**Panel 1: Communication**

1. Ciarán Bartlett, University of Birmingham

*The Flavian flip side: mass communication in the coins of Domitian*

The Flavians were well aware of the importance of coins as a means of communication for propagandistic purposes, and they were more involved than some earlier Emperors and indeed some later Emperors, owing to the nature of their accession to power and the need to establish family *nobilitas* and imperial *auctoritas*. Flavian numismatic communication was key in the manufacture and maintenance of the consent to govern and a method by which the imperial administration communicated ideology. Flavian treatment of tastemakers seems to have included some special coins being made in small batches which contributed in a small way to dynasty becoming the forerunner of a century of expansion and prosperity. A matrix of modern scholarship can be used to form a new hybrid model of understanding of ancient coins using both communications and historical theory. Like Augustus, the Flavians used coins to preserve and promote a record of victories, both diplomatic and militaristic, in practical and symbolic, propagandistic terms. While the Augustan numismatic tactics were opportunistic, the Flavian way was more systematic and relentless, with almost 3000 types issued from 69 to 96. Evidence of these coins shows that Vespasian and Titus were masterly practitioners of both performative ideology and practical political communication while Domitian sought to glorify himself more overtly. Like Augustus’ recalling to memory accepted themes of Roman life such as Julius Caesar, Republican values, Roman religious iconography and virtues, the Flavians relied heavily on coins as a means to communicate ideas of succession, memories of Augustus, Republican values, Roman religion, and virtues. Augustan imagery was a huge influence on, but not always a direct blueprint for Flavian communication. In a real show of the agility of this artistic and practical communicative medium, Vespasian adopted *and*adapted Augustan types. Titus developed his own types, different from Vespasian, and Domitian was quite experimental. Did this experimentation actually contribute to his downfall, lack of dynastic successor, and the damnation of his memory?

2. Adalberto Magnavacca, Université de Genève

*The Poetics and Politics of being* Germanicus *in the Flavian Age*

The importance of triumphal names in Roman culture is hardly underestimated and Domitian’s name *Germanicus* is no exception in this respect (starting from Suet. *Dom*. 12.3); nonetheless, literary critics and historians have missed so far the possibility to pinpoint a conscious and striking attitude towards this name displayed by Flavian authors (Quintilian, Martial, and Statius just to name some of them). By a close analysis of different passages from the aforementioned authors, I would like to display how some literary passages where Domitian’s cognomen *Germanicus* is explicitly mentioned or clearly alluded to (most of the time by means of etymological wordplays) demonstrate a self-conscious attitude towards a previous similar situation, that is Ovidian references to Augustus’ grandnephew, Germanicus, in two works written or rewritten during the exile (*Epistulae ex Ponto* and *Fasti*). The scope of my research is twofold: on the one hand, to present a complete and detailed analysis of this attitude (consider e.g., the well-known striking analogies between Stat. *Silv*. 4.1.1-4 and Ov. *Pont*. 2.5.49-50 and the conscious reworking of *Fast*. 1 in the same poem, but also the yet undiscovered allusions to *Pont*. 4.8.69-78 in Quint. 10.1.91-92), on the other to consider these

intertextual relationships as a literary template to embed different power relations between Domitian, intellectuals, and other elite members of Flavian society into high-culture *oeuvres*. The socio-literary model possibly reconstructed by applying a perspective similar to N. Elias’s one in his book *Die* *höfische Gesellschaft* (1969) will be thus the first step towards a comprehensive study of court dynamics in the Flavian age, a project where every aspects of the society (like proper names) can provide a striking tool to reconsider Flavian age and culture.

3. Bryan Brinkman, Missouri State University

*Domitian’s ‘silence!’ and the dynamics of acclamation*

Cassius Dio recounts a certain incident involving Hadrian at a gladiatorial contest in which the crowd was making an urgent demand, but the emperor was refusing. As the author continues, not only did Hadrian reject the request, but he ordered the herald to “proclaim that [order] of Domitian’s: ‘Silence’” (καὶ προσέτι ἐκέλευσε τοῦτο δὴ τὸ τοῦ Δομιτιανοῦ κηρυχθῆναι “σιωπήσατε”; 69.6.)**.** We might be cautious in accepting the veracity of the anecdote, especially given the source, and this passage is characteristic of a rhetorical device that Verena Schultz calls Dio’s “deconstruction of imperial representation” (Schulz 2016). However, the episode referenced by Dio is presumably that found in Suetonius (*Dom*. 13.1) when the emperor ordered the crowd to be silent through a herald. The fact that many years later Domitian’s name was (allegedly) still attached to this “silencing” is an important indication of the emperor’s significant relationship with acclamation (here, used in its broad meaning of “audible reactions from crowds”). In the same passage, Suetonius records that Domitian was delighted to be acclaimed on his feast day with “well-wishes to the Master and Mistress” (*“Domino et Dominae feliciter*!”; *Dom*. 13). This is noteworthy, as *dominus* was a title specifically rejected by previous emperors. Similarly, Martial’s encomiastic poetry recalls that because of the “lengthy expressions of joy” once offered to Domitian in the Circus “nobody noticed that the horses had four times started the race and were running” (*Ep*. 8.11). As I will suggest in this paper, by examining the accounts of Domitian’s interaction with the acclamatory crowds at Rome, we may shed some light on the popularity of the emperor in life as well as his role as a problematic *exemplum* in the generations

after his death.

4. Clayton A. Schroer, Emory University

*The damned despot’s dissidents: exile in the literary culture of Domitian’s Rome*

Falling from the good graces of any emperor was a dangerous prospect for Rome’s elite; faced with the current dictator’s power to impose temporary or permanent exile, an emperor’s disgraced enemies frequently found themselves removed to more or less undesirable places. With a few exceptions like Ovid and Seneca, our evidence for these people is patchy and incomplete: sometimes we know a few names (and perhaps places) of exiled persons, but rarely more. Domitian’s exiled dissidents, however, provide us nearly unparalleled access into who these exiles were and how they positioned themselves within the literary and political cultures at Rome. In this talk, I begin by reviewing what testimonia we have—gathered from sources ranging from Suetonius and Pliny the Younger to Epictetus and Aulus Gellius—for the 20 men and women whom we know or believe were exiled during Domitian’s reign. From this data arises the central question of the second part of this paper: how did these individuals try to frame their identities in the literary culture at Rome? A case study of the elder Claudius Etruscus, whose son commissioned poems about his father from both Statius (*Silv*. 1.5, 3.3) and Martial (Mart. 6.83, 7.40), yields crucial insight into this question and the delicate ways that these poets broached such a sensitive topic. My final question is more speculative: why is it that this literary period produced so many works haunted by the threat of exile? The *Thebaid* of Statius (e.g. Polynices, Oedipus, Theseus) and *Punica* (e.g. Scipio Africanus and Hannibal) of Silius Italicus, for instance, demonstrate Flavian Epic’s fascination with the topic. I contend that these and other writers are reacting to the experiences they witnessed firsthand under Domitian.

