 170-172.

⁶⁹⁹ On Tiberius, see Mal 10. 232-234; G. Downey, *History of Antioch*, 174-184.

⁷⁰⁰ David Kennedy, ‘Syria’, *CAH X*², 718.

⁷⁰¹ Suet. *Cal.* 31.

entirely upon natural disasters occurring repeatedly and often across the entire empire, causing only damage, destruction, injury, pain and death, which Caligula regularly and consistently prayed for and hoped enthusiastically might increase in number and intensity with the gods' divine help as well, this most benevolent emperor to regions in the aftermath of such natural disasters that had occurred within them was assassinated.

6.1.2 *Gaius and Claudius*

Immediately following Gaius' assassination, rumours spread that a food shortage and possible famine was immanent due to Gaius' previous longstanding mismanagement of the financial affairs of the empire. However, these rumours appear false, as the following discussion reveals, and were deliberately contrived and circulated by Claudius and his palace courtier Seneca to besmirch Gaius' name and reputation and thereby enhance Claudius' credentials as a saviour to Rome. Thus, responses by Romans to this immanent famine are those, in the main, to a contrived natural disaster. However, given the contentious nature of the issue of this famine among historians, which the following analysis resolves, it is imperative that a PhD project such as this examines this topic, and the kinds of responses Romans undertook.

Within days of Gaius' death, Claudius and the Senate announced to Rome that Gaius, through mismanagement of the empire, had only left Rome with seven or eight days' food supply. Blamed, in particular, by Seneca for this unhappy state of affairs, was Gaius' unwise expensive and extravagant spending upon his boat bridge that extended so far all the way from Baiae to Puteoli. As Seneca states:

The shortage of supplies had occurred while Gaius was building his bridge of boats [from Baiae to Puteoli] and playing with the resources of the empire like a child with its toys. He had played the role of a mad, barbarian king, and the price we almost paid was death by starvation and the revolution, which is its inevitable consequence.⁷⁰²

Barrett and Garnsey both agree that Seneca's words contain much truth, for not only was Seneca writing for an audience cognisant of Rome's food supply,⁷⁰³ but also the recipient of this work by Seneca was Paulinus, the *praefectus annonae* of Rome's grain supply.⁷⁰⁴

Immediately, Claudius declared full Roman citizenship be granted to any, freedmen included, that built at least one transport ship that could carry at least ten thousand bushels of grain, for the purpose of feeding Rome for a period of six years or more:

Again, by an edict of Claudius, Latin freedmen attain full citizenship if they build a sea-going ship with a capacity of not less than ten thousand bushels of corn, and that ship, or any which replaces it, carries corn to Rome for six years.⁷⁰⁵

⁷⁰² Sen. *On the Shortness of Life*. 18. 5.

⁷⁰³ Anthony A. Barrett, *Caligula: The Corruption of Power* (B. T. Batsford Ltd, 1989), 42.

⁷⁰⁴ Sen, *On the Shortness of Life*, 18-19; C. D. N. Costa, *Seneca: Dialogues and Letters* (Penguin, 2005), 117, n.1; Peter Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply*, 223.

⁷⁰⁵ Gaius, *Institutes*, 1. 32c.

However, this notion of imminent food crisis appears to have been contrived by Claudius and Seneca. Whilst Claudius was famous for acting upon the suggestions and encouragements from his imperial advisers, including Seneca himself, who may in fact have initiated this contrivance himself, it was Claudius who ratified edicts as emperor. The existence of contrivance is clearly discernible in light of the following facts and considerations. Gaius was assassinated on the 24th of January, AD41, at the height of the northern hemisphere's winter, when grain shipments would have been absent from Roman ports for the past several months. Now, that in itself might have threatened Rome with a food shortage under certain circumstances, however in AD41, those circumstances were absent, for Claudius' decree would have taken months to enact in the construction of an entire new fleet of transport ships, which would then have had to bring supplies to Rome from distant Egypt, North Africa and Spain, a process that would have taken months. If Rome had had seven or at most eight days' food supply left when Claudius succeeded Gaius, Rome could simply not have escaped famine even with Claudius' decree. However, no famine actually eventuated. Clearly, Rome had far more than seven or eight days' grain in storage in Rome, and Claudius, as the emperor living in Rome throughout all that time, was fully cognizant of that even from the beginning. Indeed, fully aware as all Romans were that the return of plentiful shipments of grain to Rome began again in Spring, a little over one month away, Claudius simply bided his time, and waited Spring to arrive with its accompaniments of fresh shipments to arrive, and once these did, Claudius reaped handsome glory for having restored Rome's grain supply thanks to his timely and wise decree after the assassination of his predecessor, whose memory he sought to outshine immediately upon becoming the new emperor. And indeed, this was not the first time an emperor had resorted to this ruse.

Claudius' hero Augustus had himself employed it in 22BC, as Chapter Three of this thesis exposes with much discussion. And thus, in AD41 Claudius simply repeated this performance and became saviour Rome with the return of grain aboard ships that the people of Rome knew had been commissioned by Claudius decree and who thus believed had saved Rome just before the starvation Seneca propagated was bound to hit Rome any time eventuated. And with that, the matter of Claudius' ability to rule the city of Rome as well as the Roman emperor, despite his famous disabilities and shortcomings was proven, cementing his position, just as Claudius, Seneca, and Claudius' other advisers had hoped they would all along with the example of Augustus as their beacon.⁷⁰⁶

As for Dio's claims that Gaius' ship-bridge exhausted the empire's entire grain ship fleet, Edmondson and Garnsey rightly point out that this is an obvious exaggeration by Dio for the purposes of dramatic effect.⁷⁰⁷ To quote Dio's own words:

Of the ships for the bridge some were brought together from other stations, but others were built on the spot, since the number that could be assembled there in a very brief space of time was insufficient, even though all the vessels possible were got together –

⁷⁰⁶ On Augustus, see Chapter Three.

⁷⁰⁷ Peter Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply*, 222-223; Jonathan Edmondson, *Dio: The Julio-Claudians. Selections from Books 58-63 of the Roman History of Cassius Dio* (London Association of Classical Teachers, 1992), 164.

with the result that a very severe famine occurred in Italy, and particularly in Rome.⁷⁰⁸

In fact, there are multiple problems with Dio's account and description of the Baiae bridge affair. For one thing, Dio, in contrast to Seneca, actually dates Gaius' bridge much earlier, in AD39, and claimed that this was a real famine, and not just an imminent one as described by Seneca, and that it even swept throughout all of Italy in the process. Edmondson accurately observes that Dio had clearly 'conflated two separate incidents' – his imagined 39 famine, which Seneca had Romans imagine was imminent two years after Dio's date, and a relatively minor food shortage that did actually occur 42, but not under Gaius's principate, under Claudius'.⁷⁰⁹ Furthermore, the very location of this bridge affair in Dio's narrative reveals that the usually meticulous historian Dio believed the whole affair to be completely spurious in nature. Indeed, as Barrett points out, this incident seems to interrupt the chronological flow of Dio's narrative, and this may reflect the spurious nature Dio invested in the story. For Barrett, this story constitutes a historical novelty rather than a reliable historical event worthy of proper placement in real chronological history.⁷¹⁰

However, despite Dio's doubts about this affair and his dubious affirmations that it had swept throughout all of Italy, in AD41 conditions on the ground would have appeared very different to the average Roman by the Bay of Naples - the spectacle of so many grain transport ships roped and nailed together to make this extremely long ship-bridge promoted the belief among local onlookers that since all these grain transport vessels had been diverted from the empire's maritime trade network that Rome relied completely upon for its sustenance and its inhabitants survival, that Rome was indeed in the process of being directly and acutely under threat from food crisis and famine. No doubt these eye-witnesses of this bridged spectacle told and retold their accounts of its assembly and appearance, and not to mention their opinionated beliefs that this was paramount to imminent disaster for Rome, and it was precisely this myth that Seneca in timely fashion adopted and exploited, just as later writers and historians like Dio did, and which was accepted as common knowledge by other Romans who read Seneca's words despite any feelings of uncertainty as to its credibility, just as each existed in the case of Rome's most comprehensive and sober-minded of historians, Cassius Dio.⁷¹¹ Obviously, as Ferrill notes, given the great number of merchant ships that must have been used in this bridge which extended beyond three miles from end to end, there clearly must have been some decrease in the empire's capacity to deploy merchant ships throughout Rome's Mediterranean maritime trade network, but one may also note with clarity and assurance that even this very limited impairment to the empire's vast grain transportation machine, only lasted for a very brief time until the Baiae bridge was dismantled and the ships that had been lashed together separated from each other and recommissioned immediately again as grain vessels under Rome's service.⁷¹² But of course, our ancient sources writing almost a century later chose instead to concentrate and focus only

⁷⁰⁸ Dio. 59. 17. 2.

⁷⁰⁹ Jonathan Edmondson, *Dio: The Julio-Claudians*, 164.

⁷¹⁰ Anthony A. Barrett, *Caligula*, 211-212.

⁷¹¹ Donna W. Hurley, *An Historical and Historiographical Commentary on Suetonius' Life of C. Caligula* (American Classical Studies 32: Scholars Press, 1993), 75.

⁷¹² Dio. 59. 17. 2; Arther Ferrill, *Caligula: Emperor of Rome* (Thames and Hudson, 1991), 115.

upon what this bridge's historical and personal symbolism meant to Gaius, and what this revealed about his erratic nature. Thus, Suetonius records only the hypothesising of earlier generations that Gaius sought to outdo Xerxes' bridging of the Hellespont, or else sought to provide an excessive show of strength to British Celts and the Germans. Suetonius' own opinion of the affair was that Gaius had had the bridge constructed so that he could ride across it, to fulfil the astrologer Thrasyllus' remark to Tiberius that Gaius had as much of a chance in becoming emperor than he did in riding over the Gulf of Baiae on horseback. Thus the entire premise, recorded by our historical sources, that Gaius was the cause of a famine in AD41, real or propagated or simply imagined, is based on dubious evidence and stands on very uncertain ground.⁷¹³

In fact, Seneca's remarks are simply those of a palace courtier currying favour with the new emperor Claudius, exactly as would again with Nero when he eventually became emperor when Seneca ridiculed Claudius to highlight Nero's qualities as the new ruler of Rome, in his *Apocolocyntosis*.⁷¹⁴ Seneca understood the value of such intrinsically linked declamations and sycophancies to men like Claudius and Nero attempting to wield total power. He had already witnessed how Claudius had, upon becoming emperor, immediately replaced Gaius' Prefects of the guard,⁷¹⁵ rescinded and destroyed Gaius' papers and *acta*, and then erased his name from lists of emperors mentioned in public oaths and prayers,⁷¹⁶ and then also erased it from every inscription on public buildings which Gaius had repaired,⁷¹⁷ transferred Gaius' victories in Mauretania to himself,⁷¹⁸ and then finally demolished every single statue of Gaius that had once stood in Rome.⁷¹⁹ Then, in this zeitgeist of condemnation and erasure, the municipal bodies throughout Italy and the eastern and African provinces voluntarily erased Gaius' name from public monuments and inscriptions,⁷²⁰ and the term 'Gaian' became used commonplace as the most pejorative term throughout the empire.⁷²¹

Sensing an opportunity to ingratiate himself with power, Seneca joined the chorus, and suggested to Claudius his plans to propagate that Gaius had mishandled Rome's grain supply, in order to glorify Claudius' name and lustre to the empire.⁷²² This did not go unnoticed by Tacitus either, who, fully aware that upon Gaius' death his memory was systematically besmirched hatefully, stated:

The histories of Tiberius and Caligula, of Claudius and Nero, were falsified through cowardice while they flourished, and composed, when they fell, under the influence of still rankling hatreds.⁷²³

⁷¹³ Suet. *Cal.* 19.

⁷¹⁴ Anthony A. Barrett, *Caligula*, 236.

⁷¹⁵ Jos. *JA.* 19. 267; Sen. *Ap.* 13. 5; Dio. 60. 18. 3; Anthony A. Barrett, *Caligula*, 176.

⁷¹⁶ Suet. *Cl.* 11; Dio. 60. 4. 5-6; Anthony A. Barrett, *Caligula*, 177.

⁷¹⁷ *ILS* 205 = Smallwood 3086; Anthony A. Barrett, *Caligula*, 178.

⁷¹⁸ Dio. 60. 8. 6; Anthony A. Barrett, *Caligula*, 178.

⁷¹⁹ Anthony A. Barrett, *Caligula*, 178.

⁷²⁰ Milan: *ILS* 194; Bologna: *ILS* 5674; Pompeii: *ILS* 6396; Dalmatia: *ILS* 5948; Thugga-Africa: L. Poinsett, *Inscriptions de Thugga* (1913), 45, n.35; Alexandria: *IGR* 1. 1057; Cyzicus: *IGR* 4. 146; Samos: *IGR* 4. 1721.

⁷²¹ Stat. *Silv.* 4. 9. 23; Anthony A. Barrett, *Caligula*, 179.

⁷²² Aloys Winterling, *Caligula: A Biography* (University of California Press, 2011), 187.

⁷²³ Tac. *Ann.* 1. 1.

But the truth is, of course, that Gaius actively involved himself in supplying Rome with provisions of all kinds as emperor. He started construction of two monumental aqueducts that were eventually completed by Claudius, which brought fresh supplies of running water to the city from the Curtian and Caerulean springs some 40 milestones from Rome, which effectively doubled the Rome's water-supply.⁷²⁴ Also responsibly, Gaius kept Gaius Turannius employed as *praefectus annonae* of Rome's grain supply – the post he had exercised with thorough competency since appointed by Augustus.⁷²⁵

6.1.3 Summary

Gaius' responses to the fire in Rome and the earthquake in Antioch show very clearly that Gaius was serious about providing generous help to the inhabitants of those places hit by natural disasters. However, these were purely politically expedient responses in purpose, aim and nature. Gaius display his benevolence only to further cement his position and fame as *princeps*.

However, even the megalomaniac Gaius appears never to have considered stooping so low as to fabricate a natural disaster out of any kind of personal or imperial ambition. The honour for the invention of that idea falls to Claudius and his advisers, Seneca especially among them. For, given the clear and well known fact that shipping invariably took far longer than a mere seven or eight days to assemble and then to deploy, and the return to Rome with fresh supplies sourced from Egypt and other places around Rome's far-flung empire, during which time no famine ever actually eventuated, Seneca's allegations are clearly a deliberately devised political falsehood for his and Claudius' benefit. The truth was that the situation in Rome was far from dire, for it took a period of perhaps six weeks for spring to return and its accompanying fleets of grain ships to Rome's ports, during which time Rome thrived. And yet, there are those who up to this point have been of the firm conviction either that a famine was indeed imminent as Seneca postulated, or that a real famine actually did hit the Roman Empire in some form as an historical event, albeit in some limited capacity. Therefore, it has been the aim, purpose and nature of the discussion contained in this section to resolve these issues with historical method and deductive historical reasoning. Still, as far as all Romans were concerned, except of course for Claudius, Seneca, and his co-advisers, famine was imminent if not already upon them, and their responses to these impressions were real, as were Claudius' and Seneca's own to this imminent or actually occurring natural disaster, even if theirs were prompted by political manoeuvres deploying falsehoods in order to bring stability to Claudius' rule, and to the empire after the mayhem of Gaius' own.

THE PRINCIPATE OF CLAUDIUS

6.2 Earthquakes Under Claudius

Had Gaius lived on to AD42, his genuine prayers and hopes for additional natural disasters would have been realised. For in precisely that same year, one earthquake hit

⁷²⁴ Pl. *NH.* 36. 122; Front. *Aq.* 13, 65-73.

⁷²⁵ Anthony A. Barrett, *Caligula*, 194.

Smyrna, Ephesus, Chios, Erythrae, and Teos, while a second one hit Syrian Antioch. According to certain scholars, the similar timing of both earthquakes, suggests that these seismic events must have been a single one, even despite the obvious fact that these two regions that were affected by earthquake activity in that year were actually separated by 900 kilometers.⁷²⁶ Indeed, our main source for both earthquakes, Malalas, tells us that there was no one single earthquake event that covered an entire 900 kilometers of geographical space, but that there were two separate earthquakes that hit these two separate areas separately, and following one upon the other, and that Claudius' responses to each were entirely separate as well. For as Malalas states:

During his [Claudius'] reign Ephesus and Smyrna suffered under divine wrath and many other cities of Asia, to whom the emperor gave much for reconstruction. *And then* the great city of Antioch was shaken, and the temples of Artemis, Ares and Hercules were rent asunder, and many great houses fell. (*Italics mine*)⁷²⁷

Malalas clearly draws distinction here between the seismic event in Asia, and that which took place in Syria afterwards. Furthermore, Malalas' accounts of Claudius' responses to these seismic events, which follow the above passage – indicate clearly that Claudius' response to conditions in Antioch entirely unique and separate to that he expressed in the case of Asia.

