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Domitian's Warhorse: Expropriating Equestrian Imagery in Flavian Rome

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An abstract of
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Abstract

Domitian's Warhorse: Expropriating Equestrian Imagery in Flavian Rome

By Justin Cody Houseman

A now lost colossal bronze equestrian statue representing the emperor Domitian (r. 81 – 96 CE) once dominated the Forum Romanum in Rome but now survives only through *Silvae* 1.1, an ekphrastic Latin poem by the poet Statius. Descriptions of the statue in the poem are at first unclear about how the honorific statue related to other prominent equestrian imagery around the Forum. When considered alongside the multiple numismatic equestrian representations of Domitian that survive, the text of the poem points to a more extensive use of equestrian imagery throughout the Flavian period (69 – 96 CE) than has previously been recognized. This paper first presents a typology for Domitian's numismatic equestrian representations and then considers how these representations relate to earlier equestrian imagery, Flavian propaganda, Domitian's statue as described by Statius, and the equestrian social class that the emperor increasingly courted during his principate. This paper aims to contribute a better understanding of: how Domitian's equestrian statues relate with his numismatic images; with which ancient audiences these images resonate meaning; and what messages these representations of Domitian may have signaled.

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Introduction

Equestrian representations of reigning emperors were ubiquitous around the Roman empire. Consisting of a horse and a full-bodied portrait of its rider, equestrian statues stood as part of chariot groups, on prominent triumphal arches, or alone on inscribed podiums.[1] Although they were produced in large numbers, relatively few of these statues survive from antiquity.[2] One equestrian statue representing the emperor Domitian (r. 81–96 CE) enjoys a remarkable legacy despite its short duration of display and its destruction as a result of the memory sanctions enacted against Domitian after his assassination in 96 CE.[3] The Roman poet Statius in the first of his *Silvae*, an ekphrastic panegyric, presents this colossal bronze statue and its base in the Forum Romanum.[4] The vividly described formal qualities of this statue in *Silvae* 1.1 remain invaluable for interpreting Domitian's equestrian representations elsewhere.[5] The statue, however, has long overshadowed other artistic forms of the emperor's equestrian representations, most notably coins, and their contexts. Any satisfactory analysis of Domitian's portrayal on horseback must take into account a full reading of both the literary and material evidence. This paper provides case studies examining the variant types of Domitian's numismatic equestrian images situated

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[1] Many of these statue groups included individual riders and their horses among *bigae* and *quadrigae* chariot groups.

[2] Equine statues refer to representations of emperors paired with horses but not mounted on horseback. All equestrian statues feature a mounted rider. See M. A. Eaverly, "Equestrian Sculpture," in *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. M. Gagarin, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 95-97.

[3] Plin. *Pan*. 52.4-5; Suet. *Dom*.23.1; Dio. 68.1; Lact. *De Mort. Pers.* 3.3. Domitian's successor Nerva (r. 96–98 CE) and the Senate condemned his memory and ordered all of his inscriptions and statues to be destroyed. Contrast the equestrian statue from Misenum reworked from Domitian to Nerva. R. Cantilena and P. Rubino, *Domiziano/Nerva: La statua equestre da Miseno, una proposta di ricomposizione*, (Naples: Macchiaroli, 1987).

[4] The manuscripts of Statius refer to this statue as both the *ecus maximus* and the *Equus Domitiani.* In this paper, I employ the term Equus Domitiani for consistency. The *Silvae* is a collection of occasional poems written in epic Latin dactylic hexameter by Statius, a Neapolitan native who lived in Rome under the patronage of Domitian and other elite men. See E. Courtney (ed.), *P. Papinius Stati: Silvae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). *Silv.* 1 *Praef*. 18 notes the context of *Silvae* 1.1 performed at the statue's dedication.

[5] For fuller discussion of *Silvae* 1.1 as panegyric and problems of its rhetorical flourishes, see J. Geyssen, *Imperial Panegyric in Statius: A Literary Commentary on Silvae 1.1*, (Manhattan: Peter Lang, 1996). For a subversive reading of the poem, see F. Ahl, "The Rider and the Horse: Politics and Power in Roman Poetry from Horace to Statius," *Aufstieg und Niedergange der Römischen Welt*, 2.32.1 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 40-110.

against historical contexts or precedents and the reception of these images by audiences living in Flavian Rome (69–96 CE; e.g. Statius).[6] Careful examination of the numismatic representations of Domitian indicates the widespread reuse of older equestrian formats in both coins and sculpture for political means.

Considering both textual and visual sources, this study focuses on the historical developments underlying the function of Domitian's equestrian representations. I first construct a typology for Domitian's equestrian representations on coins, consisting of six different primary types.[7] This typology reframes and reappraises the equestrian motifs as significant in broader contexts rather than relegating Domitian's equestrian representations to one statue in the Forum described by one poet.[8] I next summarize a history of different related equestrian formats and, then, reconsider the roles of these images as reused in Flavian Rome. This approach aims to contribute a better understanding of: how Domitian's equestrian statues relate with his numismatic images; with which ancient audiences these images resonate meaning; and what messages these representations of Domitian may have signaled.

In *Silvae* 1.1, Statius describes the overall appearance of Domitian's statue in the Forum Romanum.[9] He first compares Domitian's horse to the "Bistonian steed" of Mars. This comparison suggests that its origin and saddle are Thracian, comparable to the Sarmatian horse

[6] The archaeological record provides no statue explicitly matching *Silvae* 1.1. An assortment of other surviving equestrian representations of Domitian do exist; multiple coins in all denominations depict Domitian on horseback, and one fragmentary bronze statue of Domitian has been reworked as Nerva from Misenum, Italy.

[7] This categorization accounts for minor variations from coin to coin. This body of evidence is admittedly limited. Use of diverse equestrian imagery, nevertheless, is consistently evident throughout Domitian's life more than any previous emperor, presenting a range of visual data and affording great insights into use of equestrian images for and by Domitian before and during his principate. Moreover, the presence of Domitian's equestrian representation on coins also suggests mass production and wider distribution than what survives. I operate under the assumption that Domitian's equestrian images were well known and widely circulated at least after dedication of the large statue in the Forum and then the publication of *Silvae* 1.1.

[8] For the purposes of this paper, *Silvae* 1.1 serves as testimony of a contemporary viewer's response to one statue.

[9] For the entire poem with commentary, see the appendix.

and saddle of Marcus Aurelius on the Campidoglio.[10] The horse's muzzle may also have had an open mouth and flaring nostrils, similar to Domitian's Misenum statue that was converted to Nerva. Statius indicates the horse's "great breathing" that urges on the river Rhine depicted beneath the horse and rider.[11] The sculptor may also have posed the horse rearing, for Statius describes the animal as raising its head and threatening the course ahead.[12] Domitian's equestrian base, like Trajan's, was also probably larger than average considering Statius's emphasis on the monument's overall great size and the base being equal to the work.[13] Statius first describes the equestrian statue as *moles*, focused on the size of the horse, and then *superimposito…colosso*, indicating Domitian as the colossal rider. Statius then describes the environs of Domitian's statue. This ekphrasis indicates the horse's orientation: the mounted Lysippan statue of Alexander/Julius Caesar watching from the Forum Iulium, the Basilica Iulia flanking the statue's right, the Basilica Aemilia on its left, the Temple of Concord and the Temple of Divus Vespasian watching from the rear, and the Lacus Curtius in the immediate vicinity.[14] In summary, the colossal statue faced southeast on a large inscribed base centered in the Forum Romanum nearby the Lacus Curtius.

During excavations of this central area in the Forum Romanum, carried out from 1902 to 1903, remnants of a concrete base measuring 11.8 meters long and 5.9 meters wide as well as three travertine blocks with holes presumably for struts supporting an equestrian statue were discovered [fig. 1].[15] This discovery, read alongside *Silvae* 1.1, prompted Giacomo Boni to

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[10] Stat. *Silv*. 1.1.19: *Bistonius…sonipes.* A Thracian saddle may also liken Domitian to Alexander. For the saddle of Marcus Aurelius, see H. Nickel, "The Emperor's New Saddle Cloth: The Ephippium of the Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 24 (1989): 17-24. doi:10.2307/1512863. The statue of Marcus Aurelius serves as the best comparison for what a standard imperial equestrian statue is expected to look like.

[11] Stat. *Silv*. 1.1.20-21; Cantilena and Rubino, *Domiziano/Nerva*, 25-27; 47-48.

[12] Stat. *Silv*. 1.1.46-47. This interpretation is problematic because of the vague language in the poem.

[13] Stat. *Silv.* 1.1.22: *par operi sedes.* For a new understanding of Trajan's equestrian statue base, see J. E. Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome: A Study of the Monuments 1-3*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); A. Viscogliosi, 'Il foro Traiano riesaminato," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 12 (1999), 600-613.