**PANEL 2: Domitian and the celestial**

1. Francesco Busti, Leiden University

Vera Iouis proles: *Domitian’s (alleged) divinity*

Statius presents his *Achilleid* as a «prelude» to his future poem on Domitian (I 19 *magnusque tibi praeludit Achilles*), the Greek hero being a traditional comparison for rulers, at least since Alexander the Great. However, the first couplet of the poem explicitly states that Jupiter refused to be Achilles’ father, thus denying him to become his heavenly successor (I 1-2 *formidatamque Tonanti* / *progeniem et patrio uetitam succedere caelo*): one could have thought of a better start for Statius’ prelude to Domitian than alluding to the fact that Vespasian chose as his successor Titus rather than him, thereby endangering his deification!

Moreover, the whole proem engages in close dialogue with a scene from Valerius Flaccus’ *Argonautica*, where Castor crowns his brother Pollux for his victory over Amycus, and the Argonauts salute him as *uera Iouis … proles* (IV 324-336). The twin brothers were the traditional example of fraternal *pietas* between imperial heirs in the early Principate, including – as reflected in contemporary artistic evidence – Titus and Domitian. Nevertheless, they were also a famous example of heteropaternal superfecundation: Castor was the mortal son of Tyndareus, while Pollux was the immortal son of Zeus, the ‘true offspring of Jupiter’. Which of Vespasian’s sons was who? Which one was entitled to claim genetic immortality?

The emperor’s divinity was a delicate matter, and evidence suggests a subversive character of Flavian poetry dealing with Domitian’s claim to it. In this paper, I will draw a map of Valerius’, Statius’, and Silius’ resistance to this claim, in order to show how its reception within contemporary epic poetry evolved throughout the dynasty: it will emerge that an initial cautionary doubt about Domitian’s divinity, somewhat counterbalanced with hope for brotherly concord between the two heirs.

2. Rebecca, Deitsch, Harvard University

*Disarming Minerva: Goddess & Emperor in Martial and Statius*

Domitian’s regard for Minerva is well-established, but few scholars have discussed how their relationship is constructed in literary texts of the Flavian period. I argue that Martial and Statius employ imagery of disarming and service to depict the goddess as subordinate to the emperor in a hierarchical reversal that ultimately asserts Domitian’s supremacy.

In *Epigrams* 14.179, Martial questions Minerva about the absence of her aegis. Her response – “Caesar has it” (*Caesar habet*, 2) – establishes a close affinity between emperor and goddess, but also suggests Domitian’s usurpation of her armor and authority. In 6.10, Minerva again lacks her aegis (*posita ... Gorgone*, 11), this time because she, like a secretary, is answering questions about Domitian’s intentions. The emperor’s identification with Jupiter (*nostri … Tonantis*, 9) further intensifies this power dynamic by elevating Domitian above his patron goddess.

This same logic can be traced through other epigrams (e.g., 7.1 and 9.3) and reemerges in Statius. For example, in the equestrian statue of Domitian described in *Silvae* 1.1, Minerva is reduced to a statuette on his palm – an odd reversal, given her usual portrayal with Victory on *her* palm. The goddess’s pleasure in her location (*nec dulcior usquam / lecta deae sedes*, 39-40) makes her the beneficiary, not the dispenser, of privilege, and her preference for Domitian over Jupiter (*nec si, pater, ipse teneres*, 40) once again bolsters the emperor’s superiority. Although Minerva holds the aegis, Domitian is the one who controls it.

Martial and Statius introduce a complex negotiation of roles that leaves it unclear who profits more from the connection: Domitian or Minerva. I conclude by suggesting that the goddess’s subordination goes beyond epigram and occasional poetry through a brief analysis of this power reversal in other media.

3. Kathleen Coleman, Harvard University

*The emperor presiding: Domitian at the Certamen Capitolinum*

In 86 CE Domitian changed the cultural landscape in Rome by inaugurating the Certamen Capitolinum, a competition in the Greek style that put Rome on the map of the great games circuits of the ancient world. Domitian’s innovation survived into the fourth century, by contrast with its short-lived predecessor, Nero’s Neronia, which was inaugurated in 60 CE and died with him eight short years later.

The success of the Certamen Capitolinum marked the fall of one of the last bastions of resistance to Greek cultural institutions at Rome. Its name associated it not with its founding emperor, as the Neronia had done, but with the supreme deity of the Roman pantheon, Jupiter Capitolinus. The corresponding power in the earthly realm, the emperor, presided in custom built venues in the Piazza Navona and the Piazza dei Massimi.

The image that Domitian projected for the privileged guests at one of his banquets on the Palatine is well-known from a breathless panegyric by Statius (*Silu*. IV 2), whereas the image that he projected to an audience of as many as 7,000 at the Certamen Capitolinum has to be pieced together from disparate sources: brief notices in Quintilian, Suetonius, and the *Greek* *Anthology*; the recently discovered victory list from the Sebasta in Naples; the foundation document of Diogenes of Oenoanda for the Demostheneia under Hadrian; a funerary relief from Rome; a mosaic from the villa of Lucius Verus at Acquatraversa on the Via Cassia north of the city.

In analyzing the staging of the Certamen Capitolinum and Domitian’s comportment at this major cultural event, I seek to demonstrate how he negotiated the exercise of power temporal and power celestial in sharing responsibility for a solemn cultural institution with Jupiter.

**PANEL 3: Domitian in Egypt and the East**

1. Nicola Barbagli, Independent Scholar

*Pharaoh Domitian: the statues of the emperor as king of Egypt*

Statuary has been a widespread medium to represent the pharaoh throughout Egyptian history. From the days of the builders of the pyramids in the Old Kingdom to the domination of the Macedonian and Roman rulers, innumerable statues in a wide range of materials and sizes were erected in a variety of contexts in order to perpetually materialise the presence of the king. For the later stages of Egyptian history, the statues of the Ptolemies dramatically make up the majority, while very few sculptures in the traditional mode of representation seem to have been produced for the emperors of Rome. In this framework, Domitian stands out because of the number, features, and provenance of the statues representing him in the guise of pharaoh.

This paper aims to offer a comprehensive study of the statues of Domitian as king of Egypt by analysing their material and iconographical features, as well as by discussing their possible place of origin and context of erection. The evidence will be not only measured against contemporary productions in the Graeco-Roman artistic tradition, but it will also be set in the wider spectrum of Egyptian royal statuary of the Roman period, in order to figure out the peculiarities, the occasion, and the significance of the Domitianic statues. This contribution will be an opportunity to present for the first time the entire corpus of the statues of Domitian as pharaoh, to reconsider the relationship between the last Flavian emperor and Egypt, and to address broader issues, such as the existence of workshops specialised in production of Egyptian statuary and the representation of the Roman rulers as pharaohs in Egypt and abroad.