For in relation to Antioch, Malalas states with detail and respect to Claudius' cohesive response to conditions there:

The emperor Claudius relieved the guilds, or associations, in the city of the Antiochenes in Syria of the public service of the hearth-tax which they had performed, to reconstruct the city's roofed colonnades which had been built by Tiberius Caesar.⁷²⁸

Through this response to Antioch by the emperor Claudius, a clear sense of continuity with Augustus' and Tiberius' past historical precedents in the remission of municipal or provincial taxes to free-up local economies to sustain those regions' inhabitants while the rebuilding and restoration of those cities or provinces was begun and proceeded to completion, is obviously apparent. In this case, Claudius applied the lessons he had learned from history under Augustus and Tiberius to the remission of taxes among the guilds in Antioch. This remission proved such a success that the freed up local capital helped either to repair or to rebuild the monumental temples of Artemis, Ares, and Hercules and each one of the city's roofed colonnades throughout the entire city, whilst in tandem providing employment for local workers and businesses which not only sustained this city's entire population throughout this crisis, but succeed also in stimulating its and the region's economy.⁷²⁹

⁷²⁶ G. Downey, *A History of Antioch from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton University Press, 1961), 196; Nicholas Ambraseys, *Earthquakes in the Mediterranean and Middle East: A Multidisciplinary Study of Seismicity Up to 1900* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 112.

⁷²⁷ Malalas, 246/376.

⁷²⁸ Malalas, 246/376.

⁷²⁹ Nicholas Ambraseys, *Earthquakes*, 112.

In AD46 Miletus and Samos were both hit by more seismic activity. This particular earthquake was of an intensely violent nature, extensively damaging the large monumental temple of Liber on Samos. According to one inscription found on that island, Claudius swiftly had this temple entirely rebuilt and restored:

He [Claudius] restored the temple of Father Liber which had collapsed owing to age and an earthquake.⁷³⁰

Historical records also show earthquake that the island of Thera in the Aegean was also shaken by an earthquake of the same or similar magnitude, so much so in fact that a new islet, some 30 stadia (5.5kms) long was created on account of this seismic event close to Thera itself.⁷³¹ This earthquake is dated by astronomical calculation to 6th of July AD46 - for Aurelius Victor recorded that an eclipse occurred at precisely the same time that this earthquake occurred.⁷³² Given the similar intense magnitudes of this seismic activity and that which hit Samos and Miletus, and the close proximities both of these three islands and the window of time the sources inform us that this activity took place in, and the fact that no ancient source differentiates between the Miletus, Samos, and Thera earthquakes anywhere, the seismic forces that hit all three islands must have clearly been derived from the one and the same seismic tectonic movement.

However, there was nothing identical about the seismic event that history records shook Philippi in Macedonia in AD51, and that which was later falsely circulated to have hit Egypt in that same year. According to Acts, when the apostle Paul and his colleague Silas were imprisoned in a gaol in Philippi an earthquake hit that even caused the gaol's doors to fling open and the shackles that held the two to unfetter. Acts states:

But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all of the doors were opened and everyone's fetters were unfastened.⁷³³

As the earthquake hit, the gaoler woke, and assuming that the prisoners had escaped and fled, drew his sword to kill himself out of fear of the dire consequences that lay in store for him from superiors he was convinced would become enraged once news was brought to them. However the gaoler soon realised that none had in fact escaped, as Paul came to him and reassured him that all were still safely on site. Shocked, the gaoler asked Paul and Silas, knowing they were Christians, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?', to which they replied, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household.' Then, Paul and Silas explained their beliefs concerning the Hebrew scriptures' fulfilment in Jesus, and the gaoler's household requested acceptance as Christians and baptism, which Paul agreed to. The gaoler, his household, and Paul and Silas then shared a meal, and according to Acts:

⁷³⁰ M. Schede, 'Mittheilungen aus Samos', *Mitteil. Kaiser. Deutsch. Archaeology. Inst., Athen*, 37 (1912), 217, no. 19 and 20.

⁷³¹ Sen. *NQ.* 6. 21; Dio. 61. 7; Hieron. *Hist.* 180; Oros. 7. 6.

⁷³² Aur. Vict. *Epit.* 4. 12; D. J. Schöve, A. Fletcher, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets AD1-1000* (The Boydell Press, 1984), 9-11.

⁷³³ Acts 16:25-26.

...he [the gaoler] was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God – he and his whole household.⁷³⁴

By this response the gaoler's relief in deliverance from the danger from a seismic event the consequences entertained in his mind from a mass gaol prisoner exodus under his own supervision, prompted him to believe that such deliverance must be an act of God. Once he had learned from Paul and Silas who seemingly miraculous were still present with all the other prisoners explained to him the biblical teaching of God in the context of the incarnation of Jesus, this gaoler and his family immediately took the next logical step in believing that Jesus, who Paul and Silas represented on earth, was God and that it was he who had delivered him, requiring his full submission and conversion to Christ as to God.

However, there is little historical credence, miraculous or otherwise, for the falsified earthquake the Dionysius the Areopagite assured astonished readers hit Egypt that same year. According to Dionysus, this AD51 earthquake shook Egypt at the same time an eclipse took place over Egypt that lasted three hours. But, this is obviously a case of false information and deliberate manipulation of Matthew's Gospel. Clearly, Dionysus simply projected Matthew's reference to the darkness that descended over Jerusalem during Christ' crucifixion for three hours onto his contrived Egyptian earthquake, which in itself is also probably lifted directly from the earthquake that also took place during Jesus' crucifixion as also described by Matthew's Gospel, which is treated in detail in Chapter Five of this dissertation.⁷³⁵ Dionysius is believed to have found inspiration for projecting these contrived events derived from a reading of Matthew's Gospel on conditions in Egypt soon after an historical eclipse took place over Egypt that astronomers calculate overshadowed Lower Egypt in AD67.⁷³⁶

Two years later, in AD53, one very real earthquake hit the eastern Mediterranean, this time shaking Crete and Rhodes,⁷³⁷ that exposed a large dinosaur fossil embedded in the ground on the island of Crete, that took on intense mythological importance among the locals of that island who believed it to be the bodily remains of either Orion or Otus. News of this fossil and the theories and stories that the Cretans had attached to it soon spread throughout the empire stimulating much interest as it spread, including the interest of the emperor Claudius himself. According to Pliny the Elder:

A mountain in Crete was cleft by an earthquake [and] a body 69 feet in length was found, which some people thought must be that of Orion and others of Otus.⁷³⁸

This dinosaur's designation by locals to be that of Orion or Otus reflects once again, as we have already handsomely seen regarding beliefs about earthquakes among Romans, the existence of an acute and intense religiosity imbued in events and physical objects, irrespective of whether they appear factual to us or not, associated with seismic events

⁷³⁴ Acts 16:28-34.

⁷³⁵ Dio. Arep. 8-11/303-307.

⁷³⁶ Nicholas Ambraseys, *Earthquakes*, 114-115.

⁷³⁷ For evidence this earthquake affected Rhodes, as well as Crete, see *GDI* 3753; Nicholas Ambraseys, *Earthquakes*, 115.

⁷³⁸ Pl. *NH.* 7. 16.

believed by all Romans to be portents sent by the gods themselves.⁷³⁹ Malalas records that the emperor Claudius responded with great benevolence towards the inhabitants of Crete and Rhodes in both the aftermath of this earthquake and beyond, providing generous funding, a large workforce, and much support ‘to Crete for reconstruction’. However this heightened sense of religiosity that swept the empire in the aftermath of this earthquake upon the discovery of this exposed fossil was heightened much further when, as Malalas recorded, the tomb of Dictys, an epic poet from ancient times who famously composed an epic of the Trojan War which by that time was thought lost forever, was discovered as it lay partly exposed among rubble upheaved by the violence of the earthquake, and upon inspection of the various inscribed signifiers, was identified to be the tomb of none other than Dictys’ for the first time in centuries. When it was discovered inside this tomb a tin chest containing a copy of the Trojan War epic Dictys had written that had up to this point been considered lost to history, Crete erupted in excitement as did many throughout the empire when they heard the news. Representatives from Crete, escorted the epic book by sea vessel to Rome and presented it with in the midst of fanfare throughout the city and pomp inside the imperial palace to Claudius who, after having it inspected, scrutinised and accepted as wholly authentic and priceless by his antiquarian advisers, had copies made of the book by his palace scribes and placed in Rome’s main public library for public viewing and study.⁷⁴⁰

The final recorded earthquake that took place under Claudius’ principate was the one which shook Apamea in Phrygia in AD54 destroying many lives and buildings. In response to this natural disaster, Claudius with speed and much benevolence announced that all tribute from Apamea would be waived for a period of five years as Apamea was rebuilt using imperial funds and Romans labourers. As Tacitus informs us:

Apamea, which had suffered from an earthquake shock, was relieved from its tribute for the next five years.⁷⁴¹

Once again, in this one act, Claudius betrayed that his main source of inspiration for disaster response policies were the examples left behind to the historical record by his predecessor Tiberius. For, with effortless discernment, Claudius’ response to Apamea in AD54 is clearly observable to echo the same five year period that Tiberius’ had set aside for the restoration of every city and town damaged or destroyed throughout the province of Asia by the AD17 earthquake. By comparison, the five year period that Claudius set for the restoration of Apamea was far too lengthy, especially when one considers that over the same period Tiberius had over a score of larger cities entirely rebuilt, as well as towns, villages, hamlets, and other freestanding rural buildings throughout the province. Clearly, Claudius hoped this betrayal of inspiration from Tiberius’ time as emperor would be recognised and most appreciated and admired both in Apamea and Phrygia, and throughout the Roman world.⁷⁴²

⁷³⁹ Nicholas Ambraseys, *Earthquakes*, 115.

⁷⁴⁰ Malalas, 250/381; B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt, *Tebtunis Papyri* (University of California Press, 1907), 2, 9-12.

⁷⁴¹ Tac. *Ann.* 12. 58.

⁷⁴² Barbara Levick, *Claudius* (Yale University Press, 1990), 179.

6.2.1 Summary

Repeated seismic activity that destroyed public buildings and other edifices required continual repair, and often entire reconstruction for their restoration, as was the case with both Antioch and Samos. Although Claudius drew heavily upon imperial predecessors, especially Tiberius, particularly with regard to the formulation, implementation, and completion of building repairs and reconstruction in the effort to restore cities, and even in some cases multiple cities, towns, and other inhabited regions on Aegean and Mediterranean islands, he is marked as one of the more magnanimous, generous, and even sympathetic emperors within the context of natural disaster response, in our period. Simply put, to quote Barbara Levick, Claudius never wished to be seen through public eyes to ‘fall behind in concern for [the empire’s] material welfare’.⁷⁴³

However, despite Claudius’ abilities as emperor and benefactor with relation to the earthquakes that damaged parts of cities and islands, Claudius exhibited an extreme lack of direction and even ideas throughout his efforts to respond to the long Great Famine that swept the empire from AD45 to AD63. In fact, as the next section clearly illustrates, the response by the Christian apostle Paul, an ordinary Roman in terms of humble social and financial status, to the sufferings of people in the provinces, including parts they did not even reside in, were far more purposeful and concerted. When the Great Famine in unprecedented fashion swept the empire for far longer duration than mere seismic events or even the set periods Claudius used for the restoration projects that followed those earthquake events, Claudius found himself at a complete loss as to how to respond to this new and unfamiliar kind of natural disaster anywhere near as effectively.

6.3 The Great Famine Under Claudius and Nero AD45-63

6.3.1 The Great Famine and Its Causes

It is held by many biblical commentators that under Claudius there was never one, single famine that swept the empire, but an unrelated series of localised food shortages that only gives one an impression of one singular great famine.⁷⁴⁴ On the other hand, others believe the ‘worldwide’ famine Acts refers to denotes a singular famine that covered the entire planet.⁷⁴⁵ However, as Keener points out, the word ‘world’ (οἰκουμένη) that Acts uses, consistently describes only the Roman ‘world’ at the very most.⁷⁴⁶ This same designation is used by Josephus⁷⁴⁷ and Lucian.⁷⁴⁸ Keener also notes that though various seemingly localised food

⁷⁴³ Barbara Levick, *Claudius*, 178.

⁷⁴⁴ S. J. Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 482; Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 296-297.

⁷⁴⁵ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 417.

⁷⁴⁶ Lk 2:1; Acts 17:6-7; 19:27; 24:5; Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary, Volume 2* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 1855.

⁷⁴⁷ Jos. *JB*. 3. 29.

⁷⁴⁸ Lucian, *The Octogenarians*, 7; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 372.

crises did occur throughout the empire under Claudius, each contributed together to becoming the single longest lasting and most devastating famine that occurred throughout the entire period covered in this thesis. And these facts lie behind Acts' lack of provision for one specific year date of the famine – its duration necessitated that any reference to one single year for this famine would be redundant.⁷⁴⁹

Egyptian agriculture is the gift of the Nile. However, the Nile's floodwaters that made alluvial fields cultivatable were never always consistent; and, whilst a Nile height of sixteen cubits during inundation was ideal, variation in Nile flood height could mean a year's poor harvest.⁷⁵⁰ That fact was amply demonstrated in the year AD45, when, as Pliny the Elder states, the Nile rose to a height of eighteen cubits – the highest in more than a century – which resulted in such a poor harvest for that year that its effects were felt throughout Egypt and the Roman Empire.⁷⁵¹ Both papyri and ostraca from Egypt illustrate just how dire the situation in Egypt was as a consequence. The papyri register of the Grapheion at Tebtunis dated to August, September and November of AD45 records that the price of grain at Artaba averaged some 8 drachmas, which was exorbitantly higher than the cost of grain there for the entire period preceding AD70.⁷⁵² Compared to this high rate, ostraca from Artaba show that in AD3 the normal price level for grain there was a mere 3 drachmas,⁷⁵³ and in AD33 it was 3 drachmas.⁷⁵⁴ Notably, in AD65 the cost of grain there was reduced to just 2 drachmas and 1 obol – a fall in price that indicates that by 65 the great famine had dissipated for several years.⁷⁵⁵ Papyri records from Egypt dated to September-October AD51 fill this gap somewhat between 45 and 65. They show that in one Egyptian city in AD45/46, 1,222 locals there had to default in their tax arrears, and that in AD47/48 that number had risen to 1,678, and that even in AD50/51 there were still many defaulters. Moreover, at the same time, up to half the entire adult male population of Philadelphia in Egypt defaulted as well.⁷⁵⁶ Furthermore, papyri from Oxyrhynchus in the year AD45, reveal that the poor there were heavily in debt and needed credit just to acquire food, and these conditions lasted right up to the early years of Nero's principate, by which stage there had formed a sharp depression in taxpayers in that city.⁷⁵⁷ In short, this high inundation of AD45 resulted in an acute grain shortage which produced a dramatic rise in the cost of grain throughout all of Egypt, and together with

⁷⁴⁹ Craig S. Keener, *Acts*, 1856, 1858.

⁷⁵⁰ Amm. Marc. 22. 15. 13; Kenneth Sperber Gapp, 'The Universal Famine Under Claudius', in *HTR*, 28, 4 (1935), 258.

⁷⁵¹ Pl. *NH.* 5. 58; Kenneth Sperber Gapp, 'The Universal Famine', 259.

⁷⁵² A. E. R. Boak, *Papyri From Tebtunis, Part I* (Michigan Papyri, Volume 2: Ann Arbor, 1933), no. 123, II 26- 27; no. 127. I. 8, 12-14, 16, 17, 38; Kenneth Sperber Gapp, 'The Universal Famine', 259.

⁷⁵³ F. Preisigche, *Sammelbuch Griechische Urkunden aus Ägypten* (Strassburg, 1915-), no. 7341, 22-23; Kenneth Sperber Gapp, 'The Universal Famine', 259.

⁷⁵⁴ U. Wilken, *Griechische Ostraka aus Ägypten und Nubien* (Leipzig, 1899, 2), no. 1372; Kenneth Sperber Gapp, 'The Universal Famine', 259.

⁷⁵⁵ J. Tait, *Greek Ostraka* (London, 1930, 1), no. 210, 108; Kenneth Sperber Gapp, 'The Universal Famine', p. 259.

⁷⁵⁶ *P. Mich.* 594 (Sept.-Oct. AD51); G. M. Browne, *Documentary Papyri from the Michigan Collection, X*, ASP

6 (Toronto: A. M. Hakkert, 1970), 64-67.