[14] Stat. *Silv*. 1.1: 22; 29-31; 66-73. See "Basilica Aemilia," and "Basilica Paul(l)i," *LTUR*, vol. 1, 167-168, 183-187.

[15] G. Boni, "Foro Romano," in *Atti del Congresso internazionale di scienzestoriche (Roma, 1-9 aprile 1903)*, (Rome 1904-1907), 574-577. For greater discussion, see also "Equus Domitiani" in L. Richardson,

connect this base with the *Equus Domitiani*, but discrepancies in the levels of pavement prevent a definitive interpretation. Later excavations by Patrizia Giuliani and Cairoli Verduchi show that the level of pavement attributed to the conjectural Domitianic base lay higher up, indicating an earlier date between Julius Caesar and Augustus for the excavated base.[16] The remains of another equestrian base discovered nearby suggest that the supports underneath Boni's discovery most likely predate Domitian's principate.[17] Considering the frequent reuse of high quality portraits, such as equestrian statues,[18] it is possible that Domitian's statue stood on an earlier base because of its central location or that his base was reused.[19] The Forum Romanum clearly served as a key location for the display of equestrian statues and shows the significance of different contexts for Domitian's deployment of equestrian formats [fig. 2].[20]

A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992). See "Equus Domitianus," *LTUR*, vol. 2, 228-229. Bases for many equestrian statues often have three characteristic holes in which three of the four hooves were affixed.

[16] For greater discussion of the issues underlying this area of the Forum and the statue bases discovered, see M. Thomas, "(Re)locating Domitian's Horse of Glory: The *Equus Domitiani* and Flavian Urban Design," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 49 (2004): 21-46 and R. H. Darwall-Smith, *Emperors and Architecture: A Study of Flavian Rome* (Brussels: Collection Latomus, 1996), 229-233.

[17] Thomas, "(Re)locating Domitian's Horse of Glory," 28-32. He argues that this base belongs instead to the equestrian statue of Septimius Severus.

[18] Reuse of Domitian's base is especially probable if Boni's base belongs to the Republic or early Augustan periods. For the reuse of portraits and statues, see E. R. Varner, "Reuse and Recarving: Technical Evidence," in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Sculpture*, eds. E. A. Friedland, M. G. Sobocinsky, and E. K. Gazda (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 123-138. The Domitianic base may also have been destroyed altogether in the aftermath of his assassination. One major assumption underlying these issues is that Domitian's horse stood on three legs instead of rearing on two, but neither argument is supported by conclusive evidence. In either case, the three holes on the uncovered bases all indicate horses standing on three legs rather than rearing, suggesting that if one belonged to Domitian, the horse resembled that of Marcus Aurelius.

[19] Richardson, "Equus Domitiani," 1992. "Equus Domitianus," *LTUR*, vol. 2, 228-229. Richardson, however, points instead to a group of blocks measuring 7.8m wide by 12.2m long next to Boni's base in the travertine pavement and respecting the concrete and cuniculi underneath, thus supporting a Domitianic date.

[20] "Forum Romanum (The Imperial Period)," *LTUR*, vol. 2, 336-342. For examples, before the Temple of Concord in the Forum equestrian statues were also dedicated to Gaius and Lucius, Germanicus, and Drusus Caesar. For greater discussion of these other statues, see: F. S. Kleiner, "The Arch of Gaius Caesar at Pisa (CIL, XI, 1421)," *Collection Latomus* 43 (1984): 156-164; F. S. Kleiner, *The Arch of Nero in Rome: A Study of the Roman Honorary Arch before and under Nero*, (Rome: G. Bretschneider, 1985), 35; S. De Maria, *Gli archi onorari di Roma e dell'Italia romana*, Vol. VII, (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1988), 250-1, no. 32; C. Rose, *Dynastic Commemoration and Imperial Portraiture in the Julio-Claudian Period*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 99-100, cat. 28.

Attesting the continued importance of equestrian statues after Domitian's principate, emperors such as Nerva, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, Septimius Severus, Constantine, Constantius II, and Justinian had their own equestrian statues erected in the same or similar locations.[21] Johannes Bergemann emphasizes this frequent placement of Roman equestrian statues in politically significant spaces as highly visible honorific dedications.[22] He concludes that the central location promotes the rider's virtue, also suggested by inscriptions on statues' bases.[23] Interpreting imperial equestrian representations only as public displays of the emperor's virtue is unsatisfactory considering the degree of variation among Domitian's images. When portraying the reigning emperor on horseback in a specific location, the statue invokes the power of a place at a particular moment in time and politicizes the representation of the emperor.[24] Although different emperors use similar equestrian formats over time, both on coins and with sculpture, the contexts underlying each equestrian format deserve greater discussion. Closer attention to these numismatic equestrian representations of Domitian read alongside *Silvae* 1.1 further elucidates the placement of the statue in the Forum Romanum and its relationship to other equestrian representations.

Domitian's Numismatic Equestrian Representations and their Antecedents

An awareness of the assorted Republican, Augustan, and early imperial numismatic equestrian formats available to Domitian greatly nuances interpretations of his equestrian images.

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[21] E. Babut, "Les statues équestres du Forum," in *Melanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*. 20 (1900): 209-222.

[22] J. Bergemann, *Römische Reiterstatuen: Ehrendenkmäler im öffentlichen Bereich*, (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1990). See pp. 16-19 in particular.

[23] Bergemann, *Römische Reiterstatuen*, 16-20. See in particular the statue of Marcus Nonius Balbus discussed later.

[24] For greater discussion on the importance of context for statues, see M. Squire, "Aesthetics and Latin Literary Reception," in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Sculpture*, eds. E. A. Friedland, M. G. Sobocinsky, and E. K. Gazda (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 589-605. The positioning of equestrian statue dedications in the Forum Romanum became highly legislated during the Late Republic. Later, equestrian statues associated with the imperial family could appear in the new imperial fora. For greater discussion, see: "Forum Romanum (The Republican Period)," *LTUR*, vol. 2, 325-336; C. P. Presicce, *The Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius in Campidoglio*, ed. A. M. Sommella, (Milton: Amilcare Pizzi, 1990), 16-25; *Marco Aurelio: Storia di un monument e del suo restauro*, eds. A. M. Vaccaro and A. M. Sommella, (Milan: Amilcare Pizzi, 1989), particularly Bergemann, pp. 63-64.

Coins feature equestrian statues as early as the Republic. Reverse images display horses and riders on top of aqueducts, triumphal arches, and inscribed bases. An exemplary AR *denarius* from 56 BCE depicts an equestrian statue of L. Marcius Philippus on the Aqua Marcia and commemorates construction of the aqueduct as one of the most important conveying water to Rome [fig. 3].[25] The placement of an honorific statue atop the aqueduct visually elides the rider's portrait with the greatness of the aqueduct. Triumphal arches more often seem to have served as bases for equestrian statues in both the Republic and the early imperial period. For example, the reverse of a Republican *denarius* dated to circa 114 BCE depicts Aemilius Lepidus on horseback standing on a triumphal arch [fig. 4].[26]

Coins minted under Augustus begin to show a greater range of equestrian images, some distinctly statues, others evoking the emperor himself riding horseback.[27] The obverse of a *denarius* minted under L. Vinicius in 16 BCE portrays a typical equestrian statue of Augustus on a tall inscribed podium before an arch [fig. 5].[28] The horse stands with one raised foreleg like that of Marcus Aurelius. With his right hand Augustus holds the reins rather than signaling a gesture of clemency. He wears the *paludamentum* customary for generals and emperors traveling for battle. Another example is the reverse of a frequently reproduced *aureus*, minted circa 9 BCE at Lyons, in which the statue of Gaius Caesar mounted on a rearing horse stands between military standards crowning an arch [fig. 6].[29] In the exergue, Gaius is identified as *filius Augusti*, son of Augustus, presumably being displayed publicly as an heir for Augustus. Alternatively, an *aureus* from the American Numismatic Society dated between 32 and 29 BCE depicts on its reverse an image of Augustus riding horseback, but the barely visible ground line suggests this is a

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[25] AR *denarius*; 18mm, 3.98g; *RRC* 425, I; Sydenham 919.
[26] *RRC* 291, I; Sydenham 554; Sear 5, 168.
[27] I omit from the following list representations of Augustus in horse-drawn chariots because the evidence is vast and fairly standardized in contrast to his representations on horseback. Augustan chariot statues nevertheless are significant and, according to Pliny, related to the development of equestrian statues.
[28] *Denarius*; *RIC* 362; Sear 5, 1617.
[29] *Aureus*; *RIC* 198. This type is reproduced in various other denominations; see *BMC* 500; *RIC* 199; Sear 5 1596.

representation of the emperor himself in action rather than a static depiction of a statue [fig. 7].[30] This practice of representing a variety of both statues and naturalistic compositions of men riding horseback is detectable throughout the corpus of Flavian coins, but most notably in Domitian's surviving equestrian coins.