2. Emanuele M. Ciampini, Università Ca’ Foscari, Venezia, and Federica Pancin, Sapienza Università di Roma

*And may the land be prosperous in the time of the dynasty whose name is Flavii: thoughts on the Egyptian Domitian*

Although the activity of Domitian as a pharaoh has received little attention both in Egyptology and in Classical Studies, some evidence sparked interest in recent years. Many Egyptian sites bear his name in hieroglyphic cartouches: the emperor’s interventions focused on the construction of new sanctuaries, as well as on ambitious epigraphic works. Egypt was not the sole setting for his thriving activity: in fact, much of his effort was also directed at his Egyptian self-representation in the capital. In this regard, one monument stands out for its significance: the Pamphilj Obelisk, now crowning Bernini’s Fountain of the Four Rivers in Piazza Navona; it features praising and programmatic inscriptions on its four sides, characterised by the combination of traditional Pharaonic themes and imperial statements in a legitimising perspective. The monument is possibly part of a grander project, that of the reconstruction and restoration of the Isiac sanctuary in the Campus Martius. In fact, the great fire of the year 80 had destroyed much of the pre-existing buildings, thus providing Domitian with a brand-new canvas to redesign his Egyptian image at the dawn of his Principate. This fresh start also allowed for a revival of the cult of Isis in the capital and beyond, with a well-known propagation of Egyptian and Egyptianising material culture. Lastly, the Obelisk opens a tradition of Egyptian monuments, produced in a Roman context, and linked to different models: the coeval obelisks of Benevento, also dedicated to the Isiac cult, and the later Obelisk of Antinous.

The aim of this work is to present some monuments and textual sources for the study of the Egyptian image of Domitian in the Nile Valley and in Rome from an Egyptological perspective. The dialogue between productions of different provenance and nature will contribute to the discussion on the original character of Domitian’s figure and of its achievements.

3. Abigail Graham, School of Advanced Study, University of London

*Mad love or bad blood? Domitian’s enduring legacy in Ephesus*

Domitian’s role as a benefactor in the city of Ephesus is almost unprecedented in both its scope and impact on the city. From extending the asylum boundaries at the Artemision, to collaborating in major waterworks, granting neokoros status, and being a subject of honour at Olympic games held in the city, Domitian fundamentally reshaped the urban landscape at Ephesus city as well as empowering local elites and civic institutions. Dozens of dedicatory inscriptions record his name and its subsequent erasures. *How did subsequent erasures impact his legacy and the perception of Imperial power in this great city*? While Domitian’s prolific record in Ephesian epigraphy is well documented, less attention has been afforded to the imagery and perception these erasures, an experience that did not require literacy and was surely a matter of public interest.

My paper will start with a brief introduction to his projects across the city, conveying the magnitude of his work in surviving structures and inscriptions. The focus of the discussion, however, will be a close examination of the image of erasures and the subsequent reworking of sites: considering how erasures may have shaped the perception of his legacy: *What did these erasures look like? What visual image do they present? What might this image reveal about the process and impetus behind erasures?* This section will focus on material from the State Agora, where his waterworks and neokoros temple featured prominently. A final section will explore the motivations behind the erasures and the image of rebranding on the monumental landscape, connecting Domitian’s legacy with that of Trajan. *In what context should we view erasures, were they a testament of hatred or a means of professing support for a successive regime?*

4. Jan Willem Van Henten, University of Amsterdam

*Herod Mirroring Domitian? Explaining Josephus’ changing perspective on Herod the Great*

The overlaps and correspondences in the portrayals of Herod the Great in Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities* and Domitian in contemporaneous Roman authors are striking. Most of Josephus’ criticisms highlighted in the very negative Herod portrait of the *Antiquities* reflect prominent points in the presentation of Domitian in the writings of Tacitus, Pliny and Domitian. The correspondences render it plausible that Josephus aimed to interact with contemporaneous motifs and themes that circulated in Rome about Domitian in this period. We will never know for sure what Josephus’s aims with his portrayal of Herod were, but I will argue in my paper that the similarity between the portraits of Herod and Domitian is so great that it is plausible that contemporary Roman readers of Josephus Herod could easily have interpreted Herod as a mirror-image of the apparently wicked Domitian. Josephus may well have used oral traditions concerning the emperor, but the fact that Tacitus, Pliny and Suetonius wrote their works in the same period as Josephus, or, rather somewhat later, makes a literary dependence of Josephus of these authors implausible. The accusations against Domitian as reflected in their works may partly follow well-established patterns of criticisms of earlier emperors, especially Nero, which may have circulated earlier, in which case Josephus must have been aware of them.

**KEYNOTE 1**

Virginia Closs, University of Massachusetts Amherst

*Rulers and Renewals in Martial’s Domitianic Rome*

Flavian efforts to rebuild Rome are a major subject of the era’s imperial panegyric, particularly under Domitian. A number of Martial’s epigrams contrast the present state of the city with its recent past in order to praise the current leader (and, implicitly or explicitly, to criticize a past one). As this poetic strategy develops over some two decades, it offers “snapshots” a succession of emperors as well as of the urban collapses and renewals over which they presided. Although each of these texts individually paints a picture of restoration and progress, taken together they suggest that this vision is erased as quickly as it appears. Ultimately, after Domitian’s death Martial employs this format to offer a pointed commentary on his own poetic record. Taken together, this sequence of poems traces the constant tension between the author’s literary “stamp” on the city and the monumental legacy of the Flavians; at a metapoetic level, this discourse informs the interplay between ephemerality and permanence that underpins the poetic project of the *Epigrams* writ large.

**Panel 4: Encomia**

1. Federica Bessone, Università di Torino

*A style for the emperor: Statius’ poetic monuments for Domitian*

*Damnatio memoriae* affected Domitian in art and prompted revised editions of poetry books after his death. However, poetic monuments survive that give us a visual and verbal representation of the last of the Flavians and his imperial image, in ekphrastic and rhetorically spectacular *encomia*. Statius’ hyperbolic and paradoxical style makes his eulogies of the emperor particularly challenging: his provocative writing and unexpected modes of expression imply covered tensions, hint at problematic traits of Domitian, and point out the risks inherent in absolute power (this approach informs recent work on Statius’ epic and occasional poetry).

In the *Achilleid*’s proem, the emphasis on Domitian’s incomparable superiority both in military and literary achievements, over Achilles and, implicitly, Statius himself – the celebrated author of the *Thebaid* –, hint at the emperor’s envy of rivals and susceptibility about his reputation in both fields, as pointed out by Tacitus. Statius’ monuments of words for Domitian, such as the *ekphrasis* of the equestrian statue in *Silvae* 1.1 (recently commented on by Pittà), exploit the force of paradox intensively, through oxymoronic phrases or images, counterfactual moves and conceptistic points. At the end of *Silvae* 4.1, the discussed vocative *rex magne* (effaced by some critics with a change in punctuation) equates the seventeen-times-consul with the ‘great king’ of the universe. Statius reuses the formula addressed to Jupiter in a well-known passage of the *Aeneid*, and thus literally equates the emperor with the supreme god, right as Jupiter is said to bestow on Domitian his own years (that is, immortality); at the same time, the jarring apostrophe to a *rex* at the end of a thanksgiving poem to a new *consul* is one in a number of dissonances and alarming notes to be heard in the poem (the same address is sarcastically used for the tyrant Creon in the *Thebaid*).