⁷⁵⁷ E. Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), no. 439; Josiah Osgood, *Claudius Caesar: Image and Power in the Early Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 136-137.

hoarding and the inevitable price speculation at inflated prices, food crisis conditions worsened exponentially.⁷⁵⁸ From the papyri alone we can detect that the famine lasted for many years, a scenario that is also attested to in Roman literary sources. In addition to Pliny's evidence, the Roman historian Tacitus states in AD51 there was yet another sizable dip in the Roman Empire's grain supply:

This year [AD51] witnessed many prodigies. Ill-omened birds settled on the Capitol. Houses were flattened by repeated earthquakes, and as terror spread the weak were trampled to death by the panic-stricken crowd. Further portents were also seen in a shortage of corn, resulting in famine.⁷⁵⁹

The main origin of this shortage of grain was, once again, Egypt.

However, Egypt was not alone in suffering crop failure during the period between AD45 and 57. Other food crises throughout the empire added to a general grain shortage. In AD45, an armed insurrection in western North Africa, one of Rome's other main sources of grain besides Egypt, necessitated a military campaign there by a Roman procurator against the Maurusii in Mauretania. This war disrupted North Africa's food harvests, for according to Garnsey, 'to say that an interplay of natural and human causes was a regular feature of food crisis is not a bold assertion'.⁷⁶⁰

A series of severe droughts also hit the Levant in AD46, which caused the harvests of Syria and Judea, the two next richest bread-baskets of Rome, to also fail. According to Josephus, famine had already set in by the Passover in the spring of that year.⁷⁶¹ This timing is revealing, for in the Levant the winter from November to March is the main wet and rainy season. As famine had set in by the spring of AD46, this indicates that the rains of this wet season must have failed dramatically by the beginning of that year, resulting in drought, and famine.⁷⁶² But the Levant did not suffer just one year of drought, nor just one of famine.

According to Suetonius, a whole series of droughts that spanned many years affected the entire empire, including Judea. As Suetonius succinctly states:

Once, after a series of droughts had caused a scarcity of grain...⁷⁶³

Given that the church in Jerusalem required urgent financial aid from Paul's Gentile churches in AD57 to feed itself, this series of droughts and famine clearly up to that date there. As for the date of this famine's end, we can be fairly certain that it dissipated in AD63. For, in that year, Nero issued brass *dupondius* coins that feature on its reverse side an image of a new food market that seems to celebrate the return of crop abundance once more.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁵⁸ Kenneth Sperber Gapp, 'The Universal Famine', p. 260.

⁷⁵⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 12. 43.

⁷⁶⁰ Peter Garnsey, 'Famine in Rome', in Peter Garnsey and C. R. Whittaker (eds.) *Trade and Famine in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1983), 58-60.

⁷⁶¹ Jos. *JA.* 3. 320.

⁷⁶² Yair Goldreich, *The Climate of Israel: Observation, Research and Application* (Norwell: Kluwer Academic, 2003), 21-22; Morten H. Jensen, 'Climate, Drought, Wars, and Famines in Galilee as a Background for Understanding the Historical Jesus', in *JBL*, 131, 2 (2012), 307.

⁷⁶³ Suet. *Cl.* 18.

⁷⁶⁴ *BMC* Nero 196; *RIC* Nero 110.

Given also that by AD65 grain prices had been restored to the low level of 2 drachma and 1 obol, access to plentiful supplies of grain and other foodstuffs must have been restored for several years by that time, suggesting an end to the famine in AD63.⁷⁶⁵

Drought and famine were not uncommon occurrences in the Levant in ancient times. Famines had occurred there in 25/24BC, AD38/39, and AD45/6, thereby averaging about once every 20 years.⁷⁶⁶ Famines are repeatedly referred to in both the Old Testament⁷⁶⁷ and New Testament.⁷⁶⁸ In these biblical sources, God is in some cases portrayed in the Bible as a protector from famine,⁷⁶⁹ while in others as a harbinger of famine and divine punishment.⁷⁷⁰ However, scientific findings also inform us that droughts were frequent in the Levant as a result of natural conditions in the region. Droughts there could be brought on by climatic anomalies, agricultural failure, or hydrologic failure, or all three.⁷⁷¹ Despite its small size, the Levant was characterised by geographical extremes; from hills and alpine mountains to plains, from tropical jungle to oak-forests to desert, and from gorges and valleys to lakes, rivers, and the Dead Sea, parts of Galilee in the north were often well-watered whereas southern Judea near the northern edge of the arid Negev desert were vulnerable to ongoing droughts.⁷⁷² But as a result of these variations, changes in weather patterns throughout them had immense impacts upon the food supply of inhabitants of the region, for their eating habits were largely dependent upon their own economic and technical agricultural conditions, and the trade and food patterns of neighbouring kingdoms. As a result, when drought conditions returned Syria and Judea in AD46, the outcome was acute food shortage there, which compound the suffering experienced throughout the empire, which relied upon the grain of the Levant for its sustenance.⁷⁷³

6.3.2 *The Response By Claudius*

The response by Claudius to the plight of the Egyptians, North Africans, and Judeans was virtually non-existent. In fact, it would become his consistent policy to not attempt to intervene to alleviate suffering in those places. For this, Josiah Osgood condemns Claudius inability to exercise power effectively.⁷⁷⁴ Barbara Levick has defend Claudius by pointing out that before he became emperor, Claudius had very little first-hand knowledge of the

⁷⁶⁵ See Suet. *Cl.* 18; J. Tait, *Greek Ostraka*, no. 210, 108; Kenneth Sperber Gapp, 'The Universal Famine', p. 259. Although Dio claims that this market was dedicated in AD59 to celebrate Nero's escape from an assassination attempt, Tacitus' silence is conclusive that this could not have been so. In any event the dedication of a new market does not fit well with a famine, and makes more sense if it was dedicated immediately after one. See Tac. *Ann.* 14. 12-15; Dio 62. 18. 3.

⁷⁶⁶ Israel Karmon, *A Regional Geography* (Wiley-Interscience, 1971), p. 101.

⁷⁶⁷ Famines in the time of David and Solomon, 2 Sam 21:1; 1 Kgs 8:35-40; famines in the time of Elijah and Elisha, 1 Kgs 17:1-24; 2 Kgs 4:38; 8:1-5.

⁷⁶⁸ Mk 13:8; Lk 15:14; Acts 11:27-30; Rev 6:8; 18:8.

⁷⁶⁹ Ps 37:19; Ezek 34:29.

⁷⁷⁰ Lev 26:26; Deut 28:22-24; 32:24; 2 Sam 21:1; 1 Kgs 17:1; Ps 105:16; Isa 14:30; 51:19; Jer 11:22; 14:11-18; 24:10; 42:13-17; Amos 4:6-8; 8:11-14.

⁷⁷¹ Yair Goldreich, *The Climate of Israel* (New York: Springer, 2003), 77.

⁷⁷² William A. Dando, 'Biblical Famines, 1850BC-AD46: Insights for Modern Mankind', in *Ecol. Food Nutr.*, 13, 4 (1983), 235; Yair Goldreich, *The Climate of Israel*, 78.

⁷⁷³ William A. Dando, 'Biblical Famines', 235.

⁷⁷⁴ Josiah Osgood, *Claudius Caesar*, pp. 126, 132-133.

workings of the empire, and that during his principate he had only left Italy once for six months in AD43/44, and that previously he only travelled to Ostia, Baiae, and the Fucine Lake in Italy - which, Levick argues, gave Claudius very little understanding of life in the provinces. However, even Levick observes that with Claudius' power there had to be a sense of responsibility, and that Claudius must shoulder blame for his general lack of concern for the wider empire during the Great Famine.⁷⁷⁵ Still, Claudius could not possibly have foreseen the coming of this famine, and he can hardly be blamed for the failing of the Nile, the armed insurrection of North Africa, nor the repeated droughts that occurred throughout the Levant simultaneously.

Given the emperor's public duty to provide for the people of Rome, Claudius responded by attempting to appear to be actively working to resolve the food crisis in the city. He did this by taking immediate action to improve Rome's access to fresh water. One inscription from the Aqua Virgo shows that he repaired and restored it in AD46,⁷⁷⁶ and Tacitus states that in AD47 Claudius began construction on another aqueduct to convey water from the Simbruine hills to Rome.⁷⁷⁷ Moreover, Claudius continued the construction of the two great aqueducts begun by Gaius, which carried water to Rome from the Curtian and Caeralean springs – some 40 milestones from Rome, and Frontinus tells us that once completed, Claudius gave permission that they could be used for both public and private use, and that he employed a workforce body of 460 slaves to maintain these two colossal aqueducts. Moreover, Frontinus states, Claudius followed Augustus' precedent by appointing an ex-consul as aqueduct commissioners (*curatores aquarum*) – an ongoing post that was to be filled by successively appointed ex-consuls that each held up until his death.⁷⁷⁸ However, as a demonstration of Claudius' policy of non-urgency, these were built in grand fashion, but given their monumental size and style, work on these structures proceeded very slowly, and they remained uncompleted until the 1st of August, AD50 – some 4 years after famine had begun to set in.⁷⁷⁹ As for those who suffered in the provinces, Claudius had some pity, for one inscription does honour Claudius for his efforts in the building of an aqueduct to increase fresh water supply for Sardis, but this project was not completed until AD54.⁷⁸⁰

In Rome, Claudius was initially slow to source reliable supplies of food for its population. By and large, Claudius was disinterested in the famine's effects on Rome's poor, that is, the lowest plebeian classes, due to their peripheral nature to the ruling of the state. But very soon, as unrest in Rome grew, Claudius began to take action, deciding that the moment to begin the construction of his new harbour of Portus already planned in AD42 had come. The ostensible aim of this new harbour was to streamline the import of grain to the Tiber mouth. Another aim, just as it was only five years since Gaius' assassination, was to stave off any uprising or threat to Claudius' political position. As an inscription discovered at Portus reveals, construction began in AD46 at the start of the Great Famine.⁷⁸¹ It would

⁷⁷⁵ Barbara Levick, *Claudius* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 163, 186.

⁷⁷⁶ *ILS* 205 = Smallwood 308b.

⁷⁷⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 11. 13.

⁷⁷⁸ Front. *Aq.* 105, 102, 116.

⁷⁷⁹ Front. *Aq.* 13, 65-73, 86; Pl. *NH.* 36. 122-123.

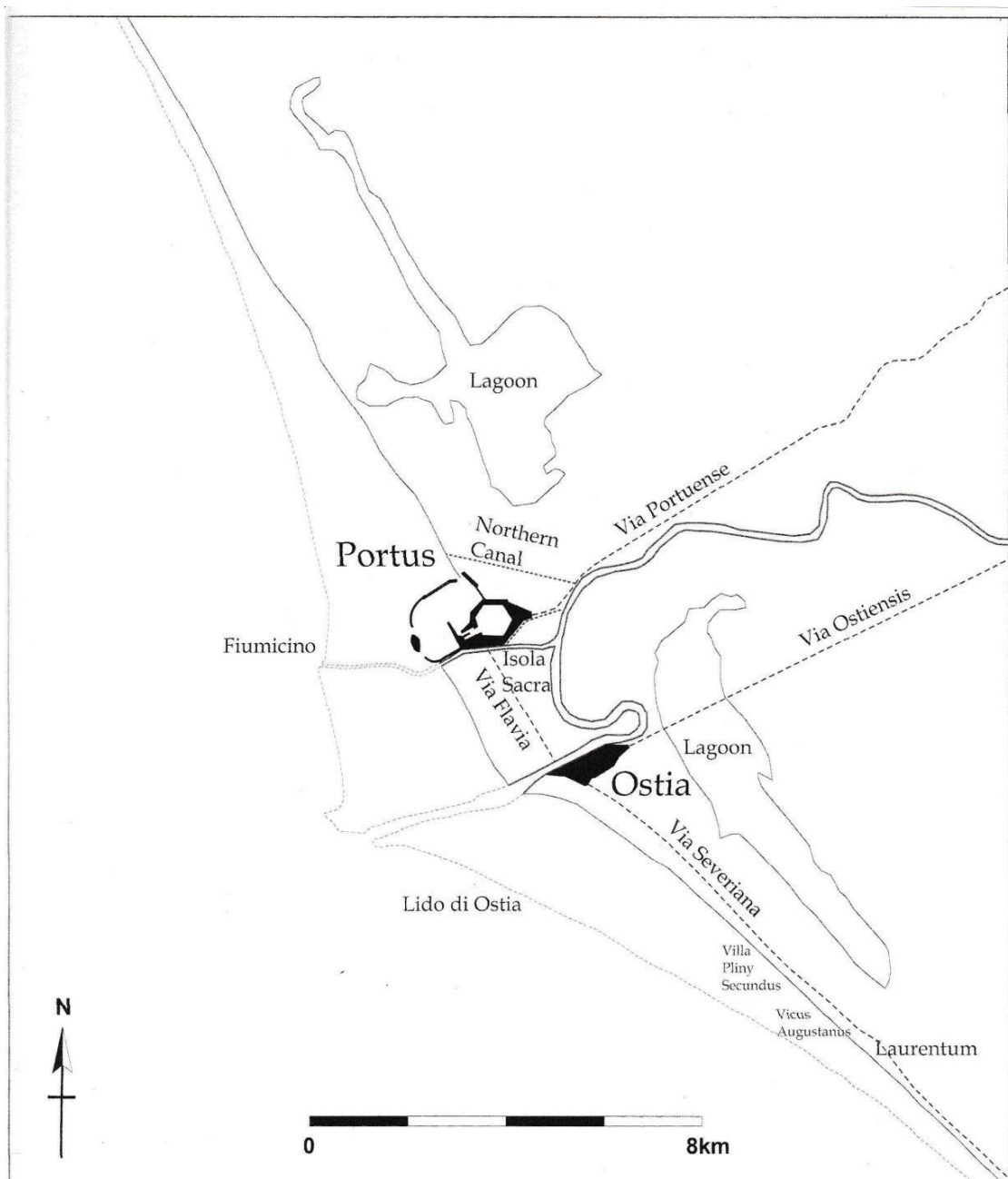
⁷⁸⁰ Smallwood 318 = *IGRRP* IV 1505.

⁷⁸¹ *CIL* XIV 85 = *ILS* 207.

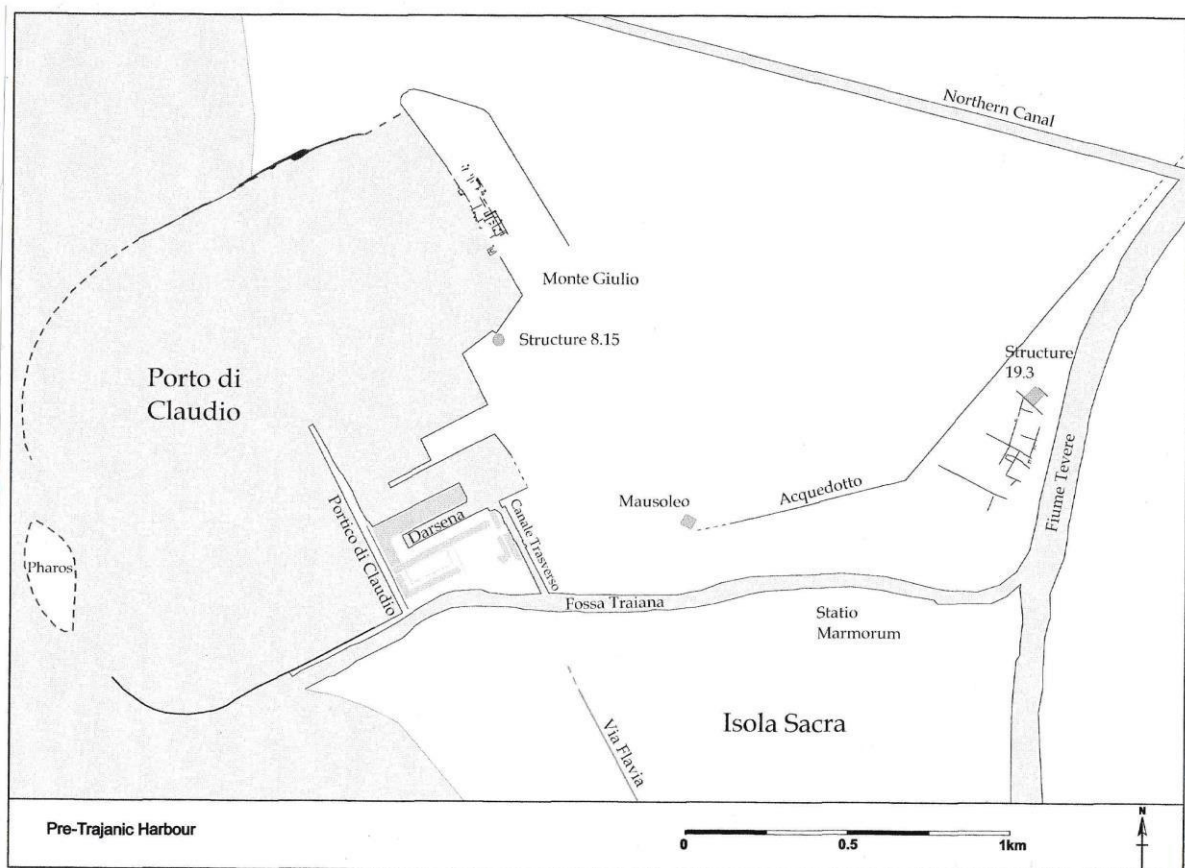
become the largest monumental project ever initiated by Claudius. However, such was the scale of the plans for Portus that debate was generated over its very practicability,⁷⁸² for the great Julius Caesar had repeatedly decided it wholly impracticable after beginning plans for a harbour at Portus.⁷⁸³

⁷⁸² Quint. *Institutio Oratoria*. 2. 21. 18; 3. 8. 16; S. Keay, M. Millett, L. Paroli, K. Strutt, *Portus: An Archaeological Survey of the Port of Imperial Rome* (London: British School at Rome, 2005), 297.