The few equestrian images associated with Vespasian and Titus greatly informs those produced under Domitian's rule.[31] The coins of Vespasian and Titus show that these numismatic equestrian images fulfill one chief role for all three emperors: that of a propagandistic tool for legitimizing and maintaining authority.[32] I here focus on classifying the equestrian representations of Domitian into six main types: types I and II (two variations of a *principes iuventutis*/Dioscuri type); type III (with variant formats possibly commemorating the titles of Caesar or Consul); type IV a Republican format with a cavalryman; type V (the enemy-trampling type), and type VI (the *adventus* type).[33]

The equestrian representations associated with Vespasian prove illuminating for equestrian images used for Titus and Domitian. In a great number of reverses of coins minted at Rome and in provincial mints, Vespasian appears in a *quadriga*, which emphasizes the context of a triumphal ceremony or commemorates victory [fig. 8].[34] The reverses of coins minted frequently at Lugdunum and Illyricum, such as a rare AR *denarius*, show along with IMPER in

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[30] American Numismatic Society, inv. 1944.100.39136, 21mm, 7.94g, *BMC* 594; *RIC* I (second edition) Augustus 262.

[31] Numismatic representations of Vespasian (r. 69–79 CE) and Titus (r. 79–81 CE) on horseback are rare and receive little discussion, whereas Domitian's equestrian portrayal have been frequently scrutinized but with insufficient analysis. See, for example, R. H. Darwall-Smith, *Emperors and Architecture: A Study of Flavian Rome*, (Brussels: Collection Latomus, 1996), 227-233.

[32] Although Titus and Domitian first appear together on horseback in numismatic equestrian images, as Domitian is the focus of this paper I do not categorize these examples with Titus. They instead serve as the first type of Domitian.

[33] Omitted from this typology are Lydian coins minted under Vespasian (e.g. *RPC* 987) and Titus (e.g. *RPC* 992), although these types include a rider and horse with Domitian appearing alongside Titus as jugate portraits on the obverse. The rider on the reverse, however, is most likely the Thracian horseman deity, indicated by the exergue.

[34] For examples, see *BMC* II 650, pl. 26, 1 (35mm, 25.56g); Mattingly identifies the figure as Titus. The context, nevertheless, remains a triumphal ceremony.

the exergue Vespasian riding horseback with the horse rearing or running full-stride [fig. 9].[35] He wears a cloak blown back from the movement of the horse. As with most depictions of riders, he raises his right hand. In a rare *as*, Vespasian rides a rearing horse that tramples a fallen opponent who thrusts down his spear [fig. 10].[36] This composition distinctly presents Vespasian in military guise as victorious from war in a pose made popular by equestrian representations of Alexander the Great and other battle scenes.

Titus first appears as the sole rider in two coin types. One AE *sestertius* from the American Numismatic Society represents his type I equestrian portrayal which is a nearly exact replica of Vespasian's *as* reverse image [fig. 11].[37] Only the placement of SC in the exergue differs. This type was minted during Vespasian's second consulship in the years 72 or 73. A rare *sestertius*, minted in the same years, depicts Titus riding on horseback and wearing a cloak draped over his left arm [fig. 12].[38] His right arm extends forth to a soldier who presents him a globe. The horse, with reins clearly delineated, raises its right foreleg, and its tail falls casually down. The composition hinges upon the action of Titus receiving the globe rather than movement of the horse. This ceremonial presentation signals Titus accepting power via the reception of the globe but also use of the horse as a power symbol. The text on the obverse identifies Titus as consul for the second time. This title reinforces the message of the reverse image and its significance for public dissemination of Titus presented in a leading role.

Domitian first appears on horseback in the principate of Vespasian. On the reverses of two coin types, Titus and Domitian appear together labeled as PRINC IUVENT in the exergue, distinguished as sons of the emperor. Representative of type I, a silver *denarius* [fig. 13] shows both Titus and Domitian brandishing spears in military poses comparable to yet distinct from the

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[35] *AR denarius*, 0.75mm, 3.11g, *BMC* II 419, pl. 14, 16.
[36] *As*, 25.49mm, *BMC* II 136, 622. See Bergemann (1990) Taf. 91, M62.
[37] American Numismatic Society, inv. 1944.100.41662, 31mm, 26.57g; *BMC* 634; *RIC* II, Part 1 (second edition) Vespasian 430; RIC 497; See also *BMC* II 653, pl. 25, 2; 654, pl. 26, 3.
[38] *BMC* II 140, 634f. See Bergemann (1990) Taf. 91, M69.

reverse of Nero's *decursio sestertius* [fig. 14].[39] The *decursio* scene depicts Nero riding horseback with a helmet, cuirass, and either a staff of command or spear, followed by another horseman who likely was a member of the imperial mounted guard.[40] The *decursio equitum* is a formalized military exercise in which cavalrymen practice fighting skills on horseback; the exercise served both for military skill training with horses but also as parade in front of soldiers and the general public for entertainment.[41] The coin thus fulfills two roles for Nero: disseminating an image of military skill and also entertaining the public. In Domitian's equestrian type II, as modeled by an AR *denarius* minted under Vespasian around 69 to 70 CE, the princes each raise a right hand in the gesture of beneficent greeting or clemency and ride in what seems to be a formal procession, perhaps a triumph or the *decursio* exercise [fig. 15].[42]

Domitian's equestrian type II reproduces an obverse type minted frequently under the authority of Caligula for a bronze *dupondius* series dated from 37 to 41 and captioning Nero and Drusus as *Caesares* in the exergue [fig. 16].[43] Like the title of *Caesares* for Nero and Drusus, the title of *principes iuventutis* publicly marked Titus and Domitian as symbolic leaders of the equestrian order, the *equites*.[44] Augustus first introduced the honorific title for his adopted sons Gaius and Lucius.[45] The pair of youths mounted on horseback closely assimilated the princes to the Dioscuri Castor and Pollux, sons of Jupiter who had come to the Romans' rescue at the battle

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[39] Fig. 13: Silver *denarius*, American Numismatic Society, inv. 1944.100.39963, 17.25mm, 3.35g; *BMC* II 426; *RIC* II, part 1 (second edition) Vespasian 1378. Fig. 14: AE *sestertius*, Berlin, SMBPK, Münzkabinett, inv. 18204315, 35mm, 25.53g; *RIC* 170; *cf. RIC* 509, *RIC* 164.
[40] Speidel, *Riding for Caesar*, 27-29.
[41] For greater discussion, see D. R. Smith, "The Decursio Sestertius Types of Nero and the Lusus Troiae," *The Numismatic Chronicle* 160 (2000): 282-289.
[42] The Harry N. Sneh Collection, 23.3mm, 10.64g; *RIC* 5; *BMC* pl. 7; *RSC* 539.
[43] Bronze *dupondius*, American Numismatic Society, inv. 1941.131.699, 30.5mm, 17.69g; *BMC* 70; *RIC* I (second edition) Gaius/Caligula 49.
[44] For discussion of the importance of the title, see M. Horster, "Princeps Iuventutis: Concept, Realization, Representation," in eds. S. Benoist, A. Daguet-Gagey, and C. Hoët-van Cauwenberghe, *Figures d'Empire, fragments de mémoire: Pouvoirs et identités dans le monde romain imperial*, (Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2011), 73-103.
[45] For fuller discussion of the Dioscuri and their deep connections with the early Principate, see E. Champlin, "Tiberius and the Heavenly Twins," *Journal of Roman Studies* 101 (2011): 73-99. doi: 10.1017/S0075435811000013.

of Lake Regillus.[46] The association of the imperial heirs, Gaius and Lucius, with the Dioscuri, also elided Augustus with Jupiter. In the Flavian images, the two youths are identified by the text evidently in relation to Vespasian's rule rather than by any emphasis on virtue or traditional associations with honorific presentation on horseback.[47]

Both types I and II also assimilate Titus and Domitian as heirs with traditional Hellenistic representations of the Dioscuri on coins, marking the young princes as possibly divine [fig. 17].[48] It is also possible that these coin types allude to Titus and Domitian riding in a triumphal procession.[49] Like the Augustan use of the title *princeps iuventutis*, these two coin types indicate a concerted effort by Vespasian to legitimize Titus and Domitian as heirs to the empire.[50] From these earliest equestrian types of Titus and Domitian, deliberate decisions made under Vespasian's authority are apparent in politically conscious equestrian numismatic formats.