2. Stefano Briguglio, Università di Torino

*Ganimede, Earino e gli altri: amori efebici e encomio del principe tra Stazio e Marziale*

Un aspetto rilevante del regno di Domiziano è la politica moralizzatrice che vietò la castrazione dei fanciulli e la prostituzione infantile e che riportò in vigore la *lex Iulia de adulteriis*, in continuità con la legislazione augustea. Dopo la morte del principe, tuttavia, gli oppositori attaccarono l’ipocrisia di un comportamento irreprensibile in pubblico e censurabile in privato; il mio contributo si concentra sul modo in cui questa tensione viene recepita da Stazio e da Marziale, che celebrano, fra l’altro, la rinata *pudicitia* della Roma domizianea (Mart. 6, 4, 5). Mi soffermerò in particolare sui *pueri delicati*, a partire da Flavio Earino, protagonista di *Silv.* 3, 4 e di un ciclo di epigrammi (Mart. 9, 11-13; 16-17; 36). Stazio inserisce la posizione discutibile del principe – responsabile della castrazione del giovane – in un discorso encomiastico che si sostanzia di modelli callimachei e virgiliani. Inoltre, Earino (la cui ambiguità sessuale è paragonabile a quella di Achille a Sciro) è ritratto come un giovane il cui potenziale, mancato passaggio alla virilità si compirà in un altro *puer*, Fileto, salvato dalla castrazione grazie a Domiziano (*Silv.* 2, 6, 38ss.), o in Glaucia, a cui solo la morte ha impedito che spuntasse la barba tanto attesa (*Silv*. 2, 1, 52ss.). Le *Silvae* celebrano così efebi paradossalmente quasi-virili, a cui il principe garantisce il passaggio alla condizione di uomini (a differenza del Ganimede di Mart. 9, 36: ancora una comparazione tra Giove e Domiziano che si risolve a vantaggio di quest’ultimo). Questo peculiare statuto dei *pueri delicati* trova parziali consonanze nell’epica coeva: esso andrà dunque letto alla luce di significativi modelli letterari e insieme inserito in un complesso sistema encomiastico che elogia il principe anche per la sua politica censoria.

3. Jean-Michel Hulls, Dulwich College

*A new kind of despot? Re-reading Domitian’s eunuch in Statius and Martial*

In *Silvae* 3.4, Statius addresses a farewell poem to a lock of hair shorn from the head of Earinus, Domitian’s favourite eunuch. This is a controversial poem, read as an illustration of the emperor’s extraordinary despotism and one poet’s attempt to subvert it. Furthermore, the poem continues the tradition of Catullus 66, itself a translation of Callimachus’ *Plokamos Berenikes* in *Aetia* 4. Here we read Statius as reinvigorating the aesthetic of ‘Callimacheanism’ with a complex Flavian political message akin to the autocratic political milieu of Alexandria in the Ptolemaic era. Where Catullus had translated Callimachus to the late Roman republic, Statius moves both to Domitian’s Rome.

In a world where Domitian had recently outlawed castration and his relationships with wife and eunuch were open to interpretation, Statius’ poem deliberately courts controversy, but does so openly. This is a new form of ‘Callimacheanism’, whose aggressive intertextual poetics re-work the Catullan corpus (poems 65, 66 and 101 in particular) for a new Flavian age, while reviving the complex, allusive and difficult politics of the original ‘lock of hair’ poem. Only as a ‘new Callimachus’ can Statius address the realities of autocratic Rome under Domitian.

Earinus becomes a central player in Martial ninth book, which acts as a complex poetological response to Statius’ *Silvae* and a reassertion of the down-to-earth Catullan persona and subtle Callimachean virtues of miniaturisation. Hairiness and hairlessness, manliness and effeminacy, sight and blindness are the stark themes of this book. Martial’s aggressive riposte to Statius provides an alternative response to the extreme autocracy and authoritarianism of Domitian’s final years, by looking it straight in the eye.

4. Martin T. Dinter, King’s College London

*Domitian the Sublime*

For us Domitian manifests himself through coins, statues, buildings and literature thus projecting a transmedial story. However, since this is not just one specific story Domitian creates for us a transmedial world as ‘an abstract content systems from which a repertoire of [fictional] stories and characters can be actualized or derived across a variety of media forms’ (Klastrup/Tosca 2004; 2014). This paper will examine how Martial in his epigrams employs the sublime to contribute to Domitian’s world-building through the two main strategies through which a world may be extended: either, and most traditionally, through ‘adaptation’, a transposition of an existing story into another medium, or through ‘growth’ which expands the world by offering new canonical material, that is material that presents new pieces of information that are “true” for the fictional world (Wolf 2012, 245) .

The sublime is a ‘communion with the infinite’, but also something ‘so overwhelming that it defies comprehension’ (Day 2013:8). Longinus saw the sublime as something that ‘naturally elevates us’ (Long. *Peri Hyp.* 7.2). Modern day theorists such as Lyotard see the sublime as powerfully transformative, an affect that forces us to bear witness to the unpresentable. In generic terms, the totalising, panoptic descriptions of epic exhibit affinities with the sublime’s suprahuman impulses.

Accordingly, this paper challenges the common view that Martial despises epic (Baumann 2018; Gunderson 2021). Instead I argue that he depends on it, on its appropriation. For Martial employs epic allusions programmatically in Epigrams book 9 to elevate both the emperor Domitian and his own literary oeuvre. As this paper demonstrates, Martial’s epi(c)grams help to expand Domitian’s transmedial world.

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**PANEL 5: Domitian’s monuments**

1. Ana Maria Lóio, Universidade de Lisboa

*Domitian’s building program for the Campus Martius: Augustus, Romulus, and the Divorum porticus in contemporary poetry*

Domitian’s building program in Rome included two structures dedicated to his family: the *templum* of the *gens* Flavia on the Quirinal Hill and the Porticus Divorum on the Campus Martius. The first has a cycle dedicated to it by Martial in book 9 (3, 20, 34) and is mentioned in Statius’ *Silvae* 4.3 and 5.1. In contrast, contemporary poets appear to ignore the Porticus Divorum. Yet this temple, which has been considered the counterpart to Augustus’ Pantheon, played a highly symbolic role in Domitian’s reshaping of the Campus Martius. Augustus had forged a relationship with the foundational myths of Rome by emphasizing a link with Aeneas and Troy. Domitian replied by exploiting the Sabine origins of his *gens*. The *templum* of the *gens* Flavia was on the Quirinal Hill, next to the temple of Romulus known by his Sabine name, Quirinus. In turn, the Porticus was built on the axis between Minerva Calchidica and the Serapeium and Isaeum. If Minerva was Domitian’s protector *par excellence*, the Egyptian cults evoked the legitimation of the Flavian dynasty, which had been granted to its founder, Vespasian, in the Serapeum of Alexandria. Coarelli finds a parallel between the temple dedicated to the Divus Augustus in the area where Octavian lived in Rome until the thirties and the location of the Porticus Divorum, where Vespasian and Titus spent the night before celebrating their triumphs. For Coarelli, the concept of the *triumphus* is paramount in Domitian’s program, which explores associations to Romulus’ triumph. I would like to examine the connection between Romulus and Domitian in contemporary poetry, as well as the concept of the *triumphus*, while considering how Domitian’s building program responds to that of Augustus. My aim is to investigate whether contemporary poetry might be seen to support, or even reinforce, Coarelli’s proposals for the Porticus Divorum.