⁷⁸³ Suet. *Cl.* 20.



The topographical context of the Claudian and Trajanic phases at Portus. Source: S. Keay, et al., *Portus*, page 273.



Summary plan showing the evidence for the Claudian and first century AD layout of Portus.
Source: S. Keay, et al., *Portus*, page 274.

However, despite this climate of doubt and uncertainty, construction began and continued steadily. The new harbour was excavated out of the sandy dune landscape inland from the north coast of the Tiber inlet, and moles were sunk and built-over extending out into the sea.⁷⁸⁴ The design and construction of this harbour was greatly distinguished over that at Ostia for its judicious blend of functionality and grandeur, a blend earned Claudius much admiration and respect.⁷⁸⁵ However, Claudius' purposes for the construction of Portus was not just to build a harbour. Numismatic evidence suggests that construction on Portus came to a close as late as early AD64, after the dissipation of the famine in AD63.⁷⁸⁶

Work on Portus could obviously have been brought to a close much earlier, especially given that Pliny the Elder states that even while Claudius was still alive, ships from Gaul containing cargoes of hides were already using Portus harbour's already monumental facilities on an ongoing basis.⁷⁸⁷ In fact, Tacitus states that by AD62 well over 200 ships used Portus' harbour facilities at any given time.⁷⁸⁸ Clearly, the construction of Portus was no

⁷⁸⁴ Suet. *Cl.* 20; Dio. 60. 11. 1-5; S. Keay, M. Millett, L. Paroli, K. Strutt, *Portus*, 298-299.

⁷⁸⁵ S. Keay, M. Millett, L. Paroli, K. Strutt, *Portus*, 304-305.

⁷⁸⁶ See coins *RIC I* Nero 178-183; *BMC* Nero 131, which commemorate the dedication of the harbour at Ostia in AD64 under Nero; M. G. L. Cooley, *Tiberius to Nero* (LACTOR, 19; London Association of Classical Teachers, 2011) K37, p. 215. See also Smallwood 312b = *ILS* 207; S. Keay, M. Millett, L. Paroli, K. Strutt, *Portus*, 12.

⁷⁸⁷ Pl. *NH.* 9. 5. 14-15; S. Keay, M. Millett, L. Paroli, K. Strutt, *Portus*, 12.

⁷⁸⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 15. 18; S. Keay, M. Millett, L. Paroli, K. Strutt, *Portus*, 12.

ordinary project. Indeed, work progressed so slowly on Portus that Suetonius was entirely lost for a reason why. For one thing, Claudius employed 30,000 men to carry out the excavation and construction of a drainage scheme at the Fucine Lake – but one simply this scheme took Claudius’ vast corps of labourers an astonishingly long 11 years to complete.⁷⁸⁹ One must find, therefore, that the timing for the beginning of construction on Portus, the lengthy progress of its construction, and the timing of its eventual completion in AD64, is found in the Great Famine. This project provided Rome’s population with the wages to purchase foodstuffs, albeit at inflated prices, for the duration of the famine.

Claudius clearly wanted to demonstrate to all Rome that through such steady employment, he was trying to show he was concerned for its welfare, and wanted to be seen acting on their behalf in a way that would bring their generation lasting glory. Thus, the construction of Portus remains the single longest civic external response to a natural disaster undertaken by any emperor throughout the entire period examined in this thesis. As an unforeseen positive, efforts in digging water channels to link the Tiber and the new Ostian harbour also alleviated minor flooding in the area, as one inscription from Ostia informs us.⁷⁹⁰

Still, water can never replace solid food, and such was the public outcry at Claudius’ total lack of initiative on sourcing food thus far, on one occasion, when the emperor happened to be in the Roman Forum, gangs of mobs began abusing him with many curses, and pelting him with the stale crusts that were all that they had been supplied with by the state to live on. Violence followed and, according to Suetonius, Claudius had difficulty escaping it, fleeing through a side-door in his palace in order to preserve his life.⁷⁹¹ Then, plots began to be formulated throughout Rome with a view to overthrowing and replacing Claudius. According to Tacitus, in AD47, one equestrian by the name of Petra claimed to have had a dream some months before the Great Famine had taken hold in Rome, in which he saw Claudius wearing a wheaten wreath with inverted ears and whitening vine leaves. This he interpreted, sometime after the Great Famine set in, had been a divine warning of the famine to come, as well as the emperor’s death. The famine had eventuated as Petra had claimed it would, albeit after the event, and the *princeps*, aware that Petra’s dream had also foretold Claudius death taking place after the famine had dissipated, became terrified and had Petra immediately arrested and executed.⁷⁹²

Following this alarming turn of events, Claudius realised that he had to at least attempt to address the problem of famine in the city of Rome outside the mere construction of the harbour at Portus, thus elevating Claudius’ status among Rome’s plebeian classes. He could not become another assassinated emperor, like Gaius, who Claudius had designated as unfit to feed Rome long before. According to Suetonius, from this point on Claudius began

⁷⁸⁹ Suet. *Cl.* 20.

⁷⁹⁰ See coins *RIC* Nero 178; *BMC* Nero 131, which commemorate the dedication of the harbour at Ostia in AD64 under Nero; M. G. L. Cooley, *Tiberius to Nero: LACTOR 19* (London Association of Classical Teachers, 2011) K37, page 215. On the inscription that describes the ditches dug under Claudius from the Tiber to the harbour at Ostia, thus minimising Tiber floods, see Smallwood 312b = *ILS* 207.

⁷⁹¹ Suet. *Cl.* 18.

⁷⁹² Tac. *Ann.* 11. 2-4.

sourcing and importing grain from more on an increased scale and from more far-flung locations around the empire. Then, he began the construction in Rome of new, larger, cargo ships. But, while this benefitted Rome, it had a marked negative effect on people living in the provinces. As this higher percentage of grain from around the empire began flowing into Rome, this ultimately decreased the amount of grain available to locals throughout the provinces, and this in turn produced higher grain prices in throughout the empire, making food acquisition near impossible for many, and in provinces such as Judea, people began to starve. But Claudius did not halt, and actually began importing grain into Rome during the winter months. But, this only exacerbated the provinces' denial to food even further, and it also resulted in the cargo ships that sailed to and from Egypt, North Africa, and throughout those Mediterranean winter months facing greater danger from the violent weather and sea conditions characteristic of the Mediterranean Sea' winter months, and many ships were damaged and wrecked and lives were lost. However, Claudius, determined as he was to provide for Rome so as to avoid a coup, simply devised insuring all ships from damage and wreckage using funds from the imperial treasury, and the winter month. As Suetonius states:

... he took all possible steps to import grain, even during the winter months – insuring merchants against the loss of their ships in stormy weather (which guaranteed them a good return on their venture), and offering a large bounty for every new grain- transport built, proportionate to its tonnage.⁷⁹³

However, as Claudius sourced all of the empire's grain supplies to feed Rome, the provinces languished in hunger and faced starvation – a condition all too apparent in Judea when the Jewish royalty from Adiabene arrived in Jerusalem as pilgrims in AD46.

6.3.3 *The Roman Paul's Responses to the Famine*

The letters of the Christian apostle Paul, himself a Roman citizen, afford us an insight into the course and workings of a charitable drive that may mirror other Romans' own, but in regard to which evidence no longer exists. In the vacuum of inactivity by Claudius around the provinces during the Great Famine, there may have been a number of signs of benevolence shown by more ordinary Romans to Roman and non-Roman provincial populations. Thus, the Jerusalem Donation affords the historian a plebeian movement that compares to those of the imperial family in its dispense of largesse or donation, however this was a collective dispensation in contrast to the individual provisions of benefaction produced by Rome' emperors. As a result, it is worth examining the evolution and course of the Jerusalem Donation here, bearing in mind that other Romans may have embarked on similar pursuits, both during the Great Famine and/or times of other natural disasters. Some commentators assume that Paul's first reference to his collection among his Gentiles appears in *Galatians*. But, debate rages as to when this letter was written. Some commentators argue that Paul's letter was intended for the churches of northern Galatia, and was written in the late 50s, while others more persuasively suggest that Paul intended the letter for the churches of southern Galatia –the area that he evangelised on his first missionary tour. This would date

⁷⁹³ Suet. *Cl.* 18.

this letter to sometime between AD48 and the early 50s, perhaps 53. Although, throughout the Hellenistic period, ‘Galatia’ designated the geographical region in northern Phrygia on the Anatolian peninsula,⁷⁹⁴ by Paul’s time ‘Galatia’ designated the Roman province of that name which stretched from the Black Sea to Pamphylia on the Mediterranean.⁷⁹⁵ Thus, while the churches of Galatia have traditionally been held by scholars to have been located somewhere in the Hellenistic Galatia of northern Anatolia,⁷⁹⁶ Acts does inform us that Paul founded churches in the southern regions of the Roman province of Galatia himself, at Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.⁷⁹⁷ Thus, just as Paul used provincial titles for Arabia, Syria and Cilicia, and Judea throughout his letter to the Galatians, and that Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy from southern Galatia, accompanied Paul when he eventually took the Jerusalem Donation to Jerusalem, it is highly likely that Paul had in mind the churches of the southern region of Roman Galatia in mind when writing *Galatians*.⁷⁹⁸ This places the composition of *Galatians* not long after Paul’s meeting, as recorded in *Galatians*, between himself, James, John, and Peter in Jerusalem, ‘fourteen years’ after his conversion to Christianity, around AD47/48, around two years after the Great Famine began to grip Judea. However, the assumption that *Galatians* contains a reference to an order or charge by the pillars of the Jerusalemite church to Paul to embark upon the Jerusalem Donation is ill founded. For, there appears in *Galatians* description of Paul’s meeting between them not one explicit statement to this effect. Many commentators entertain that the pillars simply must have made this request as a given fact,⁷⁹⁹ however all that is contained in this epistle is that instruction that Paul should make provision for the poor. But, this is general advice that they hoped would be applied to all his missionary travels throughout the Gentile world - advice that Paul recalls in the following terms:

They [James, Peter and John] agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.⁸⁰⁰

It is only presumed that this is proof that the pillars had commanded Paul to raise funds for ‘the poor’ in Jerusalem specifically.⁸⁰¹ F. F. Bruce even identifies these ‘poor’ of

⁷⁹⁴ Polybius, 5. 77-80; Liv. 38. 16; Strab. 12. 5. 1-4.

⁷⁹⁵ Pl. *NH*. 5. 147.

⁷⁹⁶ J. Moffatt, *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (3rd Ed.; Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1918), 83-107; H. D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 81-83; J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians* (10th Ed.; London: Macmillan, 1986); J. D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (BNTC, 1993), 8.

⁷⁹⁷ Acts 13:13 – 14:20; F. F. Bruce, *Commentary On Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 3-10, 17-18; C. J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1989), 277-307; R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (Dallas: Word, 1990), Ixii-ixiii; Greg W. Forbes, ‘The Letter to the Galatians’, in Mark Harding, Alanna Nobbs (eds.) *All Things to All Cultures: Paul Among Jews, Greeks, and Romans* (Eerdmans, 2013), 244-246.

⁷⁹⁸ Arabia: Gal. 1:17; Syria and Cilicia: Gal. 1:21; Judea: Gal 1:22; on Gaius and Timothy see Acts 20:4; D. Guthrie, *Galatians* (NCBC: Eerdmans, 1981), 21, 25.

⁷⁹⁹ Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, ‘1 and 2 Corinthians’, in James D. G. Dunn (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to St Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 83.

⁸⁰⁰ Gal. 2:9-10.

⁸⁰¹ Donald Guthrie, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 84; N. Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem: A Study in Relationships and Authority in Earliest Christianity* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992), 116-112; James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Hendrickson, 1993), 112.

Jerusalem as forerunners of the ‘Ebionites’ – derived from the Hebrew word for ‘the poor’.⁸⁰² However, revealingly, Paul’s later efforts to help the poor in Jerusalem were not even of his own inspiration, but were actually advised and encouraged by the Christians of Corinth, Macedonia, and Galatia in AD54. Thus, Paul had clearly not received any explicit, imperative order from the pillars to raise money for their own community among the Gentiles, although later he would do just that very thing.⁸⁰³

Nor is there any mention of any such command in *1 Thessalonians*, composed by Paul between the years AD49 and 52.⁸⁰⁴ And nor does Paul explicitly command the Galatian churches themselves to raise funds for the Jerusalem church anywhere in that same letter to them, but rather tells them to use its monetary resources to help all people, everywhere:

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.⁸⁰⁵

Clearly, the churches in Galatia must have been beginning to feel the effects of the Great Famine. For, an inscription from Asia Minor dated to this period records in horror the devastating effects of this famine throughout Asia Minor, in the following expressions:

A famine in the land, flesh-eating, terrible, and bearing inescapable death, [that] gripped the whole [Roman] world.⁸⁰⁶

In fact, there is no doubt that the Galatian Christians were feeling effects of this famine similar to these. For although in his letter to them, Paul instructs those Christians to ‘do good to all people’, he lays heavy emphasis that those who should receive such good gifts ‘belong to the family of believers’.⁸⁰⁷ This seems to strongly imply that funds in the Galatian churches were dwindling so that their members were stretching themselves giving to the poor both within and without their churches as they had been in the habit of practicing up to this point but which Paul here puts to an end.⁸⁰⁸ Still, there clearly continued to be some degree of flexibility as to how the Galatians interpreted Paul’s instruction, for ‘all people’, and the ‘family of believers’ could still, theoretically, apply to every single Christian, including those outside the Galatian churches themselves. In fact, in less than one year the Galatian Christians had even started raising funds for Jerusalem, even if Paul had intended all Galatian church

⁸⁰² F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians* (Paternoster Press, 1982), 126.

⁸⁰³ J. Klausner, *From Jesus to Paul* (ETr, 1944), 364-370; D. R. Hall, ‘St. Paul and Famine Relief: A Study in Galatians 2:10’, in *ExpT*, 82 (1970-1971), 309-311; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, 126.

⁸⁰⁴ A. J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 361-364; G. L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 52-53; Margaret M. Mitchell, ‘1 and 2 Thessalonians’, in James D. G. Dunn, *The Cambridge Companion to St Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 51-63; B. Witherington III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 10, 31, 183; G. D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 5; M. Smith, ‘The Thessalonian Correspondence’, in Mark Harding, Alanna Nobbs (eds.) *All Things to All Cultures: Paul Among Jews, Greeks, and Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 269-301.

⁸⁰⁵ Gal. 6:9-10.

⁸⁰⁶ CIG 3973: 5-6; B. W. Winter, ‘Acts and Food Shortages’, in D. W. J. Gill, C. Gempf (eds.) *The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting, Volume 2* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 59-78.

⁸⁰⁷ Gal. 6:9-10.

⁸⁰⁸ N. Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem*, 116-112; James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 112.

funds to be reserved for the Galatian churches themselves. But, while Paul held this position for the time being, as the Galatian churches began pressing Paul hard to be permitted to contribute funds for Jerusalem, the Apostle's resolve weakened and he agreed that they be allowed just as they had wished.⁸⁰⁹

6.3.4 *The Jerusalem Donation*

The Jerusalem Donation is extremely important to the purposes of not just this section but this thesis as a whole, for there is so much biblical evidence for its inspiration, purpose, beginnings, progress, completion, and deliverance, that we know more about this natural disaster response led as it was by the Roman Paul than almost any other response to a natural disaster in this period. Taken together with nonbiblical evidence such as historical writings, inscriptions, and papyri, our picture of this collection and its context is so full that these will remain the subject of the rest of this chapter. The collection serves as one exciting example of how ordinary Romans, like Paul, were able to coordinate themselves and each other in order to bring financial support to parts of the empire affected by a natural disaster, even far from their own. Each biblical reference quoted in this section provide such rich and unparalleled detail and insight regarding how ordinary individuals and groups of individuals could, and did, respond to those suffering from a natural disaster in the Roman Empire without any imperial help, that even though the number of these references is not copious, each contains enough material for the lengthy discussions of each that are presented herein.