Type III, the most abundant of Domitian's surviving equestrian representations, shows a serene rider and rearing horse frequently accompanied by the die mark SC, denoting *senatus consultu*, "by decree of the senate." In the left hand of the rider rests a transverse scepter or standard extending past the left shoulder. This type varies marginally from coin to coin, but the overall formats remain the same [figs. 18a-f].[51] Subtle differences are detectable in the positions

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[46] For the use of such images of Castor and Pollux in Flavian Rome, see S. Wood, "Public Images of the Flavian Dynasty: Sculpture and Coinage," in ed. A. Zissos, *A Companion to the Flavian Age of Imperial Rome*, (Malden, MA: Wiley, 2016), 131-132.

[47] Imperial virtues and laudatory titles begin to be frequently with the equestrian representations of Trajan.

[48] For Fig. 17, see Sear, *Roman Coins and their Values* (*RCV*, 2000 edition) Number 153. The juxtaposition of Titus and Domitian with the Lydian horseman deity on coins from Mostene may further conflate Titus and Domitian with gods on horseback since Vespasian is presumably already deified at the time of their minting.

[49] Suet. *Dom*. 2.1 describes Domitian specifically on a white horse.

[50] For greater discussion of the overall use of images on Flavian coins for insuring stability, see Wood, "Public Images of the Flavian Dynasty: Sculpture and Coinage," 129-146.

[51] For example, on the reverse of one gold *aureus* (American Numismatic Society, inv. 1980.109.161, 19mm, 7.15g, *BMC* II, 123; *RIC* II, part 1, second edition Vespasian, 540), the horse's tail is more stylized, the scepter and clothing more detailed, and the horse rears more obtusely. Fig. 18a: silver *denarius*, American Numismatic Society, inv. 2009.3.1; RIC II, Part 1 (second edition) Vespasian 1480, pl.79; Fig. b: gold *aureus*, American Numismatic Society, inv. 1958.76.28, *BMC* II 124; *RIC* II, Part 1 (second edition) Vespasian 540; Fig. c: silver *denarius*, American Numismatic Society, inv. 1985.140.54, *BMC* II 129, *RIC* II, Part 1 (second edition) Vespasian 680; Fig. d: bronze *dupondius*, American Numismatic Society, inv. 0000.999.18143, *BMC* II 686, *RIC* II, Part 1 (second edition) Vespasian 662; Fig. e: bronze *as*, American

of the forelegs and tail of the horse as well as the presence and position of SC. Their meanings, however, seem variant. Domitian raises forward his right hand, and his left hand resting by his hip holds a scepter, spear, or standard. He seems to wear the toga but neither shoes nor military attire, such as the *paludamentum* or *chlamys*. The restrictive traditional toga is also strange to wear on horseback. One possible alternative garment is the *toga picta*, a purple garment worn during triumphs.[52] The triumphal attire would make better sense for Domitian on horseback with a staff of command.

Domitian's third equestrian type may reinforce Domitian's support or service for that role of *princeps iuventutis*. This type has previously been interpreted as marking his assumption of the title *Caesar* under Vespasian because of the obverse legend text, but the repeated use of this type and its strong correlation with other titles in the exergue may warrant alternative interpretations, especially considering Suetonius's accounts of Domitian wearing the purple toga in the Greek style when presiding at competitions.[53] Yet, because some of these different examples preserve the title of *princeps iuventutis* without Titus, this type may mark Domitian's continued use of the title until he becomes emperor. A silver *denarius* from the year 69 CE bears a strikingly similar reverse image identifying Otho as *pontifex maximus* in the exergue [fig. 19].[54] This representation of Otho is distinct in that he raises his right hand to strike whereas Domitian lowers his right hand.[55] Both types, however, redeploy the reverse of the *aureus* from 32-31 CE depicting

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Numismatic Society, inv.1906.236.269, *BMC* II 690, *RIC* II, Part 1 (second edition) Vespasian 672; Fig. f: silver *cistophoros*, American Numismatic Society, inv. 1955.21.6, *BMC* 150; *RIC II*, Part 1 (second edition) Titus 518.

[52] For greater discussion of the triumphal implications of the *toga picta* and other triumphal garb, see M. Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 225-238.

[53] E. R. Varner, *From Caligula to Constantine: Tyranny and Transformation in Roman Portraiture*, (Atlanta: Michael C. Carlos Museum, 2000), 155. There arises a need for a more thorough methodology capable of distinguishing and explaining the variant forms inconsistently paired with titles on numismatic representations, as Klose (2015) notes. Suetonius (*Dom*. 4.4.) describes Domitian wearing a purple toga in the Greek fashion while presiding over competitions.

[54] Silver *denarius*, American Numismatic Society, inv. 1944.100.39832, 3.12g; *BMC* 12; *RIC* I (second edition) Otho 22.

[55] The American Numismatic Society interprets Otho as leveling a spear for battle since no detectable features mark the object as a scepter or standard.

Octavian/Augustus on horseback, labeled as CAESAR DIVI F (*filius divi Caesaris*, "son of Divus Caesar"), which helped legitimize his rule as the first emperor and Julius Caesar's heir [fig. 7].[56]

That Domitian in these images is not explicitly in military guise seems a crucial point of the designs. Donning the toga, a civic symbol associated with peace, may present Domitian as a restorer of peace through military engagement (akin to Augustus with the *pax Augusta*). The pairing of the raised right hand as a gesture of clemency with the rearing horse seen frequently in battle images balances Domitian between notions of peace and war, serving as both a skilled general and restorer of peace in the aftermath. *Silvae* 1.1.16 supports this idea of balance because Domitian's face is described as "mixed with signs of war and governing peace." This format, paired with the title of *princeps iuventutis*, also would have been particularly resonant with the cavalry because of Domitian's presentation as a mounted general. It likewise would have been reminiscent of honorific statue dedications familiar to the Roman people.

Type IV, in contrast, overtly presents a horseman in soldier's attire with a helmet, crest, and cloak billowing behind him [fig. 20].[57] The horse's tail aligns perpendicularly with the rider's cloak and right arm. The right hand does not closely match any gesture of greeting, pacification, or clemency; rather, the hand flies behind the rider, presumably Domitian, as if to beckon other cavalrymen or signal victory. The height of the bucking horse's forelegs also does not rise as markedly as elsewhere. This discrepancy perhaps indicates more of a forward charge rather than a stately procession as suggested by types I, II, and III. The exergue reads COS V, indicating the year 77 CE in which Domitian serves as *consul* (*suffectus*) for the fifth time.[58] On the obverse of a silver *denarius* in a format that resembles Domitian's type III, Galba deploys his own equestrian representation, labeled as *imperator* in the legend [fig. 21].[59] For Galba, the equestrian form

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[56] American Numismatic Society, inv. 1944.100.39136, 21mm, 7.94g, *BMC* 594; *RIC* I (second edition) Augustus 262.
[57] Silver *denarius*, American Numismatic Society, inv. 1944.100.42441, 17mm, 3.52g; *BMC* II 234; *RIC* II, Part 1 (second edition) Vespasian 957.
[58] The title of *consul suffectus* was more honorific than practical.
[59] *RIC* 1 and Cohen 76; *RIC* 86var.; *BMC* 207; Cohen 75 var.

highlighted his military experience with which he took control of the empire in 68 CE around the time of the rebellion of Julius Vindex. Domitian may have capitalized on this equestrian format to highlight his military leadership.

Domitian's type III equestrian image seems to blend the standard format of the emperor on horseback with Republican numismatic images of cavalrymen [figs. 22a-b].[60] Domitian's types I and II exhibit the same raised hand position as Galba, although in types I and II the military characteristics are not overt. That both coin types are issued with COS V marking Domitian's fifth consulship means that types III and IV circulate at the same time. Domitian's portrayal on horseback thus may be seen as stately and peaceful or concurrently as the emperor in military guise. Whereas production of type III persists under Domitian's seventh consulship, limited survival suggests that type IV appears only during the fifth consulship.

The more violent type V presents a horse bucking with the rider either raising his right hand or holding a shield, spear, or sword. The reverses of four *sestertii*, dated to Domitian's tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and fourteenth consulships, portray battle images with the rider, spear in hand, trampling a fallen opponent [figs. 23a-d].[61] To interpret this type only as celebratory of military triumph is problematic. The years in which these four coins were minted do not necessarily correspond to Domitian's victories. For example, during Domitian's eleventh and twelfth consulships dated to the years 85 and 86 CE, the Dacian king Decebalus defeats the Roman army, an act which prolonged the war with the Dacians. Alternatively, in 88 CE there is a Roman victory over the Dacians at Tapae. The continued production of these images may document a positive military representation of Domitian used as propaganda for maintaining public favor during these years of questionable success.

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[60] *RRC* 39.5; *RRC* 286, I; Bergemann (1990) Taf. 89, M1 and M4.