2. Jovan Cvjetičanin, University of Virginia

*Countering subversion: the power of poetic and architectural marginalization in Mart. 4.53*

Recent scholarship has acknowledged that, as Domitian wrote himself into Rome’s urban environment, Martial acted as a reader and interpreter of these changes (Hulls, Closs). In the *Epigrams*,Roman architecture is given deeper meaning through juxtaposition with potentially subversive individuals, which creates scenes of everyday life that also subtly praise the emperor (Laurence, Roman). Martial’s response to the transformation of Rome’s religious landscape deserves special attention because both Martial and Domitian show interest in using urban space to impose boundaries (Rimell, Fredrick). Furthermore, studies of urban religion in Augustan poetry have shown that the socio-historical context of religious spaces plays an integral role in poetic constructions of Rome (Rüpke, Egelhaaf-Gaiser). This paper will examine how epigram 4.53, an invective exposing a Cynic as a false philosopher, offers a commentary on the power of both imperial architecture and poetry to counter subversion by creating boundaries. This is an extension of Martial’s strategy of using the Domitianic cityscape to fence in those who appear to threaten the social order (2.14; 7.61; 9.59). The poem begins by situating the Cynic within a shrine of Minerva built by Domitian (*penetralia nostrae Pallados*) and the temple of Augustus, which was restored after the fire of 80 (*templi limina … novi*). The Roman context gives the scoptic epigram a political edge that goes beyond generic tropes, since Cynics were known as critics of traditional religion and imperial authority. Furthermore, through contrast with a figure transgressing sacred spaces, religious architecture becomes more than a symbol of Domitian’s piety and its presence gains the potential to neutralize ideological opposition. While the permeability of religious groups and spaces with other communities is often emphasized in the study of urban religion, this epigram shows the potential of religious spaces to marginalize individuals who express their dissent through transgressive behavior.

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3. Giuseppe Restaino, Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale *‘Anche gli archi, eretti in gran numero per un solo uomo, vennero demoliti’ (Cass. Dio, LXVIII,1): l’arco ‘di Domiziano’ sul Clivo Palatino, tra oblio e persistenza*.

Nel 1918, Giacomo Boni dava notizia della scoperta, avvenuta in occasione degli scavi condotti lungo il Clivo Palatino, dei resti di una possente struttura in opera cementizia, che egli interpretò come la fondazione del pilone di un arco. Nei mesi seguenti, l’ipotesi venne confermata dallo scavo eseguito sul lato opposto del Clivo, al di sotto di via di S. Bonaventura, dove si rinvennero le tracce di una seconda fondazione, identica alla precedente, evidentemente appartenente a un arco, che Boni attribuì a Domiziano. Tale identificazione, tuttavia, ricevette scarsissimo credito, tanto che nei decenni seguenti la maggior parte degli studiosi preferì retrodatare il monumento all’età augustea, identificandolo con l’*arcus Octavii*, eretto da Augusto in onore del padre *C. Octavius* sul Palatino – come ricorda Plinio senza però specificare l’esatta collocazione. Tale cronologia – e di qui l’attribuzione dell’arco –, rimessa occasionalmente in dubbio, è stata smentita dagli scavi successivi, che hanno confermato la datazione flavia delle strutture, ma continua a riemergere nella storia degli studi. L’intento di questo intervento è dunque quello di ricostruire le circostanze della scoperta del monumento, di riesaminare i suoi resti, di analizzare la sua funzione e le sue relazioni con gli edifici circostanti, quindi di verificare la datazione flavia e l’eventuale sopravvivenza del monumento oltre l’età domizianea, nonché, infine, di proporre una sua ricostruzione basata anche sul riesame dei frammenti di decorazione architettonica rinvenuti da Boni al momento dello scavo.

**PANEL 6: Rethinking the Palatine**

1. Francesca Caprioli and Patrizio Pensabene, Sapienza Università di Roma

*Domiziano e lo spazio architettonico: si può ancora parlare di barocco Flavio?*

La mostra “Domiziano odio-amore” fornisce l’occasione per riflettere su una serie di categorie che nel 1940 vennero teorizzate da Peter von Blankenhagen in *Flavische architektur und ihre Dekoration untersucht am Nervaforum*, Berlin 1940, per affrontare l’analisi stilistica della decorazione architettonica flavia, e che da allora dominano i giudizi degli studiosi su quel periodo.

Abbiamo constatato come le ricerche sulla decorazione architettonica del Palatino. Al momento in cui abbiamo affrontato la cultura architettonica che si legge nel complesso flavio del Palatino abbiamo constatato come le ricerche sulla sua decorazione siano rimaste sostanzialmente ferme all’opera dello studioso tedesco.

Nel corso del nostro lavoro abbiamo subito preso nota della necessità di analizzare con altri occhi il concetto di “barocco flavio”. Categorie come *horror vacui*, chiaroscuro, effettualità, sono state affiancate al concetto di pattern che privilegia l’impressione e l’impatto che la combinazione dei motivi decorativi poteva suscitare nel fruitore. Inoltre, non solo nella analisi della scultura del periodo Flavio (uso degli effetti coloristici visibili soprattutto nella resa delle pettinature nei ritratti), ma anche nello studio del linguaggio architettonico sono emerse correnti classicistiche che convivevano con quegli aspetti considerati tipicamente domizianei. Le tendenze riscontrate nel palazzo dei flavi, difatti, sia quando si sono presi in considerazione gli spazi più raccolti destinati ad incontri con numero ristretto di invitati sia negli spazi grandi, aperti al pubblico declinano entrambe le categorie di classicismo e innovazione, cioè resa plastica ed effettualità.

Enorme importanza avevano poi i rivestimenti parietali e pavimentali in marmi colorati che erano disposti in base all’accostamento di diverse qualità che tenevano conto dell’illuminazione e non solo degli effetti coloristici e che, insieme all’ apparato architettonico in marmo bianco o colorato, i dipinti sulle pareti e la statuaria contribuivano a creare l’atmosfera, l’essenza del luogo, il décor del complesso adattato alla *natura loci*, o meglio al contesto. *Horror vacui*, chiaroscuro, forte intaglio diventano quindi categorie che aiutano a leggere il pezzo dal punto di vista del fruitore. Ma con queste categorie si può parlare ancora di barocco Flavio?

2. Alessandro Mortera, Università Ca' Foscari, Venezia

*The imperial palace of Domitian on the Palatine hill: comparing contexts and architectural solutions*

Il grande complesso del palazzo imperiale sul Palatino rappresenta senza alcun dubbio la più vasta e significativa delle numerose imprese edilizie promosse da Domiziano a Roma. Esteso a gran parte del colle – dalla sommità alle sue pendici –, il palazzo domizianeo ebbe un considerevole impatto sul panorama urbano circostante e sull’immaginario dei contemporanei, come testimoniato dalle fonti letterarie dell’epoca (Marziale, Stazio) che attestano una totale identificazione e sovrapposizione tra il palazzo e il Palatino stesso. Avviati durante il principato vespasianeo, i lavori furono ampliati da Domiziano, che fece realizzare un gigantesco complesso unitario costituito da un blocco centrale con grandi aule cerimoniali (*Domus Flavia*) e vani di dimensioni minori (*Domus Augustana*, *Domus Severiana*) distribuiti attorno a peristili e aree destinate a giardino (Stadio, Vigna Barberini).