Soon after Nero became *princeps* in AD54, the church of Corinth acted after learning of the worsening conditions in Jerusalem by demanding to Paul that they be allowed to provide financial assistance to the Christians there.⁸¹⁰ As Paul wrote to the Corinthians in AD55:

Last year [AD54] you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so.⁸¹¹

This request would constitute the first step in what would become the 'Jerusalem Donation'. Astonishingly, by AD49 the Great Famine was being felt hard in Corinth. There, one *modius* of grain cost six didrachms, eight times the normal price at Rome.⁸¹² Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth reflects the hardships faced by the Christian community there, and in it Paul even instructs it to resist the temptation of celebrating any more weddings to conserve its funds. As Paul states:

Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is [unmarried].⁸¹³

Paul's explicit reference to a 'present crisis' is revealing. Decades earlier, Dionysius of

⁸⁰⁹ Gal. 1:2.

⁸¹⁰ Josef Hainz, *Koinonia: "Kirche" als Gemeinschaft bei Paulus* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1982), 123-151; John S. Kloppenborg, 'Paul's Collection for Jerusalem', 309.

⁸¹¹ 2 Cor. 8:10.

⁸¹² Eus.-Jer. 181 Helm (AD49); B. M. Levick, 'Greece (Including Crete and Cyprus) and Asia Minor From 43B.B. to A.D.69', in *CAH X*², 666.

⁸¹³ 1 Cor. 7:26.

Halicarnassus replicated the same language using words such as ‘trouble’ and ‘perplexity’ when describing the effects of a separate famine in another city.⁸¹⁴ Thus, the ‘present crisis’ Paul describes in Corinth, reflects recent hardships faced there by the Great Famine, necessitating a ban by Paul on weddings.⁸¹⁵

In support of grain price statistics and Paul’s letters as evidence of hardship in the face of famine in Corinth,⁸¹⁶ the archaeological record also tells us that the effects of famine were profound throughout during late 40s and 50s. Three honorific inscriptions found at Corinth memorialise the wealthy, and politically influential, Corinthian Tiberius Claudius Dinippus, for serving as *curator annonae* three times, twice in the late AD40s and once around AD51.⁸¹⁷ Throughout the Greek East, a *curator annonae* was responsible in times of food crisis for sourcing grain and selling it at reduced prices to favour the consumers in their city,⁸¹⁸ a practice the Greeks termed *paraprasis* (παράπρασιν).⁸¹⁹ It was also the role of the *curator annonae* to secure contributions from their city’s wealthiest citizens and create a grain fund in times of food crisis, to purchase food for their city.⁸²⁰

Solidarity with Jerusalem proved contagious among the other Pauline churches. Very soon, the churches of Macedonia made its own request to make their own contributions as well. In Paul’s second epistle to the Corinthians, written in late AD55, Paul indicates that the Christians in Macedonia pleaded with Paul so they might join with Corinthian Christians to help the Jerusalemite Christians, too. As Paul states:

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in the service to the Lord’s people [in Jerusalem]... Last year you [the church in Corinth] were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so.⁸²¹

⁸¹⁴ Dion. Hal., *Rom. Ant.*, 9. 3-4.

⁸¹⁵ Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Eerdmans, 2001), 223-225.

⁸¹⁶ M. Rostyovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire, Volume 2* (Oxford University press, 1957), 600; M. Jameson, ‘Famine in the Greek World’, in P. Garnsey, C. R. Whittaker (eds.) *Trade and Famine in Classical Antiquity* (CPS Supp. 8, 1983), 6.

⁸¹⁷ A. B. West, *Corinth: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens 1896-1926* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931) VIII/II, no. 86-90; J. H. Kent, *Corinth: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens 1926-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) VIII/III, no. 158-163; J. Wiseman, ‘Rome and Corinth I’, in *ANRW*, 11, 7, 1 (1979), 500; Bruce W. Winter, ‘Secular and Christian Responses’, 86, 98-99; Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 221-222.

⁸¹⁸ H. W. Pleket, ‘Economic History of the Ancient World and Epigraphy: Some Introductory Remarks’, in *Akten des VII. International Kongresses für griechische und lateinische Epigraphik* (C. H. Beck’sche, 1973), 254; Bruce W. Winter, ‘Secular and Christian Responses’, 96.

⁸¹⁹ J. Triantapyllopoulos, ‘Paraprasis’, in *Acts of the Fifth International Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphy* (Hoboken: Blackwells, 1971), pp. 65-69; Bruce W. Winter, ‘Secular and Christian Responses’, 96; Bruce W. Winter, ‘Secular and Christian Responses’, 96.

⁸²⁰ Bruce W. Winter, ‘The Public Praising of Christian Benefactors: Romans 13:3-4 Peter 2:14-15’, in *JSNT*, 34 (1988), 87-103; Bruce W. Winter, ‘Secular and Christian Responses’, 106.

⁸²¹ 2 Cor. 8:1-4, 10.

This generosity by the Macedonian church is equally impressing as that of the Corinthian church. For according to Paul, the Macedonia churches were also undergoing its own ‘severe trial’ and ‘extreme poverty’ due to the Great Famine. Even though some commentators still seem puzzled over the possible cause of this trial and poverty,⁸²² given that this letter coincides exactly with the Great Famine, and that Paul makes similar references to conditions faced by the Corinthian church as a direct result of the it, no doubt these are again references to suffering endured in Macedonia at this time due to the famine as well. This may explain Paul’s total silence on Christian charity in 1 Thessalonians. Clearly, by AD49-52, Paul had perceived that Macedonia was feeling the effects of the Great Famine and wanted the Christians there to conserve their funds.⁸²³ And this Macedonian context that makes its churches’ willingness and enthusiasm to contribute funds to the church Jerusalem equally impressive as that of the Corinthians’ own.⁸²⁴

Such fervour kept catching, and soon the churches of Galatia also sent its own message to Paul demanding that they too be allowed contribute to funds for the Christians of Jerusalem. After receiving all these requests so quickly one after the other, Paul first addressed the Galatian churches, possibly even to the ambassadors of those Galatian churches that had come to Paul with their demand. In rapid march, Paul then responded to the churches in Corinth, and then those in Macedonia. In *1 Corinthians*, Paul writes:

Now about the collection for the Lord’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collection will have to be made. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.⁸²⁵

To some commentators, this passage appears to be mere bookkeeping.⁸²⁶ But, in fact, its richness on information on the workings of the Corinthian church during the Great Famine, and the nature of the collection of the ‘Jerusalem Donation’, is clearly evident.⁸²⁷ What is abundantly clear is that Paul stipulated that on the first day of the week – which was most likely the day when the Corinthian church came together for worship⁸²⁸ – over an undisclosed extended period, each person was to ‘set aside a sum of money in keeping with one’s income, saving it up’ throughout that week.⁸²⁹ Every person was expected to make some kind of contribution, irrespective of their financial situations, their donations saved in the home for

⁸²² Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians* (Inter-Varsity Press, 1958, 1978), 237.

⁸²³ H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Fortress Press, 1975), 132 n.13; G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Eerdmans, 1987, 2014), 329; Bruce W. Winter, ‘Secular and Christian Responses to the Corinthian Famines’, in *Tyndale Bulletin*, 40, 1 (1989), 93.

⁸²⁴ Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 223-225.

⁸²⁵ 1 Cor, 16:1-4.

⁸²⁶ Robert Jewett, ‘Romans’, in James D. G. Dunn (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, 104.

⁸²⁷ F. F. Bruce, *Paul*, 151.

⁸²⁸ On the matter of worship on the first day of the week in the early Church, see Justin Martyr, *Apology*, 1. 67. 6. See also, Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 233.

⁸²⁹ 1 Cor. 16: 1-2; Kenneth E. Bailey, *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 2011), 483-485.

the church's treasury.⁸³⁰ It also clear that Paul appointed collectors to collect funds from every Macedonian, Corinthian, and Galatian church, in order to pass the funds onto the Jerusalem church at a later time.⁸³¹

The Christians of Greece, Macedonia, and Galatia clearly raised funds from their own labour and business endeavours, especially in mercantile Corinth. However, part of those funds were derived from slave labour throughout the empire in some form as well, for as Ste Croix in his treatises on economy in the ancient world first alerted the world, the many parts of the Roman economy was established upon class cooperation and exploitation, and included the use of slave labour,⁸³² a finding that many Roman historians now recognise and accept.⁸³³ In fact, slaves often lived and worked as parts of households which at least some level of hierarchy and wealth.⁸³⁴ And these included first-century Christian households. Hierarchical households feature throughout Acts,⁸³⁵ Ephesians,⁸³⁶ Colossians,⁸³⁷ and 1 Peter.⁸³⁸ Thus, such was the all-pervading presence of slavery throughout the Roman world, that even the private wealth of free Christians themselves who lived throughout those regions was always partly derived from the unfree labour system of the Roman Empire.⁸³⁹

Despite initial signs of enthusiasm and zeal, the Corinthian church quickly found itself abating, that is, until it learnt of the fervour with which the Galatian churches were busily raising their own funds for Jerusalem, which proved such an inspiration there, that its members were soon pressing on with similar fervour.⁸⁴⁰ Christians from Macedonia passing through noticed this fresh enthusiasm of the Corinthian churches, and their observation soon inspired the churches throughout Macedonia to increase their giving as well. As Paul states in *2 Corinthians*:

For I know your eagerness to help [in the Jerusalem Donation], and I have been boasting

⁸³⁰ Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 233.

⁸³¹ 1 Cor. 16: 2-4; 2 Cor. 8: 19-21.

⁸³² G. E. M. de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (London: Duckworth, 1981), 43, 52, 55-69, 133-162, 179-204, 210.

⁸³³ Keith Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Keith Bradley, 'Roman Slavery: Retrospect and Prospect', in *Canadian Journal of History*, 43, 3 (2008), 477-500; Keith Bradley, 'Slavery in the Roman Republic', in Keith Bradley, Paul Cartledge (eds.) *The Cambridge World History of Slavery. Volume 1: The Ancient Mediterranean World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 241-264. See also D. Kyrtatas, 'Modes and Relations of Production', in A. Blasi, J. Duhaime, P. Turcotte (eds.) *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches* (Walnut Creek: Altamira, 2002), 529-554; D. Kyrtatas, 'Domination and Exploitation', in P. Cartledge, E. Cohen, L. Fox-Hall (eds.) *Money, Labor and Land: Approaches to the Economics of Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 2002), 140-155.

⁸³⁴ Steve Roskams, 'The Urban Poor: Finding the Marginalised', in W. Bowden, A. Gutteridge, C. Machado (eds.) *Social and Political Life in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 487-532; J. Edmondson, 'Slavery and the Roman Family', in K. Bradley, P. Cartledge, *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, 337-361.

⁸³⁵ Acts 10-11; 16:25-34; 18:8.

⁸³⁶ Eph 5:22-6:9.

⁸³⁷ Col 3:18-4:1.

⁸³⁸ 1 Pet 2:18-3:7.

⁸³⁹ R. Boer, C. Petterson, *Time of Troubles: A New Economic Framework for Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 169-174, 185-190.

⁸⁴⁰ F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (Oliphants, 1971), 157; C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1971), 385; Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 897.

about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year [AD54] you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action.⁸⁴¹

This link between the Corinthian and Macedonian churches explains Paul pairing the two together in one passage in his letter to the church in Rome, written in AD57, a passage replete with palpable, retrospective nostalgia. As Paul reflects:

Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord's people in Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe (ὀφείλεται) it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe (ὀφείλουσιν) it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.⁸⁴²

This passage has sparked intense scholarly debate regarding the nature of the Jerusalem Donation. During the mid-twentieth century, scholars drew comparison between it and the Jerusalem temple tax demanded by Jews universally.⁸⁴³ However, although the Jewish leaders of Jerusalem maintained that a full observance of the Mosaic Law was obligatory for all Jewish sects, including that of the Christians, Paul's letter to the Galatian churches clearly stands against any Judaizing.⁸⁴⁴ However, other scholars accurately emphasize the voluntary nature of the Jerusalem Donation. And indeed, there is much value in this emphasised point, for it certainly appears that Paul encouraged sharing between Jewish and Gentile Christians in order to cement together as one universal, 'Community of Goods' without any compulsory tribute.⁸⁴⁵ Indeed, Paul's use of the words ὀφείλεται and ὀφείλουσιν in Romans 15:27 reflect his own Pauline connection between grace and responsibility, a connection that Paul taught that Christians ought to consider adopted universally.⁸⁴⁶ Thus, what concerned Paul was not a unilateral direction of funds to a mother-city by its subjects in the politico-religious sense, but rather true signs of faith and loving reciprocity between Christians, thus just as the Jerusalemite church had shared its 'spiritual blessings' with Gentile Christians living throughout the darkened Roman world out of love, so too Paul simply pointed out that the time was now appropriate for Gentile Christians to return this kindness with monetary support in the Jerusalemite church's hour of need.⁸⁴⁷

6.3.5 *Paul Takes Charge*

In late AD55, Paul assumed control over the Jerusalem Donation, and henceforward exhibited much dedication to seeing it through to a successful completion. But not all churches contributed without any difficulty. In fact, Paul soon found himself abjuring the church in Corinth to rectify its loss of heart in the collection and finish their task:

Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your

⁸⁴¹ 2 Cor. 9:2.

⁸⁴² Rom. 15:26-27.

⁸⁴³ J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesu* (1958), I. 86; II A 48; II B 118.

⁸⁴⁴ Margaret E. Thrall, *The First and Second Letters*, 161; F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 158.

⁸⁴⁵ C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary*, 386.

⁸⁴⁶ Michael F. Bird, 'The Letter to the Romans', in Mark Harding, Alanna Nobbs (eds.) *All Things to All Cultures*, 198.

⁸⁴⁷ 2 Cor. 8:11-12.

completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.⁸⁴⁸

In order to ensure the success of this instruction, Paul sent a number of representatives on his behalf to encourage them in their fervour for the donation.⁸⁴⁹

Finally, in AD57, Paul brought the collection to Judea, after sailing from Ephesus, strategically situated for Paul as a base for the purposes of collecting the Jerusalem Donation as it is between Corinth, Macedonia, and Galatia. Acts states that Paul was already aware that he would probably be arrested by his enemies in Jerusalem, having been told by the prophet Agabus in Caesarea Maritima that immediately following his arrival in Jerusalem he would indeed be arrested and tried by Gentiles. And yet Paul hastened to Jerusalem. This need for haste in the face of certain danger tells us more than anything that, at last, the Christians in Jerusalem were now feeling acute shortage and despair from the Great Famine, that was not only continuing unabated, but it seems intensifying. With simple brevity, Paul farewelled the church in Rome in his letter, informing them he was about to sail for Jerusalem:

Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord's people there.⁸⁵⁰

Perhaps to his astonishment after Agabus' dire prophecy, when Paul arrived in Jerusalem, the Christians there welcomed him excitedly. On the following day, Paul received an audience with James and the Jerusalemite elders, upon which the apostle:

Greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. When they heard this, they praised God.⁸⁵¹

Given the ever-present famine conditions throughout the empire and especially in Judea, and given also that Paul used minute detail to describe all his actions on his missions, Paul's report on this occasion must have contained an equally detailed account of the collection's beginnings, progress, completion, the purpose behind it, and Paul's reasons for bringing it to Jerusalem at this time. The fact that all Christians present at this homecoming for Paul, upon hearing Paul's account, broke into praise for God reveals to us that the collection was gratefully and lovingly received as a blessing and means of deliverance from hunger sent through Paul and his Gentile churches by God himself. However, Fitzmeyer and others have proposed that Acts' description here is far too simplistic, and that Luke's lack of explicit detail on Paul's collection in this passage shows that Luke actually suppressed many details about this audience deliberately, perhaps even details about veiled opposition to Paul and the collection there.⁸⁵² However, no proof exists in support of this argument, and as Bock reminds us, Luke's immediate Gentile audience were already entirely familiar with all details of this

⁸⁴⁸ 2 Cor. 8:11-12.

⁸⁴⁹ Margaret E. Thrall, *The First and Second Letters*, 161; F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 220.

⁸⁵⁰ Rom. 15:25.

⁸⁵¹ Acts 21:19-20.