[61] Fig. a: bronze *sestertius*, American Numismatic Society, inv. 1958.135.1, 34mm, 25.51g; *RIC* II, Part 1 (second edition) Domitian 205; Fig. b: bronze *sestertius*, 26.48g; *BMC* II 339; Cohen 484; *RIC* 358; Fig. c: bronze *sestertius*, American Numismatic Society, inv. 1980.187.2, 33mm, 24.64g; *BMC* 380; *RIC* II, Part 1 (second edition) Domitian 470; Fig. d: bronze *sestertius*, American Numismatic Society, inv. 1957.172.1603, 36mm, 23.56g; *BMC* 409; *RIC* II, Part 1 (second edition) Domitian 638.

The legends of each of these type V obverses also identify Domitian as *censor perpetuus* (Censor Forever), an unprecedented title among Flavian coinage dated first to the year 85 CE.[62] The most substantial powers granted by this title include the formal ability to control entrance into or dismissal from the senatorial and equestrian orders.[63] Although the title *censor* had been held by previous emperors, the assumption of *censor perpetuus* distinguishes Domitian as symbolically in charge of the Senate without end, a dangerous undertaking comparable to Caesar's self-proclamation as dictator for life before his own assassination. Paired with the lack of strong correlation with specific victories, the title signals an important link between Domitian's politics, involvement with the equestrian class, and Domitian's coins. This type recycles, but does not copy, the formats of Vespasian's and Titus's bronze *sestertii* depicting rearing horses trampling a fallen, but still armed enemy [figs. 10-11]. These reverse images evince a similar purpose underlying deployment of equestrian images of both Titus and Domitian, if not also Vespasian, promoting themselves in the guise of Alexander or as triumphant generals.

The reverse of a *sesterius* minted in 95 is the sole representative for type VI of Domitian's equestrian format and may depict a statue[fig. 24].[64] Presenting the most frequently used imperial equestrian statue pose with a horse raising its right foreleg while the rider raises his right hand, this image closely matches the *adventus* type used more frequently under Trajan and his successors and then exemplified by Marcus Aurelius on the Campidoglio. Scholars most often connect type VI with the statue described by Statius, circa 91 CE after the Senate dedicated Domitian's statue in the Forum. This interpretation is both problematic and unresolved. Certain critical details of each horse's pose do not match *Silvae* 1.1, whereas discrepancies in these details (such as the rigidity of the horse's pose and the absences of a sword, Medusa, and a prominent base) are accounted for by Statius.

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[62] B. Jones, *The Emperor Domitian*, (New York: Routledge, 1992), 106.
[63] Jones, *The Emperor Domitian*, 106.
[64] Bronze *sestertius*, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. 1978.10.21.5; *BMC* II 476; see R. H. Darwall-Smith, *Emperors and Architecture*, 228-229.

Since equestrian statues typically have bases, coins often indicate such bases by including a straight ground line or rectangle, as on Republican and early imperial coins showing statues on arches or the inscribed bases themselves. Domitian's type VI, however, also resembles early Macedonian, Republican, and imperial statues and coins [fig. 5], indicating Domitian's adherence to traditional formats, such as the Cartoceto horsemen, in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale delle Marche in Ancona, or Marcus Aurelius on the Campidoglio.[65] Such parallels have led scholars to identify this type VI *sestertius* as a statue, but this coin cannot be certainly linked with the statue in *Silvae* 1.1. The reverse image lacks multiple important attributes described by Statius other than a head below one hoof. Darwall-Smith identifies a statuette of Minerva under magnification, but the size is too small and the quality of the die-casting too poor to argue definitively either way.[66]

Because all three Flavian emperors deploy multiple formats of equestrian images in coins if not sculpture also, the meaning embedded in each format must be reconsidered as detached from individual emperors. The six types of Domitian's numismatic equestrian representations, however, display a remarkable variety of formats produced by the metropolitan mint(s).[67] Domitian's significantly greater variety of equestrian imagery therefore should be understood as a set of deliberate, politically motivated adaptations. These coin images bear broader historical, social, and geographic significance related to earlier representations of cavalrymen, consuls, and public processions rather than only being considered in relation to honorific dedications, such as the Forum *Equus Domitiani*, or commemorative coins.

Contextualizing Flavian Numismatic Equestrian Representations with Sculpture

It is necessary to situate Domitian's numismatic equestrian images and the *Equus Domitiani* among earlier equestrian statues and the places they inhabit. I argue that images

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[65] Discussed in greater detail below; see 24 n. 103.
[66] R. H. Darwall-Smith, *Emperors and Architecture*, 228.
[67] Many earlier minted equestrian coins of Domitian are also attributed to provinces such as Lugdunum. This somewhat limited geographic distribution may indicate a particular connection with politics and audiences at Rome rather than abroad, but there is simply not sufficient evidence.

portraying Domitian on horseback are meant both to evoke imperial predecessors and to resonate with the cavalry (*equites*, equestrian class). Most surviving equestrian statue fragments indicate a stately rider sitting on a saddle covering the horse's back. The horse frequently raises up the front right foreleg, like that of Marcus Aurelius, to indicate motion within its location.[68] The conscientious placement of imperial equestrian statues is apparent first with Augustus. For example, the *quadriga* statue group in the center of the Forum of Augustus declared the emperor as *pater patriae*, matching placement of the statue with propaganda in his Forum. The formats of his statues were in fact part of a defined tradition firmly established in Rome by the Republic, attested by coins with equestrian statues most often on triumphal arches [figs. 4-6].[69] After victory at Actium in 31 BCE, silver equestrian statues of Augustus were erected in as many as eighty cities along with chariot and pedestrian statues; they are presumed to have stood in the center of fora or agoras.[70] From the Aegean, the rider of one equestrian statue identified as Augustus serves as a notable comparison that indicates the widespread placement of these statues [fig. 25].[71] In this example, Augustus wears a tunic with a thin, vertical purple stripe (*clavus purpureus*), the fringed *paludamentum*, and the hilt of a sword which rested at his left side. In his lowered left hand, on the bezel of his ring finger are remnants of the *lituus*, which signals his authority as *pontifex maximus*. Like the pose of most equestrian statues, Augustus raises his right hand, perhaps emphasizing clemency as one of his codified imperial virtues inscribed on the golden shield in the Curia.[72] This statue is an important early imperial precedent for Domitian.

Pliny the Elder assigns Roman equestrian sculpture in the round to a Greek tradition: "Equestrian statues also have a Roman appreciation, without doubt derived from the Greek

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[68] See Bergemann's catalogue, *Römische Reiterstatuen*, 169-184.
[69] *Res Gestae*, 35. The inscription of *pater patriae* was also placed in the vestibule of his temple and in the Curia, visually linking the chariot statue and all the three spaces with his public service and honor.
[70] *Res Gestae*, 24.
[71] Athens, National Archeological Museum, inv. X 23322, H. 1.23m.
[72] See M. B. Dowling, *Clemency and Cruelty in the Roman World*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006), 131-133.

model, but they used to dedicate so many victory horses for those in the sacred games."[73] This description both distinguishes and connects the Greek and Roman traditions of equestrian statue dedications. Pliny's understanding of equestrian sculpture, and more broadly equestrian images, is vital because not only was he writing in Domitian's lifetime, but he dedicates his *Historia Naturalis* to Titus. The Greek origin of equestrian statues is reflected also in Pliny's choice of the word *celetas*, a specific Latinized gloss of the Greek κέλης associated with the single horse race. In his earlier description of live horses and their utility, Pliny pairs riding horseback in war with chariots.[74] The author likewise connects equestrian sculpture with the later development of chariot statue groups. These statues differ markedly from the standard trotting equestrian pose and frequently depict the horses rearing. However, it is clear from Pliny that both imperial equestrian statues and chariot groups in Flavian Rome communicated notions of honor and triumph in public so as to characterize the emperor as victorious and protective of the empire. The *pater patriae quadriga* from the Forum of Augustus serves as the best analogue for Pliny's discussion and its significance for Domitian's equestrian statue. Given Pliny's juxtaposition between chariot groups and equestrian statues, the Augustan *quadriga* and the equestrian statues