La natura e la valenza politico-simbolica dietro la realizzazione della reggia domizianea comportarono in determinati casi l’accentuazione di quella sperimentazione e quella audacia tipiche dell’architettura romana, contribuendo così a fare del palazzo la residenza “degna di un dio” (Staz., silv., 4.4.20-2). Ciò risulta particolarmente evidente nel caso di volumetrie come quelle dell’Aula Regia o del Triclinio della *Domus Flavia* – finora inedite –, per le quali le conoscenze ingegneristiche dell’epoca e le capacità dell’opera laterizia furono spinte alle estreme conseguenze, o per le tipologie degli espedienti costruttivi messi in campo.

In questa sede verranno pertanto presi in esame quei contesti del palazzo domizianeo per i quali, di fronte a simili necessità o “sfide costruttive” – nell’ambito di una “architettura sperimentale” quale fu quella romana –, vennero adottate differenti soluzioni architettoniche. Il confronto tra queste permetterà così di indagare un aspetto architettonico di grande interesse del palazzo imperiale e di approfondire alcune questioni legate alle pratiche e alle dinamiche del cantiere (o dei cantieri) di un complesso monumentale come quello del palazzo di Domiziano.

3. Daira Nocera, Field Director APAHA-Tibur

*Reuniting the two halves: a reassessment of the Domus Flavia and the Domus Augustana*

 Plutarch's “Life of Publicola”, attributes the incessant activity that characterized Domitian’s rule to a diseased, insane desire to build. One of its most striking products is his imperial residence on the Palatine. Traditional interpretations sharply divide an "official/ public" *Domus Flavia* (DF) and a "private" *Domus Augustana* (DA). These are our labels, not ancient ones. No mention in the sources indicates that this separation was intended or perceived by its builders or contemporaries. In the wake of recent research many scholars have pointed out the inadequacy of the labels and the strict division of the palace into two halves. Yet, the labels are currently used signaling the two alleged halves of the palace as separate or distinct both in architecture and function.

In this talk, for the first time, I investigate the history of the two labels, *Domus Flavia* and *Domus Augustan*a, and how they were coined and applied to the different areas of the palace. The history will show how these arose from fragmentary excavations and as a result of misidentifications of the remains. Then, I provide a different reading of the articulation of the palace space, arguing for more permeable *limites* throughout the palace, with a new awareness that it is made of landscaped open vistas as much as of solid rooms. Conventional interpretations read the layout along two parallel NE-SW axes. While the main buildings of the so-called DF are along one of these, separation from the DA is difficult to discern in the plan and elevation. Yet, it is easy to identify other axes of motion which are perpendicular to the two NE-SW ones, that show a less rigid articulation of the space. This will change our understanding of how the compound was experienced with relation to administration, official ceremonial and the emperor’s hospitality. That re-description has important consequences for interpreting Domitian’s public face as well as his famous palace.

**KEYNOTE 2**

Katharina Lorenz, Universität Giessen

*Seeing through ‘Flavian Baroque’: on making sense of Domitianic art in past scholarship*

This paper unpicks some of the historiographical and theoretical trajectories along which scholars have grappled, from the start of the twentieth century, with Domitianic art and the Flavian period more generally. It will assess which paradigms were employed as a framework to infuse the art of period with meaning. Specifically, the paper will examine the role of Eugénie Strong’s writings on Flavian art and her role in bridging German and Anglophone scholarship. It will propose ways in which we can employ learnings from those past approaches to our own study of the art of the Domitianic period.

**PANEL 7: Domitian as tyrant**

1. Bart Janssen, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

*Domitian as the tyrant of declamation in Pliny’s* Panegyricus

In this presentation, I compare the portrait of Domitian in Pliny the Younger’s *Panegyricus* to the declamatory stock character of tyrant. Pliny paints an extremely negative picture of the former emperor, primarily influenced by his aim in this speech: praising the incumbent emperor Trajan. As such, Pliny’s portrayal of Domitian has mostly been appreciated for its literary and rhetorical relevance rather than its historical accuracy. Earlier research into the representation of Domitian in the *Panegyricus* has focused on comparison with Martial’s and Statius’ portrayal of the Flavian emperor, the relationship between Pliny and Domitian, and the historical accuracy of Pliny’s account.

For this paper, I follow Jon Lendon’s identification of Domitian as a ‘tyrant of declamation’. Lendon argues that the version of Domitian in Latin literature shares all his defining characteristics with the tyrant as a recurring character in declamation, the genre of fictional practice speeches of which advanced rhetorical training consisted. Lendon’s analysis revolves around Suetonius, Tacitus, and other historians, but Pliny’s portrayal of Domitian features only marginally in his account.

My presentation therefore evaluates the portrait of Domitian as tyrant of declamation throughout the *Panegyricus* as a whole. In doing so, I offer a corroboration of Lendon’s identification of Domitian as declamatory tyrant. More importantly, however, I discuss how Pliny’s portrayal of Domitian as tyrant of declamation functions rhetorically to steer his audience’s response to Domitian’s death.

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2. Salvador Bartera, University of Tennessee Knoxville

*Domitian in Tacitus’* Histories

Domitian’s negative image has been recently reevaluated by scholars, who have pointed out, for example, his administrative skills and successful building program (e.g. Jones 1992; Darwall-Smith 1996; Galimberti 2016; Augoustakis-Buckley-Stocks 2019; Raimondi Cominesi-de Haan-Moormann-Stocks 2021). Recent material evidence has also contributed to a reassessment of Domitian’s principate (Spinelli-Gregori 2019). Yet the fiercely negative portraits of Tacitus, Pliny, and Suetonius, despite the positive accounts of some literary sources (e.g. Martial, Statius, Frontinus), continue to dominate our perception of Domitian. Like Nero, Domitian, the *calvus* *Nero* (*Juv*. 4.38), suffered from a posthumous damning judgment of the senatorial class, who cast him as a bloodthirsty tyrant, in opposition to both his brother Titus and his successors, Nerva/Trajan (cf. e.g., Szoke 2019).

In this paper, I shall examine how Tacitus, who spent much of his political career under Domitian, to whom he may have owed his suffect consulship, introduces the young Domitian in the *Histories*. As Andrews (2019) has shown regarding the *Germania*, and Szoke (2019), among others, for the *Agricola*, Domitian, whether he is openly mentioned or not, is a constant presence in Tacitus’ oeuvre. I will focus my analysis on the momentous event which was the burning of the Capitol in *Histories* 3. Since this building was Rome’s most symbolic temple, its destruction and later rebuilding were especially noteworthy. Of the Flavian emperors, Domitian alone was present at the fateful night of its burning, and it was Domitian who was responsible, after the second fire of 80, for the temple’s restoration. In its final shape, the Domitianic temple, with its unprecedented display of gold, which the court poets praised but the senatorial tradition criticized (e.g., Plin, *Pan*. 52.3-4), looked very different from its republican past. Tacitus’ text, by carefully recording the temple’s history, highlights the loss, physical and metaphorical, of the republican ideals that the temple embodied.