⁸⁵² H. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 199; S. J. Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 692; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 644.

collection - brought to together as it was among themselves as an important and consistent endeavour over a period of years. Hence, there was simply no need for Luke to repeat to his audience what it already knew about full well.⁸⁵³

However, Luke's omission of explicit reference to the collection's acceptance in this meeting in Jerusalem has led many commentators into assuming that the collection must have actually been rejected there, finding tenuous support for this hypothesis from Romans 15:31, in which Paul says he was not actually entirely certain that the collection would be found acceptable in Jerusalem after all.⁸⁵⁴ Some scholars even claim that the 'alms' that Paul later presented to the Temple was the rejected Jerusalem Donation, which Paul deposited in the Temple as alms after he and it had been rejected and despised by the church leaders of Jerusalem and their followers.⁸⁵⁵ Achtemeier even argued that in the build-up to the First Jewish War, the Jerusalemite Christians probably would have found Gentile monetary gifts from the wider Roman world despicable, and unacceptable considering the animosities felt by Jews towards the Gentile world during this time. Thus, Achtemeier claims, the Jerusalem Donation was a dismal failure, which explains Luke's omission of an explicit statement saying it was accepted there.⁸⁵⁶

However, as Barrett has observed, given that James asked Paul to present alms at the Temple, Paul's monetary gifts were far from despised there throughout Jerusalem's circles. In fact, James' request to Paul actually suggests that the Jerusalemite church was so impressed with the collection and by Paul, that they wanted to share Paul with their other Jewish brethren throughout the city as well, as a blessing to counter at least some of the chaos caused by the Great Famine.⁸⁵⁷ The alms Paul presented at the Temple were most certainly not the Jerusalem Donation, but a personal contribution by Paul himself. For the term 'alms' (ἐλεημοσύνη) that Acts uses denotes only personal, benevolent giving, generally of money, specifically to meet a single or general need, rather than any kind of communal donation.

Therefore, the 'alms' that Paul presented to the Temple were only a private donation by Paul from his own purse to the Temple specifically to help the people of Jerusalem suffering from the hardships of the famine.⁸⁵⁸ And nor was the 'offering' Paul presented at the Temple the Jerusalem Donation either. For the term 'offering' (προσφοράς) Acts uses refers specifically to traditional Temple sacrifices.⁸⁵⁹ Indeed, these 'offerings' that Paul offered

⁸⁵³ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, 646.

⁸⁵⁴ P. J. Achtemeier, *The Quest for Unity in the New Testament Church: A Study in Paul and Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 46; James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996), 284.

⁸⁵⁵ F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary, Volume 2* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999 [1951]), 445; J. Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Berlin: Verlag, 1988), 338; C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, Volume 2* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1998), 1107-1108.

⁸⁵⁶ P. J. Achtemeier, *The Quest for Unity*, 46.

⁸⁵⁷ C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, Volume 2*, 1001.

⁸⁵⁸ Eckhard J. Schnadel, *Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 960; David J. Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 67-69.

⁸⁵⁹ I. H. Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 379; D. J. Williams, *Acts* (San Francisco: Harper, 1985), 400; R. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*,

were probably his thank offering for the successful and safe delivery of the Jerusalem Donation and its warm acceptance by the Jerusalemite church.⁸⁶⁰

In order to make clearer Luke's intentions in employing such simple, and inexplicit, wordage in his account of Paul's audience in Jerusalem and the collection's deliverance, one must recognise the distinction that must be drawn between the time of Paul's deliverance of the collection to Jerusalem in AD57, and the time that Luke wrote Acts. In Acts, the Jewish lawyer Tertullus' address to Felix reveals that most Jews in AD57 were actually still fairly content with Felix's governance in Judea, his helpful reforms, and the level of political stability that the Jewish nation enjoyed under his leadership. In Tertullus' own words:

We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms to this nation. Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude.⁸⁶¹

Notwithstanding conventional sycophancies in such *captatio beneloventiae*, it nonetheless follows that the relationship between Felix and Jewish authorities was still relatively healthy in AD57. Unfortunately for Paul, Tertullus' words to Felix reveal that the Jewish establishment and Roman governors like Felix were close and still had a working relationship that saw the bringing of common enemies, like Paul, to trial, as they had in the days of Jesus' arrest and trial, and the imprisonments of Christians in the early chapters of Acts.⁸⁶² Thus, by AD57 war was clearly still a far off uncertain event that lay years in the unforeseeable future. But, later when Luke wrote Acts, Judeo-Roman relations were far mostly sinister. For many years, commentators favoured a date for Acts' composition around AD61-63, where the narrative of Acts ends.⁸⁶³ However, there is now a sizable consensus that its composition took place during the years immediately following the destruction of the Temple, on account of the fact that in the Luke, Acts' immediate prequel, Luke has Jesus prophecy the destruction of Jerusalem, which has the appearance of being a reference to a recent event, worthy of a mention, and it seems also to be a deliberate improvement made by Luke on Mark's earlier, and much brief, description of that prophecy. Taken together, these observations point to a date for Acts sometime not long after Josephus had his Jewish War published in AD75, in the late 70s or early 80s.⁸⁶⁴ However, this does not undermine the integrity of Jesus' original prediction. As both Blass and Morris point out, as he was

Volume 2 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990 [1986]), 300; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 712.

⁸⁶⁰ D. J. Williams, *Acts*, 400; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 712.

⁸⁶¹ Acts 24:2-3.

⁸⁶² Bruce W. Winter, 'The Importance of the *Captatio Beneloventiae* in the Speeches of Tertullus and Paul in Acts 24:1-21', in *JTS*, 42 (1991), 505-531.

⁸⁶³ B. Reicke, 'Synoptic Prophecies on the Destruction of Jerusalem', in D. E. Aune (ed.) *Studies in New Testament and Early Christian Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 121-134; J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London, 1976), chapters 2 and 4; C. K. Barrett, 'Acts and the Pauline Corpus', *ExpT*, 88 (1976-77), 2-5; I. Howard Marshall, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989), 46-48.

⁸⁶⁴ James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1996), xi; C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Acts of the Apostles. Volume II* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1998), xlii-xliii; B. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 60-61; J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Doubleday, 1998), 54-55; B. R. Gaventa, *Acts* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 51.

prophesying, Jesus obviously spoke many words, and many would have concerned the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, more than any Gospel contains. Thus, between each gospel exists shifts not in historical accuracy, but in emphasis. Thus, Luke was not providing a ‘correction’ of Mark’s Gospel, but simply used certain words of Jesus’ own to relate to his immediate audience in the late 70s or early 80s Jesus’ relevance to this most recent and calamitous of events.⁸⁶⁵ Still, some commentators advocate for a later date for Acts’ composition, around AD115.⁸⁶⁶ In any event, whether Acts was written in the AD60s, 70s, 80s, or even in the 110s, in each case during these periods were characterised by hostile relations between Romans and Judeans, which culminated not only the First Jewish War (AD66-70), but also the Kitos War, otherwise known as the Second Jewish War (AD116-117).⁸⁶⁷ Thus, whichever option one chooses to date Luke and Acts, it is clear that Luke simply had no choice but to omit explicit details of the Jerusalem Donation, not because Paul did not deliver, and not because the Christians of Jerusalem did not accept it excitedly in AD57, but because Luke must have feared that such details might exacerbate the tensions between Romans and Jews even further, over a matter that, given his relative lack of familiarity with Paul’s epistles, he probably did not feel extremely confident describing perfectly anyway.⁸⁶⁸

Upon the Jerusalem Donation’s certain warm acceptance, James thereupon instructed Paul to take four specific but unnamed men who had made vows to the Temple for their final purification. The following events provide us with a timeline as to Paul’s actions leading up to his presentation his own personal alms at the Temple in support of those Jews suffering from the effects of the famine. Paul took the four and visited the Temple the following day. In the Temple, Paul gave notice of the length of time still required for the completion of these men’s purification and the kinds of offerings each would thence make.⁸⁶⁹ For the length of time for this kind of purification required seven days. But, crucially, before these seven days were complete, Paul entered the Temple by himself once again,⁸⁷⁰ to bring his alms and present offerings there.⁸⁷¹ While before Felix, Paul made abundantly clear that by that point in time he was already ceremonially clean.⁸⁷² Most commentators misconstrue these details, and posit that Paul merely went to the Temple to join with the other four in their purification rites, perhaps to become a Nazarite, or perhaps to atone for having been away from Jerusalem for too long, and that alms giving was not the point of Paul’s visit.⁸⁷³ But these hypotheses are unsupported by the evidence both within and outside Acts. For passage Numbers 19:11-

⁸⁶⁵ F. Blass, *Philology of the Gospels* (Macmillan, 1898), 46; Leon Morris, *Luke* (Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 26-27.

⁸⁶⁶ J. Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament: An Essay in the Early History of the Canon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), 114-139; J.C. O’Neill, *The Theology of Acts in Its Historical Setting* (London: SPCK, 1961), 1-53; R. I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 5.

⁸⁶⁷ On the Kitos War, see M. P. B. Zeev, *Diaspora Judaism in Turmoil 116/117 CE: Ancient Sources and Modern Insights* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005).

⁸⁶⁸ On growing tensions between Jews and Romans under Albinus and Florus, see Jos. *JB*. 2. 278-279.

⁸⁶⁹ Acts 21:23-26.

⁸⁷⁰ Acts 21:27.

⁸⁷¹ Acts 24:17.

⁸⁷² Acts 24: 18.

⁸⁷³ C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1018-1019; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 652; S. J. Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 694.

13, the same passage that is usually employed to argue that indeed these seven days of purification were biblically mandated for any Jew who had travelled outside Israel, actually states that this period of purification only applied to those that have touched dead bodies, and makes not mention at all of anybody that had travelled abroad. Clearly, this passage has been taken out of its original context either by will or by accident by each of these commentators. And in any case, according to the rules of purification among Jews at that time, all that was required to become ritually pure (ἡγνισμένον) after having travelled abroad, was a single immersion in a *miqv'ot*. Seven days of Nazarite purification rites was simply unnecessary, and probably never entered Paul's mind. In any event, it was as he presented his alms and offerings at the Temple that Paul was arrested, just as the prophet Agabus had foretold to Paul that he would.⁸⁷⁴

In recent years, Downs has suggested that the total sum must have been small, collected as it was among relatively poor Gentile churches, and given the fact that no honorific inscription has been discovered in Jerusalem, Corinth, Macedonia, or Galatia, Paul's achievement warranted no grand monument to him.⁸⁷⁵ However, given the fact that the Jerusalem Donation was collected by a number of Pauline churches over a period of three years, and that no mention is made in any ancient source that any further financial help was required by the Jerusalem church after AD57 at all, one finds that the Jerusalem Donation must have been substantial, and handled wisely enough by the Jerusalemite church thereafter for it to require no further financial support after its delivery. But, as for the fact that no monument to Paul for his leading role in the Jerusalem Donation was ever set up – so far as we know - Downs reminds us that 'no doubt Paul would have objected to such a memorial, had one been proposed, on the grounds that thanksgiving and honour for this offering were properly rendered only to God'.⁸⁷⁶

Other ancient sources besides biblical writings also reveal that conditions under the Great Famine were worsening in the Ancient Near East at this time, which may have contributed to Paul's timely intervention in Jerusalem. One particular Papyrus letter from Egypt from precisely this time informs us that many once-well-populated villages in that province were by that time in such a severe state of poverty that this letter, sent by a tax-collector over several villages sent to a presiding *strategos* of their *nome*, named Asianus, actually requests Asianus to postpone all taxation among those villages forthwith at least until the famine conditions eventually alleviate.⁸⁷⁷ There is evidence in Josephus and Acts that these worsening conditions in Egypt were shared in Judea forcing Paul's intervention there. Although Josephus is virtually silent about the Roman procurator at the time, Felix (AD52- 58),⁸⁷⁸ clearly there were troubles under his governance. Acts tells us that Felix was notorious for his weaknesses to bribery at precisely this time, and in light of the worsening conditions in Egypt and Judea in which money inflated exponentially, these factors may have exacerbated Felix's already present weakness. For, as Acts states, so soon after Paul's arrest:

⁸⁷⁴ Eckhard J. Schnadel, *Exegetical Commentary On the New Testament*, 961.

⁸⁷⁵ David J. Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles*, 164-165.

⁸⁷⁶ David J. Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles*, 165.

⁸⁷⁷ Smallwood 439 = A. S. Hunt, C. C. Edgar, *Select Papyri II* (1977), no. 281.

⁸⁷⁸ Jos. *JB*. 2. 243-268; Jos. *JA*. 20. 137-147.

...he [Felix] was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.⁸⁷⁹

Other historical details support the argument presented here that conditions were worsening terribly in Judea at precisely this time as well. Besides Roman procurators, the temptation of acquisition of funds by dishonest means corrupted many Jews at this time as well. Bandits began to plunder villages using Roman 'sicae' daggers, hence the later term to describe these bandits, *Sicarii*. The next procurator, Festus (AD58-62), took measures against them. But these bandits soon began to further organise and structure themselves, and now transformed themselves into the *Sicarii* we recognise from the pages of Josephus. This group would go down in history as quintessential Jewish protagonists against Roman power, but the fact that they began as mere bandits in response to the Great Famine, also contributes to our understanding that conditions were worsening in Judea greatly from the Great Famine in AD57.⁸⁸⁰

It also appears that these conditions only continued to worsen too. For, the next procurator, Albinus (AD62-64), began to strip Judea of all its wealth through steep hikes in taxation, to continue to provision the city of Rome and stave off want there. This only served to escalate the resentment already felt towards Romans by Jews as more Judean went hungry. Despite Albinus' best efforts to suppress the *Sicarii*, these continually worsening conditions made Jews flock to the *Sicarii* and other bandit groups to obtain food through any means possible, including open plunder. This development began to hamper Roman Albinus' ability to further strip Judea of its already drained resources.⁸⁸¹

Given this manifold evidence of deterioration in Judea due to the pressures of the Great Famine, it is perhaps not surprising that the church in Jerusalem now found itself desperate, and that Paul knew he had to intervene there, arrest and imprisonment or not. Josephus downplays the ravages of this famine in his account of the build-up to the First Jewish War, however Josephus possessed wealth and privilege of a Jewish noble that insulated him from want, freeing him to focus all his attentions on political and military spheres.⁸⁸²

However, despite this sweeping view, and the fact that although many at the time may have at last begun to contemplate that this famine would prove endless, in AD63, conditions at last finally began to abate all over the empire. This we may determine from four historical developments. Firstly, in AD63, Nero dedicated his brass *dupondius*, depicting an image of Rome's newly built marketplace on its reverse. This quick completion of a major market, and its completion's commemoration on coinage and distribution throughout the empire at this time, constitute a deliberate statement by Nero that celebrates the return of normal food supply both within and outside Rome.⁸⁸³ Secondly, in AD64, Nero brought the construction of Portus to a close, the clearest sign that affordable food was again available in Rome for ordinary inhabitants, including those tens of thousands who had been previously employed

⁸⁷⁹ Acts 24:26.

⁸⁸⁰ Jos. *JB*. 2. 278; Jos. *JA*. 20.185-188.

⁸⁸¹ Jos. *JB*. 2. 278; Jos. *JA*. 20.197-210.

⁸⁸² Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, '1 and 2 Corinthians', 88.

⁸⁸³ *BMC* Nero 196; *RIC* Nero 110.

for wages to pay for food at inflated prices. This harbour is depicted on a new, commemorative, brass sestertius, which distributed throughout the empire as it was, served as the clearest warm welcome for the captains of food import transport vessels.⁸⁸⁴ Thirdly, at precisely this time also, Nero dropped the price of grain sharply, which fell to such low levels that by AD65 the price of grain in Egypt was at 1 drachma, and 1 obol - even lower than what it had been before famine began there some two decades earlier. With this plummet in grain prices, and the return of imported food into Rome, the empire at large at last began to show some signs of recovery.⁸⁸⁵ And fourthly, and finally, in AD64, the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem was also brought to completion, and with that, there took place a speedy shift among militant groups such as the *Sicarii*, away from subsistence banditry towards a more volatile urban political militancy. This militancy became centred round a thoroughly nationalist agenda – developments that contributed greatly to the eventual eruption of the First Jewish War.⁸⁸⁶

This shift also marks the transition from entrenched famine that produced and encouraged subsistence banditry, to the renewed opening up of access to food in each of the empire's cities, including Jerusalem. However, even with such conditions established, the memory of callous, unsympathetic, and unflinchingly Romano-centric policies by Roman procurators throughout the Great Famine lingered in Jewish minds, especially among those who ascribed to the anti-Roman movement taking hold in Judea. These callous behaviours by Roman governors, Josephus would portray as out of character for the Roman race who God had chosen to become the conquerors of the people of His own Promised Land. Instead Josephus chose to paint cases of individual Roman procurators with nuanced, jaundiced, and all-too brief character strokes using his thematically pro-Roman and Flavian-biased, stylus.⁸⁸⁷

In the aftermath of the most severe famine in Roman living memory, the brutality, and the blatant self-interest of Judea's Roman imperial overlords, would be well remembered among the vast majority of Jewish agitators in Jerusalem in the build-up to the First Jewish War. Thus, in AD66, when many Judeans found their new procurator Gessius Florus no more benevolent than his predecessors, and left wondering if and when famine returned whether Florus would drain Judea of resources once again as his predecessors had done, Judea revolted.⁸⁸⁸ Josephus would go on to gloss over all of these themes and issues, to claim instead that by comparison to the horrors of the war that was to follow, the pretext for the start of this war by Jews was 'insignificant'.⁸⁸⁹

6.3.6 Conclusions

For Paul, Christian charity should be a natural expression from one's Christian faith, and

⁸⁸⁴ *BMC* Nero 131; *RIC* Nero 178.