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[73] Plin. *HN* 34.10.19: *equestres utique statuae romanam celebrationem habent, orto sine dubio a graecis exemplo, sed illi celetas tantum dicabant in sacris victores.* The use of "celebrationem" is telling because it also indicates the common or frequent use of the statue type. Dedications of equestrian statues occurred from the Archaic through the Hellenistic periods, and their popularity diffused into imperial Rome. In the archaeological record, the Greek statue type to which Pliny the Elder refers may harken back to models like the Archaic Attic Parian marble Rampin Rider (Paris, Louvre, inv. Ma 3104, Acr. 590, H. 27cm.) from around 550 BCE, consisting of a nude male rider mounted rigidly on top of a horse now in the Louvre. Other notable early examples include the Persian Horse Rider (Athens, Acropolis Museum, inv. Acr. 606, H. 1.08m.), dated slightly later to about 520 BCE and consisting of Parian marble horse fragments and the legs of a rider now in the Acropolis Museum, gives a rigid stance to the Archaic honorific horse, but enough fragments survive to reconstruct a forward-stepping motion of the hooves. These honorific dedications, if Pliny is correct, symbolize in a most basic form the racing action of the winners rather than representing the action itself. One terracotta equestrian statue from sixth century Volci, Italy, exhibits the same rigidity seen in Attic examples. Later Etruscan and early southern Italic variations show changes in form as artists represent more dynamic action through naturalistic poses. In Macedonia, the Archaeological Museum of Pella houses an unidentified, fragmentary fourth century horse and semi-nude rider wearing the *chlamys*, indicating a Greek heroic, martial quality. Its form balances rigidity with stately movement. These examples attest similar forms developing over time across the Mediterranean. Pausanias mentions two equestrian statues that stand at the gates of the Athenian Acropolis in the second century CE; however, he provides few details, and this account is unclear about whether the statues serve explicitly as dedications or decoration for the gates. These statues, nevertheless, evince the continuity and dissemination of equestrian images from the Archaic and Classical periods into the Hellenistic and Roman worlds.

[74] Plin. *HN* 8.65.

of Julius Caesar, Domitian, and Trajan should be understood as distinctly legible visual analogues for Flavian audiences after encountering *Silvae* 1.1.

For Roman equestrian statues representing emperors, the most important earlier model was Alexander the Great on horseback, most notably the Lysippan Granicus monument. Mounted on a rearing horse and preparing his right arm to strike an opponent lying beneath the horse, Alexander as depicted by a bronze statuette exudes authority [fig. 26].[75] In 334 BCE after the Battle of Granicus, Alexander's first victory against the Persians, the sculptor Lysippus is said to have created the general's most famous honorific monument.[76] The statuette at Naples, presumed to model the format of the Lysippan Granicus monument, shows Alexander wearing a *chlamys* (short cloak), *chiton*, cuirass (breast plate), and an empty sword hilt at his left side. His right hand, which would have held the sword, prepares to strike an enemy below. The Lysippan original also is presumed to be the same statue that Statius describes. Statius claims that Caesar's portrait replaced that of Alexander and remained on display as an equestrian statue before the Temple of Venus Genetrix in the Forum Caesaris.[77] In his description of the nature of horses, Pliny the Elder first describes the horse Bucephalus as permitting no other rider but Alexander,[78] and he then transitions to Julius Caesar who owned a similar horse of the same temperament. Pliny and Statius both directly associate Alexander and Julius Caesar, but Statius inserts Domitian and his statue into this trope. Since Statius associated Domitian's horse with Alexander and Caesar, it is reasonable that other viewers in the Forum could draw the same parallels. These examples indicate that the equestrian statues of Alexander, Caesar, other prominent rulers, as well

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[75] Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 4996, H. 48.5cm, W. 47cm. See M. Bieber, *Alexander the Great in Greek and Roman Art*, (Chicago: Argonaut, 1964); A. F. Stewart, *Faces of Power*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). The pose also recalls older examples associated with Greek cavalry, such as the Dexileos tomb relief (Athens, Kerameikos, Oberlaender Museum, H. 1.75m; W. 1.35m; D. 0.11-0.14 m; *IG* II.2, 6217). More contemporary tombstones of cavalrymen across the empire, however, have greater, more relevant visual parallels.

[76] J. J. Pollitt, *The Art of Ancient Greece: Sources and Documents*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 98. He argues that the Granicus equestrian statue was taken to Rome in 148 BCE.

[77] It is unclear if this replacement of Caesar's portrait occurred before or after his death, although Pliny (35.36.94) describes Claudius enacted similar alterations to Alexander's painted portraits.

[78] Plin. *HN* 8.64.

as their portraits continued to resonate political weight for emperors and contemporary audiences, such as Statius and his readers under Domitian.

Similar images of Alexander, his predecessors, or other Hellenistic rulers, either with only a rearing horse, on horseback riding in the standard statue pose, or smiting foes underneath a trampling horse, appear both in sculpture and on Macedonian coins [fig. 27a-b].[79] An increased popularity of this motif before the rise of Alexander but more noticeably in various media after his rise to power confirms the potent influence of his equestrian representations on all later leaders.[80] For example, Demetrius of Phaleron, after ruling Athens for ten years, is notably honored with an extravagant statue group by the people of Attica. Diogenes Laertius, in his biography of the ruler, describes three hundred sixty bronze statues, a majority of them equestrian, dedicated to Demetrius.[81] This monumental group epitomizes the representational potential made possible by Hellenistic experiments with equestrian formats, for the assembled statues create an entire mimetic cavalry in bronze. Equestrian statues in Rome maintained the honorific aspect of earlier statues while reacting against Hellenistic grouping. *Silvae* 1.1 suggests that Domitian's statue achieved effects similar to statue groups in that it continued to relate to nearby equestrian images.

We may consider Domitian's equestrian statue as maintaining associations with victory monuments. Pliny suggests that the equestrian statue in its original Greek context alludes to victory in the sacred games rather than only wealth and honor attributed to the horse or privileges to own one.[82] By Pliny's time, however, the equestrian statue type is no longer dedicated only for racing victories. Elsewhere the author draws attention to how Romans commemorate military

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[79] Fig. a: Bronze, American Numismatic Society, inv. 1944.100.29269, 4.57g; Fig. b: Silver *stater*, 22.2mm, 11.49g, American Numismatic Society, inv. 2015.41.1. *BMC* Thessaly 47, 14. pl. X, 11.
[80] It is at this time after Alexander's death that Hellenistic gems also begin increasingly depicting scenes of Bellerophon mounted on Pegasus attacking a chimera in a pose akin to Alexander's equestrian images.
[81] Diog. Laert. 5.2.
[82] See Eaverly (1995) for greater discussion of equestrian dedications. For more on the ancient use and training of horses, see J. K. Anderson, *Ancient Greek Horsemanship*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961).

success and honor with the equestrian statue, recalling the portrait of Marcus Tremulus dedicated before the Temple of Castor and Pollux around 112 BCE for his victory over the Hernicians.[83] The vicinity of the Temple of Castor and Pollux as divine horsemen was a popular location for the dedication of honorific equestrian statues.[84] This tradition, defined in the Republic and consistently resonant with the *equites* who saw the Dioscuri as their tutelary gods, persisted through imperial equestrian formats, most prominently on arches under the Julio-Claudians.[85] Statius's allusion to Cyllarus, Castor's horse, in relation to Domitian's horse subtly connects Domitian's statue with other previously dedicated statues in the vicinity.

Livy describes an explicit military context for these early equestrian statues. He notes a triumph and statue dedication for Lucius Furius Camillus and Gaius Maenius because they successfully captured the city of Latium.[86] By the time Livy is writing, the dedication of equestrian statues must have been relatively commonplace, for he interjects with the phrase "rare at the time," setting practices from his own time in antithesis to the narrative date of about 338 BCE. Neither Livy, Pliny, nor Pausanias mention the pose or iconography of the riders or horses, but they also do not distinguish the statues from convention. This lack of commentary indicates two important factors. Either the pose was insignificant, and merely being represented on horseback conveyed honor. Alternatively, the authors discuss different formats of equestrian

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[83] Cicero (*Phil.* 6.13) addresses Marcus Tremulus and issues of equestrian statue dedications. Livy (9.43.22) documents both this historic victory and the statue. Pliny (*HN* 34.23), however, notes that this statue of Marcus Tremulus no longer survives in the location described by the time of Pliny's composition. See "Equus Q. Marci Tremuli," *LTUR*, vol. 2, 229-230. Pliny (*HN* 34.13.28) also indicates that women could be honored with equestrian statues, as shown by the statue of a Claelia (also Cloelia or Valeria), who was honored because she escaped from being a war prisoner. Plutarch (*Life of Poplicola* 19) also places this female equestrian statue on the Sacra Via as one approaches the Palatine. See "Equus Cloelia," *LTUR*, vol. 2, 226-227.

[84] For fuller discussion of the temple and its vicinity, see the multiple volumes of publications by I. Nielsen and B. Poulsen, eds., *The Temple of Castor and Pollux*, (Rome: De Luca, 1992); L. Nista, ed., *Castores*: *L'imaginne dei Dioscuri a Roma* (Rome: Ministero per I Beni Culturali e Ambientali, Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma, 1994).