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3. Paul G. Johnston, Harvard University

*The geography of Roman literature before and after Domitian: Florus’ Vergilius poeta an orator*

This paper discusses Florus’ fragmentary dialogue *Vergilius poeta an orator*, written under Trajan or Hadrian and set in the first decade of the second century, which reflects on its author’s entry into Domitian’s Capitoline games at Rome. Drawing on insights from comparative literature and situating the text within the broader history of Roman literature as a socio-cultural phenomenon (which I understand as encompassing both Greek and Latin production in the city and the empire), I suggest that Florus provides us with a vivid autobiographical testimony for one of the most significant developments in Roman literary history, namely the decentralization of literary authority away from the imperial capital, or in other words the transformation of Roman literature from the literature of a city into the literature of an empire as a whole. His own career, as he recounts it, testifies to how the power vacuum opened up by Domitian’s death created new opportunities for literary success for writers working in the provinces, which accelerated decentralizing trends in Roman literary (and, not unrelatedly, political) culture that had already been developing over the course of the first century. Vergilius can help us appreciate how and why the Romanocentric literary-cultural policy of Domitian, as exemplified by the Capitoline games and the most emblematic writer of his time, Statius, gave way to the rise of the texts of the so-called Second Sophistic as the characteristic literary output of the second century. Although our sources, like Pliny and Tacitus, encourage us to think of Domitian’s death as significant in terms of the literary freedom it brought about, I suggest we might instead understand its importance primarily in terms of its effects on literary geography.

**PANEL 8: Water and Aqueducts**

1. Valerio Astolfi and Andrea Grazian, Sapienza Università di Roma

*Tra funzione e simbolo: la spettacolarizzazione dell’acqua in epoca domizianea*

*“Qualiter Assyrios renovant incendia nidos, una decem quotiens saecula vixit avis, taliter exuta est*

*veterem nova Roma senectam et sumpsit vultus praesidis ipsa sui”*

(Mart. *Ep*. V,7)

I più recenti studi hanno finalmente messo in luce il reale impatto della politica domizianea

sull’urbanistica di Roma antica: si trattò a tutti gli effetti di una vera e propria rivoluzione che

coinvolse e investì, trasformandoli radicalmente, gli spazi urbani qualificanti della vita pubblica, politica e religiosa, secondo un disegno che prevedeva il superamento della concezione di una struttura urbana organizzata attorno ad un unico centro monumentale. Meno noto - ma certamente fondamentale in questo processo - fu il ruolo ricoperto dalla “politica dell’acqua” che coinvolse sia la ristrutturazione della rete degli acquedotti pubblici sia la costruzione di monumentali ninfei, tra cui la celebre terrazza domizianea. In questo senso, il riesame della documentazione archeologica ha evidenziato come l’impatto di Domiziano fu più capillare di quanto in passato ipotizzato: il *nomen* dell’imperatore è, infatti, tra i più attestati sulle *fistulae* urbane e restauri o costruzioni *ex novo* sono documentati in tutta la città lasciando intravedere come la monumentalizzazione e il rinnovamento delle infrastrutture acquarie si configurò come una pianificata operazione di riformulazione spaziale investita sia di significati funzionali, che simbolici.

Nel contributo si propone, quindi, di analizzare e riordinare le differenti fonti sul tema (archeologiche, letterarie ed epigrafiche) cercando di comprendere la portata del disegno domizianeo, la sua distribuzione topografica e gli attori coinvolti in quella che appare essere stata, dopo quella augustea, la più grande operazione di questo tipo, interconnessa e parte fondamentale della *nova Urbs* domizianea. La documentazione mostra, infatti, come le fontane e le infrastrutture ad esse connesse furono strategicamente posizionate per trarre vantaggio dai nuovi schemi di traffico creati a seguito delle trasformazioni urbanistiche, divenendo nuovamente uno *strumentum imperii* che oltre a legittimare l’autorità di Domiziano, collegandola a quella di Augusto, manifestava pubblicamente la *munificentia* e la *liberalitas* del princeps flavio.

2. Nicolas Liney, University of Warwick

*Domitian the censor perpetuus, the Aqua Marcia, and imperial inspiration in the Silvae*

This paper takes as its starting point Statius’ praise of the Aqua Marcia in his poem on Manilius Vopiscus’ villa in Tibur (1.3.64-69), and in his poem on the baths of Claudius Etruscus (1.5.23-31). I argue that Statius figures access to this aqueduct as a Roman, and specifically Imperial, form of inspiration, against traditional Greek sources. Importantly, such praise of the aqueduct must also reflect upon the imperial *ius ducendae aquae*,granted to Statius’ patrons by the emperor (cf. *Silvae* 3.1.62-3; Mart. *Ep.* 9.18), and especially upon Domitian’s self-proclaimed role as *censor perpetuus* (cf. *Silvae* 4.3.14).

Statius’ specific reference to the Aqua Marcia is further clarified by research on the so-called Terrace of Domitian, the monumental nymphaeum that Domitian constructed as the new terminus to the Aqua Marcia (Tortorici 1993; Longfellow 2011; Nocera 2018). Moreover, Domitian’s public *nymphaeum* would have been in pointed contrast to the private baths of Nero (Suet. *Nero* 31), the disgraced emperor who had swum in the spring of the Aqua Marcia, thus polluting its sacred source (Tac. *Ann.* 14.22.4)—and, consequently, the sort of poetry it might yield. Prompted by Domitian’s own monumentalisation of water, in the *Silvae,* aqueducts, monuments and imperial access to water combine to create a prevalent motif for the poetics and politics of inspiration in Domitianic Rome*.*

Ultimately, this paper aims to further establish the intimate connections between poetics and politics in Domitianic Rome and explore the links between poetic formalism and historicism in Flavian literature (Martelli 2009; Hinds 2001), in order to illuminate Domitian’s principate. Through the traditional language of poetic inspiration, Domitian’s attention to water and monumentality can be construed in literary critical terms, whilst Statius can present the *Silvae* constitute a well-irrigated work of imperial praise, whose vital source is Domitian, the *censor,* source of inspiration*,* and *poeta doctus* himself.