⁸⁸⁵ J. Tait, *Greek Ostraka* (London, 1930, 1), no. 210, 108; Kenneth Sperber Gapp, 'The Universal Famine', p. 259.

⁸⁸⁶ *Jos. JA.* 20. 219.

⁸⁸⁷ Tessa Rajak, 'Josephus', 592-593.

⁸⁸⁸ See *Jos. JB.* 2. 278-279.

⁸⁸⁹ *Jos. JB.* 2. 285.

one that shows itself, as Tasker describes it, ‘in action, just as faith must issue in works’.⁸⁹⁰ As Paul articulated in his letter to the church at Ephesus, ‘by grace you have been saved, through faith’, but in juxtaposition to Luther’s strongly held position that a Christian’s life depends on faith alone and that good works have little importance, Paul actually follows up the above reference immediately with his clear statement that once saved Christians should indeed act upon their faith with all types of good works equal to that faith for ‘we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works’.⁸⁹¹ Paul even reiterated this point to the church in Rome, writing that we are ‘justified by faith apart from observing the law’, but, by using a slavery metaphor – an apt one in the days of the Roman Empire – added that once a Christian is saved by grace that person is no longer a slave to mere human masters, but rather we become ‘slaves to righteousness’ under one creator, in order to exercise good works as spiritual gifts that include ‘contributing to the needs of others’.⁸⁹² In fact, the Jerusalem Donation itself was a long, vast good work expressing Christian faith and driven by love – love for God and His children, and for the comradery those Christians shared.⁸⁹³ Therefore, for Paul, the ideal Christian ought to not only do, but also strive to do good works as outward signs of one’s own inner love for God and for other Christians and other people, showing all people ‘faith working through love’ in ways that might also win converts, as Paul told the Christians in Galatia.⁸⁹⁴ This stood Paul’s inner workings in stark contrast to Claudius’ own, as an emperor who cared little for those suffering in his empire except those in Rome mostly for his own self-preservation and desire for his own long lasting fame and glory. And this also juxtaposed Paul to the vast majority of other Romans as well, including on the one hand every Roman plebeian who believed that the constant observance of their religious duties was essential to their own lives because they were utterly terrified of the eternal spiritual consequences they would face without the inclusion of that constant observance throughout their entire lives, and on the other hand the members of Rome’s elite who held up the accumulation of money in the wake of natural disasters above any generosity in giving, especially to strangers from outside their classes and outside the city of Rome.⁸⁹⁵

The Jerusalem Donation was different to contemporaneous forms of Roman patronage too. We have already examined in depth how it was up to each emperor, like Gaius, Claudius and Nero, and their imperial families, to take charge and use the state treasury to dispense benevolent largesse in order to help the inhabitants of Rome and the empire rebuild and recover from all manner of natural disasters, especially in the cases of fire, earthquake, and the minor food crisis of AD42 under these three emperors. But unlike this imperial process, the Jerusalem Donation was actually a communal one by its very nature and workings, and

⁸⁹⁰ R. V. G. Tasker, *2 Corinthians*, 114.

⁸⁹¹ Eph. 2: 4-10. Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians* (InterVarsity Press, 1983) 71-78; F. F. Bruce, *Romans*, 103.

⁸⁹² On justification, see Rom. 3: 28; on being slaves to righteousness, see 6: 18, 19. John Ziesler, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 168; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, 79. On charity as a spiritual gift, see 12: 6-8. F. F. Bruce, *Romans*, 103-104, 134, 214-215. James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, 150. See also William Pauck (ed.) *Luther: Lectures On Romans* (Westminster Press, 1961), 119-120.

⁸⁹³ John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Eerdmans, 1959, 1965), 123, 218; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Eerdmans, 1996), 902.

⁸⁹⁴ Gal 5:6.

⁸⁹⁵ Gal. 5:6. William Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans*, 58, 180; F. F. Bruce, *Romans*, 103; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, 51.

nor did not originate or emanate from one single imperial or simply wealthy individual or family. And whereas the emperors of this period always had a regular supply of vast wealth to draw from and controlled the currency and mints of the whole Roman Empire, those on the other hand who contributed to the donation had limited resources, resources that had been further dwindled by conditions sustained under the Great Famine itself, and who made contributions from those meek resources weekly amounts over a long drawn out period, amounts that depended entirely upon the productivity or otherwise and profit margins each week. Lastly, Rome's imperial benefactions in this period were always, ever since Pompey the Great, and continuing under Augustus and Tiberius and indeed even right through to Nero, only ever in the form of one-off payments tightly controlled by the imperial regime of the time. However, in Paul's case, the apostle encouraged long-term economic investments, as well as the distribution and redistributions for the sake of helping and supporting the hungry Christians of Jerusalem.⁸⁹⁶ Thus the Jerusalem Donation that Paul oversaw was entirely different in both nature and mechanical workings to kinds of patronage that Claudius and other wealthy Romans dispensed.⁸⁹⁷ However, that was to be entirely expected, for although a Roman, Paul was never cognizant of the inner workings of the imperial family, and nor did he ever formulate an imperial policy as Roman emperors. Seen in this light, the Jerusalem Donation is more an extension of Christian love than either Claudius' or Nero's politically driven purposes.⁸⁹⁸

Paul was especially eager that God's blessings would follow for the Macedonian and Corinthian Christians as a result of their loving monetary gifts, relating to all Corinthian Christians in apt metaphors in the midst of the Great Famine, that he who 'sows generously will also reap generously'.⁸⁹⁹ For Paul, generosity is always as beneficial to the giver as it is to the receiver. In Paul's own words:

If he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.⁹⁰⁰

In 2 *Corinthians*, Paul called this teaching the 'grace of giving',⁹⁰¹ and through this kind of giving, Paul firmly assured the Christians of Greece and Macedonia that they would become, to quote Blomberg, rich 'in every way that God knows will contribute to that person's spiritual growth'.⁹⁰² Paul also held that this kind of growth always outweighs the practical importance of charity itself, articulating that 'If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing'. For Paul, a Christian

⁸⁹⁶ Steven J. Friesen, 'Paul and Economics', 50-51.

⁸⁹⁷ Peter Lampe, 'Paul, Patrons, and Clients', in J. Paul Sampley (ed.) *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (Trinity, 2003), 488-523, esp. 502-505; Steven J. Friesen, 'Paul and Economics', 51.

⁸⁹⁸ Richard A. Horsley, *1 Corinthians* (Abingdon, 1998), 223-224; Steven J. Friesen, 'Paul and Economics', 51.

⁸⁹⁹ 2 Cor. 9:6.

⁹⁰⁰ 2 Cor. 9:10-11.

⁹⁰¹ 2 Cor. 8:7.

⁹⁰² Craig L. Blomberg, *From Pentecost to Patmos*, 223. See also Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1997) 443.

should ‘do everything’ in regard to the relief of poverty, but only ever ‘in love’ or otherwise although that kind of relief might prove practical, it will prove cold and hollow.⁹⁰³ For as O’Connor summarises, Paul believed entirely that a church’s love is always to be ‘more important than the value of the gift’ given in love. Yes, Paul felt obliged on religious grounds to give practical help to the poor, and in this regard his actions resemble those of the emperors who aimed to rebuild entire cities and thus give assistance to the poor as well, which implies his actions were politically driven as well, though not on the scale of the Julio-Claudians. However, the Christian form that this help took through Paul - confirmed by own Paul’s articulate writings, which he shared and encouraged with his churches, were foreign to Rome’s emperors.⁹⁰⁴

⁹⁰³ 1 Cor. 16:18.

⁹⁰⁴ Jerome Murphy O’Connor, *Paul*, 185.

CONCLUSION

This PhD thesis has endeavoured to thoroughly set forth the case that individuality and change within that individuality over lengths of time were ultimately characteristic of the ways all Romans responded to natural disasters from the Late Republic right through to the Great Famine that ended in AD63. In doing so, this author has examined at length the kinds of unique internal and external responses that Romans employed when confronted by natural disasters that include fire, flood, earthquake, plague, and famine.

In Chapter One we witnessed the very beginnings of Roman disaster relief efforts in the actions of the praetor Sicinius. We observed how at its very inception, Roman relief efforts required at least some degree of independence from the main senatorial body, as conditions on the ground necessitated fresh innovations and new command structures far from the Senate in Rome. This state continued to flourish and develop, so much so that by 65BC Pompey the Great would not feel any compunction to consult his senatorial peers when rebuilding parts of Antioch damaged by several destructive earthquakes. These new conditions served to enhance Pompey's standing as individual patron of Antioch over and above any claims as patron body the Senate could claim, although at this stage the Republic was still working and Pompey did represent Rome's imperial interests in Syria and beyond. These trends stand in stark contrast to the purely ceremonial responses to natural disasters the Senate had hitherto provided. In fact, in this regard the Senate was extremely rigid and even as late as 56BC Cicero is still to be found lauding the merits of *supplicationes* and *lectisternia* over and above all other possible types of natural disaster response. Thus, effective, practical disaster relief efforts demanded some degree of breaking away from the Senatorial body. It could even be said that had not the rigid solely senate-centred Republic slowly deteriorated and been replaced by the principate, it is doubtful whether any practical disaster relief efforts would have ever been put into any form of action whatsoever. But even among senators there were variations between individuals. Crassus used natural disasters for financial gain, as did others after him, and Cicero manipulated their religious interpretations against Cataline, Clodius, and other political rivals and enemies. Outside the Senate, other Romans also held individualised attitudes to natural disasters, as epicureans Lucretius openly espoused them simply as the workings of the divine earth, albeit to varying degrees between them.

In Chapters Two and Three, which focussed solely upon the principate of Augustus, detailed examination explored how Augustus discovered acumen in balancing politics with religiosity and practicality. Under Augustus, a renewed appreciation of religious sentiment was restored. Exercising freedoms from senatorial rigidity and constraints, Augustus' independence allowed him to bring practical relief to those living in both the city of Rome and throughout the empire after natural disasters than ever before in Rome's history.

Furthermore, Augustus' practical attitude encouraged and inspired him to introduce preventative measure reforms in the aim and hope to reduce death and suffering in Rome occasioned by Tiber flooding and the event of large fires. Still, this balance underwent constant shaping and development throughout Augustus' entire principate. As a first stage,

Augustus would only bring relief to those parts affected by flooding of fire in Rome if that relief brought with it the promise of fresh political honours. During this phase, Rome's poorest were seldom provided respite from Tiber flooding, and poor building methods continued to be practiced, especially with regards to techniques and materials used in the construction of *insulae* – popular multi-storeyed apartments with cheap rent built throughout Rome's areas of mostly flat, low-lying, alluvial plains. Nevertheless, steps were taken to minimise some of the effects of flood in Rome. Marcus Agrippa introduced fresh supplies of running water in 33BC to sustain as many Romans as possible during after flood, and in 27BC Augustus himself established two new boards that henceforth would monitor the health and flow of the river. However, Augustus' relative inaction after these reforms in time erupted in frustration and civil unrest among Romans living in Rome, and uprisings under Publius Rufus threatened Rome with complete disorder. But, nonetheless, these reforms did lower the overall mortality rate due to flooding in Rome.

Of all his restored public spaces, Augustus' crowning disaster response achievement was his new Augustan Forum, which represents the second phase of Augustus' progression along his natural disaster response continuum. Built over the Roman Forum that had been destroyed by fire earlier that same year as a result of a devastating fire that destroyed both it and its surrounding environs, this new Augustan Forum's monumentality and architectural artistic design outlined the future direction for Augustus' imperial Rome – a future established upon new political and religious spheres, and unalterable multi-culturalism, and a society characterised by increased class rigidity and stratification that saw Augustus positioned unquestioned at the apex. Classical yet cosmopolitan, the site of the city Rome was now universal in nature, inhabitable for all Romans but replete with blatant class and wealth inequalities that Augustus purposefully maintained, enforced and ruled, as Rome's richest and most powerful individual. After being decreed *Pater Patriae*, a third phase that saw Augustus' ambition soften was ushered in. In AD4 Augustus turned his back on his previous ambitions for honorary and political gain, and rebuilt his palace with his own funds after it was damaged by fire, on a grander scale of course, but without any concern or expectation for praise or reward. Then, finally a fourth phase was introduced as Augustus seemed to begin to intensify his concern for the safety and welfare of all Romans living in all parts of Rome, whether rich or poor. Thus, in AD6 Augustus established a nocturnal fire brigade seven divisions strong, which although served the express purpose to expand his influence over Rome, also succeeded in preventing countless outbreaks of fires, saving hundreds, if not thousands, of Roman lives.

Augustus also rebuilt and restored many cities and regions in the provinces damaged and destroyed by seismic activity, such as Tralles and Laodicea in 26BC, Cyprus in 15BC, various parts of Asia Minor in 12BC, Naples in 2BC, and the region of Carura between Phygia and Caria in AD1. However, Augustus went much further than Pompey's restorative accomplishments in Antioch had achieved for the cause of improvements in natural disaster relief in Roman history. Augustus added to reconstruction projects the provisioning of financial help to cities in the form of benevolent dispensed largesse. These sizable monetary gifts stimulated local economies and provided local populations with funds that they often reinvested in their city's reconstruction, thus speeding its restoration process. Then going

above and beyond these glowing advances, in 18BC Augustus decreed that any future city affected by earthquake damage be remitted of taxation and tribute for a period of two years.

However, Augustus had little answer to any plague or famine, and as an indication of his sense of loss at these, he only ever provided extremely limited help in the case of each one when they occurred. Plague was incurable, and famine and food shortages were impossible to check immediately, and the long delays in the resupply of food to Rome resulted in riots and uprisings. In 22BC, Augustus did attempt expelling slaves, gladiators, and foreign residents from Rome to conserve what remained of Rome's food supplies for its Roman citizens, and he appoint two ex-consuls to take charge of the management of Rome's food supply.

However, the level of plenitude in Rome's storable food supply depended entirely and solely upon the weather and seasonal patterns around the Mediterranean basin, which, if disrupted, could result in famine, that even Augustus' most desperate efforts to repair proved themselves highly ineffectual. Indeed, it was only when normal seasonal and weather patterns returned that healthy levels of plenitude were entirely restored, even as Augustus, the consummate politician, claimed the responsibility and the glory for having produced this return to constant food supply. However, all that Augustus could ever really do under these circumstances was to ration and provision what little remained of Rome's stored food supplies among all Romans, and try keeping public sentiment calm through food distribution, gladiatorial spectacles and public entertainments, as in AD5, when Augustus actually succeeded in taking Roman minds off starvation, and channelling them instead towards renewed sentiments of jovial contentment.

In Chapter Four, it was examined and how Tiberius made further advances to Rome's natural disaster relief and response capabilities across the board, especially at the most practical levels. It was explained at the outset of the chapter how in AD15, at his principate's outset, a particularly destructive flood that swept much of Rome resulting in much loss to life and property there. This sparked Tiberius into action, and he promptly established the board of five senators that would be invested with roles and responsibilities to regulate the Tiber's flow. It would prove so highly successful that flooding in Rome would not occur there until AD36, and given that there are no ancient references to any loss of life as a result of it, the number of deaths it caused was clearly a sharp decline to that which had previously been the case in AD15, and the widespread chaos that prevailed throughout the aftermath of the AD15 flood did not reappear.

Tiberius' response to outbreaks of fire in Rome was also considerable. When fire burnt Rome in AD16, the Theatre of Pompey was damaged. However, Tiberius not only had this temple rebuilt, he also compensated all those living throughout Rome who had had property damaged above and beyond what was required of him. Following this, in AD27 fire burnt the Caelian Hill. Tiberius provided compensation for all throughout Rome who had incurred any financial loss. Finally, in AD37, the Aventine Hill and the Circus Maximus were also burnt, and Tiberius donated 100 million sesterces from his own funds in order to compensate each and every sufferer. Thereupon, the emperor defrayed the value of all houses and properties throughout the basket-weaving district, making up the differences from his own

purse, and appointed a board of five senators to oversee the rebuilding of all these properties. But, although Tiberius implemented no new reform in the cause of fire prevention for Rome's benefit as Augustus did, his benevolent responses to all those who had suffered any loss as a result of fire in Rome were always far more generous. But also an expression no doubt of his genuine concern for the lives of all those living in Rome, Tiberius was ever keen to further establish his position and enhance his power on a constant basis throughout the entirety of his principate.