[85] G. S. Sumi. "Monuments and Memory: The Aedes Castoris in the Formation of Augustan Ideology," *The Classical Quarterly* 59 (2009), 167-186.

[86] Liv. 8.13.8-9: *additus triumpho honos, ut statuae equestres eis—rara illa aetate res—in foro ponerentur*.

statues since they write in different times. In both cases, these authors clearly assume the audiences' familiarity with these issues.

It is clear that through the late Republic and early Augustan period equestrian statues typify Roman honorific statue dedications. These statues were not limited to portraits of the emperor or his family.[87] The likenesses of government leaders, ranging from Pompey and Sulla to the Augustan proconsul Marcus Nonius Balbus and aristocrats could be seen in equestrian statues all over Rome and nearby cities.[88] The two gilt bronze equestrian statues of the Cartoceto group represent two unknown aristocratic family members with otherwise unremarkable portraits [fig. 28].[89] These statues show men represented on horseback in the public sphere without evidence suggesting anything other than honorific dedications. The marble statue of Balbus from Herculaneum, now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Naples, also models the early imperial Roman format of the equestrian statue with a stately rider mounted atop a horse lifting its right foreleg [fig. 29].[90] Holding the reins of the horse with his left hand, Balbus raises his right hand clenched around what would have been a rod instead of presenting open palms, as seen in the Cartoceto bronzes and the Marcus Aurelius statue. Subtle variation in this gesture of the right hand signals an important semantic shift from earlier representations of government officials or aristocrats to later portrayals of emperors.[91] Equestrian statues of emperors display their authority and clemency, whereas Balbus and other elite statues display civic authority, in the case

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[87] Cicero (*Phil.* 6.13) seems to detest the increasing frequency of dedications of equestrian statues for patrons who do not deserve the honor. In fact, he suggests that in the Republic equestrian dedications were conservative and infrequently used even for censors or the *imperator*. In this same passage, Cicero documents *equites* erecting another statue on behalf of Q. Tremulus after they received horses from the state.

[88] Equestrian statues of Sulla and Pompey both stood on the rostra in the Forum Romanum. P. Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, trans. by A. Shapiro, (Ann Harbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1988).

[89] K. Fittschen and P. Zanker, *Katalog der römischen Porträts in den Capitolinischen Museen und den anderen kommunalen Sammlungen der Stadt Rom*, III, (Mainz: P. von Zabern, 1983), 39, n. 41, 2; S. Stucchi, *Il gruppo bronzeo tiberiano da Cartoceto*, (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1988); F. Kleiner, "Review," *American Journal of Archaeology* 94 (1990): 514-515. For greater discussion of the Cartoceto Bronzes as aristocrats, see J. Pollini, "The Cartoceto Bronzes: Portraits of a Roman Aristocratic Family of the Late First Century B. C.," *American Journal of Archaeology* 97 (1993): 423-446.

[90] Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 6104.

[91] The overall similarities in form, nevertheless, afford high status to the riders.

of Balbus his service as proconsul and the paternal role he plays for his city.[92] Like Marcus Aurelius on the Campidoglio, Balbus wears the tunic and *paludamentum*, in contrast with the precedent of Alexander in full military attire. On Balbus's feet are the *calcei patricii,* also worn by Marcus Aurelius. This alteration of clothing from the expected military *caligae* emphasizes civic roles, public beneficence, and the emperor's clemency rather than military prowess or service as might be expected from older equestrian statues.

By Domitian's principate, equestrian statues in Rome have a rich history, and non-imperial honorific dedications are less frequent, if existent. The Lysippan equestrian statue of Alexander reworked as Julius Caesar notably stood in the Forum Iulium in front of the Temple of Venus Genetrix, which visually linked the dictator with his divine ancestress and displayed him in one of the most public political spaces at the time.[93] In the same place, Suetonius describes Caesar dedicating a realistic statue of his horse, which is said to have foretold his greatness.[94] The textual evidence is not entirely clear, but this statue and the reworked Lysippan statue seem to be different. Caesar aimed to expand the Forum Romanum as a greater center for business and civic activities.[95] He dedicated the Forum, and possibly also the equestrian statue, on the last day of his triumph.[96] Caesar thus employed equestrian statues as honorific victory monuments while also drawing attention to his success as a mounted general and literally taking over both the role of Alexander and his statue.[97]

Domitian renewed and reused the area of the Forum Iulium, perhaps indicating latent political intentions to liken himself to Alexander and the deified Caesar. Following a fire, Domitian rebuilt the Temple of Venus and part of the Forum Iulium, although possibly never

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[92] For fuller discussion of this possible class distinction in equestrian statues, see Bergemann, *Römische Reiterstatuen*, 28-31.
[93] Plin. *HN* 8.64.2; Stat. *Silv*. 1.1.84-90; Suet. *Iul.* 61; Richardson, "Forum Iulium" and "Equus Caesaris," 1992; "Forum Iulium," *LTUR*, vol. 2, 299-306.
[94] Suet. *Jul*. 61.1.
[95] Richardson, "Forum Iulium," 1992; "Forum Iulium," *LTUR*, vol. 2, 299-306.
[96] Cass. Dio 45.6.4.
[97] Alternatively, the replacement of Alexander's portrait could have taken place after Caesar's death.

finishing the renovations.[98] Whether for practical or political reasons (or both), Trajan rededicated the temple in 113 and continued construction over Domitian's unfinished renovations, at which point he connected the Forum Iulium to the Forum Traiani.[99]

The Curia Julia, a traditional building for Senate functions, is among the most jarring omissions from the list of buildings surrounding Domitian's statue in Statius's description.[100] Caesar's Curia effectively functioned as a vestibule in essence acting as an architectural fulcrum between the Forum Romanum and the Forum Iulium. Furthermore, it would have helped to visually elide the *Equus Domitiani* with Caesar's Lysippan statue.[101] Domitian may have restored parts of the Curia, suggested by the Chronographer of 354, but his involvement with the Curia remains uncertain.[102] Suetonius also describes Domitian as continuing to honor tradition by meeting with the Senate in the Curia and speaking in the center of the Forum Romanum for special tribunal meetings. This account attests the importance of the two spaces for Domitian's imperial agenda and public persona.[103]

Trajan connected the Forum Traiani with the other imperial fora, possibly overtaking early Domitianic work and thus visually linking Caesar's equestrian statue with his own in a way similar to how Statius connects Domitian's statue with its setting.[104] It is clear that careful placement of equestrian statues in relation to the designs of Roman fora was a priority of

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[98] Richardson, "Forum Iulium" and "Equus Caesaris," 1992; "Forum Iulium," *LTUR*, vol. 2, 299-306.
[99] See Richardson, "Forum Iulium," "Basilica Argentaria," and "Forum Traiani," 1992; "Forum Iulium," *LTUR*, vol. 2, 299-306, and "Basilica Iulii Iuxta Forum Traiani," *LTUR*, vol. 1, 180-181. For an overview of the Domitianic work over which Trajan began construction, see R. H. Darwall-Smith, *Emperors and Architecture*, 240-246.
[100] "Curia Iulia," *LTUR*, vol. 1, 332-334. If by the end of the first century CE the Curia retained any associations with the imperial virtues put forth by Augustus, such as *clementia*, Statius's omission of the Curia may reflect a negative opinion of Domitian's equestrian statue standing in opposition to the virtue of clemency demonstrated by other imperial statues.
[101] For fuller discussion of Domitian's reworking of the Forum Iulium, see J. C. Anderson, jr., *The Historical Topography of the Imperial Fora*, 55-63.
[102] J. C. Anderson, jr., *The Historical Topography of the Imperial Fora*, (Brussels: Collection Latomus, 1984), n. 33 and 39. See R. H. Darwall-Smith, 233-234, for a brief account of the recent debates about this issue.
[103] Suet. *Dom*. 7.1; 13.1.
[104] J. C. Anderson, jr., *The Historical Topography of the Imperial Fora,* (Brussels: Collection Latomus, 1984), 141-177.

emperors; this practice also speaks to the power of imperial equestrian representations and the importance of their contexts. The dedication of Domitian's statue in the center of the Forum Romanum, according to Statius, evinces this careful decision in its placement.

Although Trajan's statue also does not survive, it serves as another useful model for considering the significance of the placement of Domitian's statue. Ammianus Marcellinus describes Constantius II as wanting to imitate Trajan's Forum but only being able to copy the horse.[105] An advisor to Constantius then jokes that the Forum is the horse's stable,. This joke suggests the close semantic link between statue and setting. Trajan's equestrian statue most likely stood along the central axis of the square [fig. 2].[106] Encircling the statue raised above the perimeter of the Forum were sculptures of Dacian captives alternating with shield-portraits which, together with nearby arches, create a theater of sculpture and of post-war triumph.[107] If Trajan's statue resembled his equestrian representations on coins and the statue of Marcus Aurelius, the statue publicly showcased the emperor's clemency to the Dacians. As with the *Equus Domitiani*, scholars frequently look to numismatic evidence for understanding how Trajan's statue may have appeared. This popular claim, I think, misses the point of multiple circulating equestrian images on coins. The effect of clemency is muddled when the statue is removed from the context of the Forum Traiani and the sculptures of captives.