3. Rabun M. Taylor, University of Texas at Austin

*Did Frontinus suppress Domitian’s role in developing the Aqua Traiana?*

Frontinus makes only one explicit reference to Domitian in his *De aquaeductibus*, but implicitly he condemns the fallen emperor’s rule by denouncing the systemic corruption within the *cura aquarum* of Romewhen Nerva appointed him to oversee the commission. As often with Frontinus, we should approach his moral pronouncements cautiously. Domitian, he complained, had usurped Rome’s public water tax for his private use (*Aq.* 118) while the commission’s foremen were resorting to *ambitio* and *neglegentia* (117). *“Ambitio”* is often understood here to refer to opportunistic graft, which Frontinus describes elsewhere in the treatise. More plausibly, it references the watermen’s excessive enthusiasm for Domitian’s schemes, which implicitly thwarted the public interest; this consequently (Frontinus implies) led to systemic neglect. But what if Frontinus is distorting Domitian’s intent? I have proposed that Domitian himself, not Trajan or Nerva, initiated the Aqua Traiana, the city of Rome’s penultimate aqueduct*.* It was at his villa at Vicarello that the earliest spring sources for this line were tapped. Domitian invested heavily in waterworks at the villa, not only monumentalizing a venerable sanctuary surrounding a thermal spring but also tapping cold springs nearby to supply the structures he built there, a bath complex and a sumptuous nymphaeum. Domitian must have realized that the abundant springs in the region could supply an entirely new aqueduct for Rome. What Frontinus represented as Domitian’s improper seizure of public revenue, then, probably reflects the early stages of work on a new public aqueduct at his private property. It required calling teams of Rome’s *familia aquarum* away from the city to build the source architecture for the project destined to be finished, and claimed, by Trajan. Compelled to minimize Domitian’s agency, Frontinus kept silent about the ongoing project except to hint at massive improvements to come (*novae erogationis ordinationem,* 88).

**PANEL 9: Flavian Heaven (?)**

1. So Yeon Bae, Yongin University, South Korea

*Domitian’s creation of the Flavian heaven: the Templum Gentis Flaviae*

In the *Life of Domitian*, Suetonius created a symbolic link between the *Templum Gentis Flaviae* and Domitian by referring to this building at the critical junctures of Domitian’s life. Built on the site of Domitian’s birthplace, it was struck by lightning before Domitian’s assassination and housed his ashes after his death. In conjunction with Domitian’s notorious requests to be addressed *dominus et deus noster* and his image crafted by contemporary poets as a living god on earth, one may expect to find a hint of Domitian’s claim to divinity in this building, which appears to reflect Domitian’s fate.

Interpreting such expectations as misconceptions about the last Flavian emperor, I argue that the *Templum Gentis Flaviae* should be discussed in the context of Domitian’s imperial propaganda concerning the Flavian dynasty. The remaining archaeological and philological evidence of the *Templum Gentis Flaviae* fails to provide any clue to Domitian’s portrayal of himself as a living god among the Flavian *divi*. Instead, it reveals the ulterior motive in erecting the peculiar temple–tomb complex. Adopting the trend of the imperial cult in provinces to worship the imperial family as a group, Domitian was able to mould his image as the pious son/brother/father to the deified Flavians. His selection of the Quirinal—sharing its Sabine origin with the *gens Flavia*—marks the place of the second dynasty in Roman topography. Far from refusing the honour of deification, Domitian was waiting to be deified by his successor and to join the Flavian *divi* in their celestial abode—but only after completing his rule. The *Templum Gentis Flaviae* allows us to see Domitian as one who tries to perpetuate the legacy of the Flavian dynasty without asking for excessive honours of deification while alive.

2. Theodore Antoniadis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

*No more heroes: Domitian’s* ‘damnatio memoriae’ *in the* Punica

Except for Silius’ *Punica*, Flavian epics begin with an overt praise for the Flavian regime (Val. *Arg*. 1.5-21, Stat. *Theb*. 1.15-31, A*ch.* 1.14-19, cf. Sil. *Pun*. 3. 594-629). Similarly, the much-disputed *Laudes Neronis* (*BC* 1.33-66)culminate with Lucan’s apotheosis of the young emperor despite the upfront anti-monarchic agenda of the books to follow. On the other hand, Statius’ and Valerius Flaccus’ sheer adulation of Vespasian and his descendants seems genuine and uncompromised, while both poets complement their praise with a typical gesture of *recusatio* as an excuse for not composing an epic to honor the triumphant wars of the Flavians. As for Silius, whose historical epic is thought to have been composed largely under Domitian, himself not only refrains from including any homage to the emperor in his proem, but, even when he does so in *Pun.* 3, where Jupiter prophesies to the agonizing Venus Scipio’s final victory over Carthage as a momentous event that will lead to the future rise of the Flavian gens, Domitian’s encomium (*Pun*. 3.606-29) is much isolated from the entire narrative. Beyond the notable postponement of his panegyric (note, in contrast, *Aen*. 1.256-96) and its unbalanced content, the idea that Silius never gets back to it is throughout his epic (with the exception perhaps of a vague reference at *Pun*. 14.686), no matter how many chances he had to do so, somehow appears to be damning Domitian to a kind of oblivion or obscurity. As this paper will further argue, this may not be totally irrelevant to Scipios’ obstruse representation in the poem as a new governing authority who appears to overwrite, if not erase, the controversial praise of Domitian, even though, according to many readings so far, the victor of Zama is supposed to serve as a model of virtue and leadership to Rome’s last Flavian emperor.

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3. Luigi Maria Guerci, Sapienza Università di Roma

*‘At tu, Germanice, transcendes facta tuorum’*: *Silio Italico, Domiziano e il principe ideale*

 Nel III libro dei *Punica* Giove, in una profezia che intende rassicurare Venere circa il futuro di Roma, preannuncia l\_’a\_scesa dei Flavi (Sil. 3, 594-629): il principato di Domiziano, che succederà a Vespasiano e Tito, costituirà un momento di apogeo della storia romana, corrispondente all’avvento di Scipione nel corso della guerra annibalica (Sil. 3, 590-592). A questo brano sono stati dedicati diversi contribute, che ne hanno evidenziato l’importanza all’interno del poema; se alcuni lo hanno inteso come omaggio cortigiano al principe, altri hanno cercato di individuare, dietro la facciata panegiristica, una velata critica al tiranno Domiziano.

Nel mio intervento, al contrario, intendo mostrare come il poeta, attraverso le forme codificate del panegirico, proponga a Domiziano un modello di *optimus princeps* a cui guardare: riprendendo gli elogi di Augusto di Virgilio (*Aen.* 1, 286-296; 6, 791-805), filtrati attraverso Ovidio (*met.* 15, 818-839), Silio sembra esortare il principe a eguagliare e, se possibile, a superare Augusto, proseguendo sulla strada tracciata per Vespasiano nel proemio degli *Argonautica* di Valerio Flacco (1, 7-21) e destinata a raggiungere le stelle. Al contempo, alludendo alle *laudes Neronis* di Lucano (1, 33-66), il poeta proietta sul giovane principe le aspettative deluse dall’ultimo esponente giulio-claudio: Domiziano dovrà assicurare la pace, perseguendo l’espansione dell’*imperium* e generando un erede; l’apoteosi mancata di Nerone agisce come monito.

Oltre che come generale vittorioso, Silio celebra il *laudandus* come poeta e oratore: si percepisce qui un’eco dell parole rivolte da Ovidio a Germanico, visto come possibile promotore di un rapporto equilibrato tra letteratura e potere; di nuovo Nerone, esaltato come poeta dai suoi panegiristi, funge da *exemplum* negativo.

Questo encomio, insomma, può essere proficuamente letto come discorso rivolto a un giovane principe da un senatore più anziano ed esperto, che esprime le aspettative dell’*élite* all’inizio del principato di Domiziano.