In Chapter Four we explored in detail how Tiberius' finest hour in regards to responding to natural disasters was during the year AD17, when the *koinon* of Asia, and at least eleven other major cities there, together with other towns and villages, were either destroyed or severely damaged by the major earthquake that occurred in this year. Tacitus' description of this earthquake is clearly lifted from the events that took place during the AD115 earthquake that hit Syrian Antioch at the time that Tacitus was putting finishing touches on his *Annals*. However, his narrative of the emperor's response to illumines his reign and Roman history. The thriving Sardis was compensated with 10 million sesterces and was remitted from all taxation for five years, and other Asian cities received compensation in descending amounts starting with Magnesia-by-Sipylus and the rest of the cities of Asia following it. The restoration process saw the efforts and services of local officials, imperial architects and engineers, army staff and soldiers, and tens of thousands of slaves employed and conscripted. As a result of their concerted efforts, Asia's restoration was completed in just five years, precisely the period of time that Tiberius set aside in order to complete the restoration process. Tiberius' restoration of practically the entire province of Asia, enhanced the emperor's popularity immensely, especially in Asia, where he was hailed as the refounder of the *koinon* and honoured with numerous monuments and inscriptions throughout Asia, Rome and Italy. If Tiberius could not refound Rome again as his model Augustus had, he would lay claim instead to refounding the entire Roman province of Asia. But, the fact that Tiberius had intervened in a senatorial province earned him little respect or appreciation among Roman senators. When earthquakes later occurred in parts of Greece and Asia in AD23, Tiberius restored the cities of Aegium and Cibra in each respectively, remitting all tribute in these cities for a period of three years.

However, in AD19 Tiberius exhibited his total inability to check the immanent food crisis looming in Egypt. It had to take Germanicus' intervention and fast handling of the situation to bring about a swift resolution to this potentially disastrous situation. However, this intervention earned Germanicus little credit in Tiberius' eyes, for before leaving from Rome for Egypt, Germanicus failed to approach Tiberius and request him for his imperial permission to intervene in this province which essentially belonged to the *princeps* as an estate on a provincial scale. This resulted in an immediate fall out between Tiberius and the young prince, which ultimately led to Germanicus' inevitable downfall as an enemy of the emperor.

Gaius exhibited even more enthusiasm in his responses to natural disasters in Rome and throughout the Roman Empire than Augustus and Tiberius. He distributed compensation lavishly, both to the inhabitants in Rome after fire, and to the citizens of Antioch after one

particularly devastating earthquake there. In the case of Antioch, Gaius also spent lavishly in the construction of a monumental new aqueduct that brought Antioch a fresh new supply of running water from Mount Daphne. Gaius was extremely fastidious in the thoroughness of the implementation of his natural disaster relief efforts and restoration projects. But, the propagated rumour spread by Claudius, Seneca, and others under the principate of Gaius' imperial successor that Gaius mismanaged Rome's resources that nearly brought on a food crisis are entirely fabricated. Rather, Gaius consistently supplied Rome with enough food and water supplies, and showed a regular willingness to respond benevolently to the inhabitants of every city hit by a natural disaster of any sort. Only Gaius' assassination cut this emperor's enthusiasm short and stopped it from continuing further.

Chapter Six examined how Claudius' principate marks the highest point throughout the Julio-Claudian period in relation to the high number of repeated and thoroughly purposeful and benevolent responses to earthquakes around the Roman Empire that feature repeatedly throughout it. Cities rebuilt by Claudius after becoming damaged or destroyed by earthquakes included Smyrna, Chios, Erythrae, Teos, and Syrian Antioch in AD42, Miletus, Samos and Thera in AD46, Crete and Rhodes in AD53, and in Apamea in Phrygia in AD54. However, in stark contrast to this glowing list of architectural achievements in the wake of widespread and intense earthquake activity throughout the empire, Claudius' principate all displayed to the entire empire, just as it exhibits to all modern historians, this emperor's lack of insight and understanding as to how to tackle the problem of the Great Famine in the provinces. Most certainly, in Rome, Claudius began the construction of Portus to streamline Rome's reception of import vessels into Rome by the Mediterranean Sea, which kept employment and wages there high. This However, in regards to the provinces, despite the obvious fact that this famine was unusually and extremely long in its duration, Claudius found himself constantly floundering as to what to do, and in the end did virtually nothing for them. In places like Judea, conditions were so severe that the visiting royal family of Adiabene felt it imperative to source grain and other foodstuffs from other provinces using from their royal coffers at once to feed the local population in Jerusalem immediately.

Nero proved just as ineffective in tackling the Great Famine as Claudius. However, at grass roots levels, ordinary Romans achieved some success in providing the Judeans with funds so desperately needed there. In reflection of other possible similar movements around the empire's provinces, ordinary Romans like the apostle Paul were able to raise substantial funds over the course of three years that brought much needed relief to the inhabitants of Judea, and especially those of among the Christians in Jerusalem. Initially, this charitable movement, called the Jerusalem Donation, was the devised by the churches in Corinth, Macedonia and Galatia and virtually forced upon Paul. But, in AD55 Paul took charge of the running of the collection, and actively encouraged these churches' enthusiasm, especially when it seemed to Paul to wane, eventually bringing the collection to its successful completion. In AD57 Paul brought the funds to Jerusalem where they could only ever have been accepted with resounding acceptance and praise, even though some scholars only weigh up part of the entirety of the evidence and thereby misled, hold positions to the contrary. No record of amounts of funds raised in the collection exists any longer, although undoubtedly Paul and the Jerusalem church possessed such documents at some stage. However, the fact

that no evidence whatsoever has passed down from ancient times to suggest that the Jerusalemite church needed any further outside financial help after Paul's delivery of this collection reveals that the amount of the collection was indeed a substantial one, and ably handled by the Jerusalem church until famine conditions finally dissipated sometime during the year AD63.

Observable throughout the above examples of Roman responses to natural disasters, the primary thesis of this dissertation is borne out although cultural trends with regard to responses most certainly did exist, they were not always identical. Naturally, since each disaster took on different characteristics and affected different areas of Rome and the empire, it was impossible for imperial responses and the responses of other sections of Roman society to be altogether consistent, and this absence of regular, ongoing consistency meant that Rome's repertoire of bureaucratic and logistical responses remained imperfect. Yes, precedents of imperial policy were established, preventative bureaucratic reforms were put in place, and improvements to the various methods of relief and restoration to peoples and places in the wake of natural disasters, and especially in the cases of the flooding of the Tiber and the many fires that burnt various parts of Rome, as well as cases of restorations of buildings and cities around the provinces. However, the sheer number and variety of natural disasters that swept different places at different intensities, coupled with the fact that such responses only became serious Roman policy as recent and late as the start of Augustus' principate, meant that Rome's ability to respond to a given natural disaster always lacked perfect preparation, performance and execution, notwithstanding those times when emperors such as Tiberius showed no interest to help earthquake sufferers at all, and both Claudius and Nero showed similar disinterest in helping the provinces throughout the entirety of the Great Famine.

Just as Rome's responses to natural disasters were never identical, the Emperors who decreed and coordinated those same responses were different, sometimes entirely, both in terms of character and in the kinds of those responses that emanated from those different characters. Furthermore, the character of each emperor always underwent change over time and could swaying in levels enthusiasm and blunt disinterest from one moment to the next, depending on the political, cultural and economic importance of the region and its peoples' importance to the *princeps*' and to Rome's interests, and the capacity within each emperor to be able to cope or not cope a given situation or context, which in the cases of the various plagues and famines that hit the empire sporadically, inevitably amounted to not being able to cope very well at all.

With regards to the pioneering introduction of new techniques and methods to prevent and respond the most effectively to natural disasters, both within Rome, and around Rome's provinces, with the exceptions of course of plagues and famines, which no Julio-Claudian emperor was ever able to prevent or contain, such as floods and fires throughout the city of Rome, and the numerous earthquakes that took place throughout Rome's provinces, the principates of Augustus and Tiberius would never be matched again under the Roman Empire. Even after the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD79, Titus considered rebuilding Pompeii and Herculaneum and several other cities in the Vesuvian region buried by heavy

fallout from that eruption, but only very briefly and not one city was ever rebuilt. Compare that to the many cities and other urbanised centres throughout Asia, mostly far greater in terms of size, population and importance than either Pompeii or Herculaneum that were rebuilt entirely by Tiberius from AD17 to AD22, and suddenly the all too often stereotyped cunning, calculating, cold hearted Tiberius becomes a much more towering and admirable figure than the Titus usually so highly praised by the ancient sources. And indeed, although Nero's new Rome, with its vast new Golden Palace, outshined most if not all of Augustus' architectural achievements following many fires throughout Rome over a much longer period, it still stands that Nero still never brought as much relief to Rome's inhabitants on anywhere near as a consistent and thorough basis as either Augustus or Tiberius, or even Claudius during the Great Famine alone for that matter. And in the case of Gaius, there is no evidence that even suggests that that emperor might have been capable of innovation either, both with regard to natural disaster prevention and response. All that his invariably standardised responses indicate is that Gaius was most certainly capable of responding to a natural disaster, whether that be in Rome, or in somewhere like Antioch, and even on a monumental scale, but that is all. Even his prayers were simply for perpetuation of that which had had gone before, just on a greater scale. And whilst Claudius responded repeatedly to earthquake affected cities and regions of the empire with far more consistency than the other Julio- Claudian emperors, he did very little to either improve or perfect upon methods and techniques put in place by Augustus and Tiberius.

Rome's senators wavered in their support for every *princeps* and his policies from emperor to emperor. Although Augustus had effectively, but subtly, assumed total, supreme, autocratic, kingly power over Rome and all its provinces in calculated increments whilst in total control of Rome's legions and finances, at the expense of the Senate's powers to exert its own waning authority, both senators and ex-senators were not only happy to be selected to organise and coordinate Augustus' new bureaucratic bodies commissioned specifically to monitor and manage the Tiber River's flow, and to maintain Rome's aqueducts that supplied that city with the fresh flowing water that sustained its population in the event of floods with the resulting stagnant pools their floodwaters left behind, and to maintain and manage Rome's grain supply in Egypt, they actually welcomed these opportunities, based and provided as they were to the only real echelon of power in Rome, that which now belonged to Augustus and his vision and agendas for the present and future of an imperial Rome. However, under Tiberius, the emperor's contests with the Senate was more obvious and public. However, some segments of the Senate were still willing, even after these affronts, to cooperate with Tiberius when called upon to serve Rome's interests and execute the task of preserving the lives and property of the city's inhabitants. Thus, we find in AD15 the appointment by Tiberius of five of Rome's senators to leadership roles over an important new board whose role and purpose it was to monitor and partly reduce the Tiber River's flow in order to reduce flooding and its often resultant loss of life and property, roles that they performed so admirable that the next Tiber flood that occurred took place as late as AD36 and which produced only minimal loss of life and very limited civil disturbance. However, there is no mistaking the loss of face that Tiberius inflicted upon the Roman Senate in AD17 when he purposefully intervened in the senatorial province of Asia without request, and with

vast monumental visions and intentions which he brought to such successful completion, all without any regard for any of the thoughts, the feelings, or even possible collaborative contributions each had or were perhaps able to make. And after that point we find Roman Senators rarely being consulted by Tiberius after any kind of natural disaster. Not surprisingly, we find no further evidence of the kind of contentment that was exhibited by the five senators appointed to monitor and reduce the Tiber's flow when it came to making a contribution to relief efforts and restoration projects under Tiberius' leadership after AD17, and neither did Tiberius again provide any such new appointments as he had in AD15 for senators after that date either. Under Gaius, Rome's senators were virtually isolated from all decision making in Rome, as the emperor Gaius involved himself in making every decision on all matters of state throughout the early phase of his principate, and then assuming and wielding total megalomaniac control in its latter stages as his mind degenerated. Thus, there is no evidence whatsoever that any senator had any input or role under Gaius in relation to any response Gaius made to a natural disaster. Under Claudius too, the Senate became virtually a non-entity with regards to Claudius' restorative responses to the damage and destruction done to cities after earthquakes in the provinces, for Claudius simply preferred the advice and pressures given him by imperial advisers and palace courtiers rather than suggestions or help from any other source. As a result, there are no recorded instances of Rome's senators taking any leadership roles under Claudius' aegis in the aftermath of any natural disaster at any time during his principate.

Among ordinary Roman citizens, we have the contrasting examples of Publius Rufus, initiator, coordinator and leader of riot and rebellion in the city of Rome, and the apostle Paul while active in Asia Minor and Greece. Rufus' overall responses to the flood of AD5 and the fire of AD6 were those of organised mob violence and armed sedition throughout the city, his life and urban rebellion coming most likely to violent end around AD7 at the hands of the *cohorts vigiles* on behalf of the interests and safety of the emperor Augustus. By comparison, Paul sought to address the problem of the Great Famine, a natural disaster of far greater consequence and duration affecting the whole empire, had the role of leadership over the Jerusalem Donation thrust upon him, but once done, behaved with intelligence, love, courtesy, and strategic delicacy, under the auspices of the Roman state, using its postal system, its currencies, and its maritime network to bring much needed relief to the starving Christians of Jerusalem, enough in fact for them not only to purchase food immediately, but to also sustain both themselves, and others they felt needy of monetary help, for another six years, right up until the Great Famine eventually dissipated. Between these two polarised extremes, existed a whole spectrum of responses by a whole spectrum of types of individuals. Thus, Lucretius viewed these events through both a philosophic and poetic lens, while Strabo approached them from a purely geographical scientific angle. But the most common of attitudes and responses to natural disasters by Romans both in Rome and throughout the provinces was certainly that of Velleius Paterculus. Whilst not all shared his obsessive zeal for the emperor Tiberius, his understanding that any natural disaster that entails considerable loss of life constitutes tragedy, that if addressed thoroughly and competently by the emperor ought to bring that emperor much owed and well deserved honour, praise, respect, and even adoration, which is just what Romans governing the province of Asia felt for Tiberius in

AD23 when they offered him divine status and ruler-cult.

To conclude, although Augustus and Tiberius found some success in preventing certain natural disasters, namely floods and fires, in a limited capacity for periods of time, earthquakes and plagues were impossible to prevent throughout our entire period. An imminent famine was checked before it could eventuate when Germanicus intervened in Egypt in AD19, however given the unpredictable nature of weather patterns, periodic variations in the Nile, war and drought, the onset of famine throughout the Mediterranean region was often just as unpredictable, and therefore nearly always unexpected, as happened in the case of the Great Famine. On the ground, when and where natural disasters occurred, there was always a great loss of sense within and among those experiencing the chaos, calamity, and loss of property and life firsthand. For under his period, there was never a guarantee of survival, and when senses returned they did so with varying speed and degree from individual to individual, depending the extent and nature of their religious beliefs and fears, philosophical positions, medical knowledge.

Then, there are the multiple collective actions of groups of individuals throughout Roman history as exhibited within this dissertation that have had a bearing upon the various courses of that history, such as that of the Roman Senate in commissioning Sicinius to Apulia and deciding to allow him to take personal individual control of the entire situation on the ground there without any senatorial interference, a freedom increasingly dispensed and abused over time from that precise point on to eventually become a contributing factor to the Senate's later loss and lack of control towards the end of the Late Republic, which paved the way for Augustus and the Principate; or the Antiochene authority's combined approach to Pompey, which resulted in his decision to rebuild and restore there – a decision with far reaching consequences from the Augustus on; or the architects, sculptors, and artists who worked both collectively and concertedly in order to produce an Augustan Forum that outlined Augustus' vision for Rome and the empire to all eyes that ultimately directed Rome's social and political agenda for much of its imperial future; or Claudius' 30,000 strong workforce that designed and built Portus, altering the course of the city of Rome's destiny, especially with regards to its new capacity to feed and sustain itself and its million-strong population; or the Christians of Galatia, Macedonia, and Corinth, who pressed Paul for leadership to bring relief to other Christians living and suffering from want and starvation in Jerusalem under the most severe famine conditions ever produced by the Great Famine – the worst famine ever experienced by those living throughout the Roman Empire - which ultimately produced inclusions in correspondences written down according to Paul's personal dictated instructions to secretaries, letters that were considered and circulated as Christian scripture almost immediately, which informed and influenced not only the course of Early Christianity itself, but also the course of Rome's Christian Empire, and indeed world history right up to the present day. To understand this is to experience and partake in the spectral, engaging, and interconnected, nature and history that was entirely ancient Rome's own, a nature and history that consistently provided both the inspiration and the methods that a city like Rome would require in order to rule its own Roman empire, which it successful did, and for centuries, as history shows.

May the spectrum of ideas presented within and throughout this thesis, in interconnected engagement with the world of disaster prevention and management research, also build an empire, but one founded upon the preservation of the quality of human life rather than the self-preserving interests inherent in the various exploitative empires that are recorded throughout world history. For although we live in an age of commercial and political imperialisms today, we like Paul and the Christians of Galatia, Macedonia, Corinth, still rightly possess our freedom to contribute to humanity's health and survival even when possessing little, and we like Tiberius, have the resources and numbers at hand in this world, in its current age, to help those around it whose suffering or poverty debilitates them from offering their genuine and heartfelt gratitude and thanks in person.

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