Trajan's coins, like Domitian's, feature significantly varied equestrian types, most notably two that evoke but not imitate Domitian's types V and VI or their predecessors [figs. 30a-d].[108] Both types also appear on all denominations.[109] Images of Trajan riding a bucking horse and spearing a fallen Dacian more closely resemble the bronze *sestertius* types of Vespasian and Titus

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[105] Amm. Marc. 16.10.15-16.
[106] Richardson, "Forum Traiani," 1992; "Forum Traiani," *LTUR*, vol. 2, 348-356.
[107] J. E. Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome: A Study of the Monuments in Brief*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
[108] Fig. a: *BMC* III 48, 137, Taf. 11, 12; Bergemann M99, Taf. 92, e. Fig. b: *BMC* III 176f., 833-841, Taf. 31.2.3.5; 191.900-903, Taf. 34.8f.; 199.942f. Taf 36.11; 556.902 b; Bergemann M100, Taf. 92, f. Fig. c: *BMC* III 102.511, Taf. 18.4; Bergemann M105, Taf. 92, g. Fig. d: *BMC* III 93.445-448, Taf. 16.18; Bergemann M108, Taf. 92, h.
[109] None of these coins seem to represent clearly a statue.

on horseback.[110] The text in the exergues more frequently connect Trajan's equestrian representations either with ceremonies such as the PROFECTIO and ADVENTUS or with some variation of the titular SPQR OPTIMO PRINCIP, defining Trajan as the best *princeps* in contrast to Domitian.[111]

The inscriptions on Balbus's commemorative altar and equestrian statue base from Herculaneum indicate some of the considerations for dedicating an equestrian statue in a city center or other prominent location:

> "Because Marcus Nonius Balbus, as long as he lived here, showed a parental disposition of extraordinary generosity to individuals and the community, the councilors decided that an equestrian statue be erected for him at public expense in the most frequented spot with the inscription: 'To Marcus Nonius Balbus, praetor, proconsul, patron, from the entire Council of the people of Herculaneum in honor of his merits.'"[112]

The location was intended to display as publicly as possible Balbus on horseback because of the statue's strong honorific associations. The inscription suggests an air of authority by noting the "parental disposition" of Balbus as proconsul leading the city. A similar sentiment for the emperor as *pater patriae*, as seen under Augustus's *quadriga* statue, may be comparable. Bergemann finds that all extant imperial equestrian statue bases from Rome were inscribed with similar dedications by the Senate and most frequently on behalf of *decuriones*, Roman cavalry officers. A second century CE equestrian portrait of Fabius Hermogenes and its surviving inscription honors the *equester* who doubled as a cult priest for the deified Hadrian (r. 117–138 CE).[113] The identification of Hermogenes's social status raises the question of whether or not

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[110] *RIC* 543, *as*; *RIC* 543, *sestertius*; *RIC* 292, *RCV* 88, 991, *AR denarius*; *RIC* 291, *RCV* 291v; *RIC* 598, 599, *AE sestertii.*

[111] Trajan has been seen as continuing much of Domitian's same practices; this notion is pertinent given parallels between Domitian's and Trajan's attention to the equestrian class and increasing both their military *dona* and social mobility. For fuller discussion of Trajan being more closely associated with Domitian than numismatic texts, ancient panegyrists, and historians suggest, see K. H. Waters, "Traianus Domitiani Continuator," *The American Journal of Philology* 90 (1969), 385-405.

[112] *CIL* X.1429; *Année Epigraphique* (1976) no. 144.

[113] J. Fejfer, *Roman Portraits in Context: Image and Context*, (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 3-4.

equestrian statuary resonates with members of the equestrian class, so named for their ability to afford a horse, which cavalrymen then would use for service on behalf of Rome.[114]

That many imperial equestrian statues were dedicated on behalf of *decuriones* (cavalry officers) supports a particular resonance of equestrian formats with service as cavalrymen rather than the statues being solely an honorific type reserved for the emperor. Bergemann maintains that equestrian statues in the round are foremost military symbols. One must wonder, however, if all formats of imperial equestrian representations necessitate a link with the emperor's own role as a military officer or if one particular format is more meaningful than others. Bergemann's conclusions, nonetheless, show that the highly visible placement of these statues remains crucial for exhibiting honor in relation to public service of emperors, generals, politicians, and cavalrymen.

No surviving numismatic images from the principates of Vespasian, Titus, or Domitian explicitly represent equestrian statues in public. It is therefore important to consider Domitian's equestrian portrayal in contexts removed from the statue of the Forum Romanum. A fragmentary bronze equestrian sculpture, once representing Domitian until a sculptor reworked the head as a portrait of Nerva, was found at Misenum, Italy, in the *sacellum* of the Augustales. The reconstruction of this life-size statue closely matches Domitian's fifth numismatic equestrian type, on which the restoration is based because of physical evidence suggesting parallels to the Granicus monument of Alexander the Great. The Misenum statue provides the greatest certainty for one particular context for an equestrian representation of Domitian [fig. 31].[115] The similarity of its format compared to older types from the Republic and the principates of Octavian, Nero,

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[114] Plutarch (Plut. *Fab. Max.* 22) also relates that Quintus Fabius Maximus erected a bronze equestrian portrait of himself on the Capitoline. Q. Fabius Maximus was a patrician, governor, curule *aedile*, *praetor*, and consul *suffectus* in Republican Rome, but he also is distinguished for serving in Hispania as a legate for Julius Caesar in the civil war. Plutarch's mention of Maximus is significant, for he reveals that these equestrian statues may also represent the dedicants themselves rather than serving only as honorific statues of another individual granted by councilors or the Senate.

[115] R. Cantilena and P. Rubino, *Domiziano/Nerva: La statua equestre da Miseno, una proposta di ricomposizione*, (Naples: Macchiaroli, 1987).

Galba, Otho, Vespasian, Titus, but most notably Hellenistic types of Alexander the Great, supports an understanding of Domitian's application of multiple equestrian formats as a concerted political effort.

The bronze Misenum statue demonstrates the need for emphasis on contexts of equestrian images, especially when these images are disseminated in particular regions or displayed within statue groups, such as the Cartoceto bronzes. Domitian's Misenum statue stood in the *sacellum*, or the central forecourt, of the city's College of the Augustales.[116] Two marble statues of Vespasian and Titus, discovered *in situ*, flanked the equestrian statue from niches.[117] Vespasian and Titus appear as *divi* represented as Classical heroic nudes. Domitian's military dress strongly contrasts with the disarmed nudity of his father and brother. The bronze of the equestrian statue also sharply contrasts Domitian with the white marble *divi*. This visual divergence is significant. The white marble and classicizing features of Vespasian and Titus emphasize their divinity and heroism. Domitian presented on horseback likewise emphasizes his heroism, but in a more dynamic format. Domitian's pose is also more typical of Hellenistic statues, particularly Lysippan depictions of Alexander. This livelier form updates Domitian from the nude heroic classicizing forms of his father and brother and renders his statue more resonant with contemporary audiences. Despite these features of the equestrian statue, its central position visually anchors Domitian amidst the divinity and heroism of his father and brother, further helping to legitimize his public presentation and reign as emperor.[118]

The matching format of this Misenum statue and Domitian's type V numismatic equestrian representation also could support arguments urging for numismatic images to be understood as showing statues. One must use caution, however, when connecting the statue of *Silvae* 1.1 to coins because of the risk of misunderstanding Statius's point. I interpret Domitian's

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[116] See P. Miniero, ed., *The Sacellum of the Augustales at Misenum*, (Naples: Electa Napoli, 2000).
[117] Baia, Museo Archeologico dei Campi Flegrei nel Castello di Baia, inv. 153950; inv. 153951.
[118] Despite the portrait being reworked as Nerva, the context of the *sacellum* of the Augustales may indicate an attempt to preserve Domitian's statue and legitimacy as emperor through worship of the Flavian *gens* following his assassination.

equestrian statue(s) and extensive use of numismatic equestrian images relating more to the Flavian political climate, the need for widespread public legitimacy, and reuse of older imagery rather than referring to specific earlier statues, save for Alexander's Granicus monument. Statius's description of Domitian's statue in the Forum Romanum explicitly inserts the emperor into a firmly rooted tradition of rivaling earlier imperial statues in the Forum. An examination of numismatic equestrian images, however, supports the notion that the Flavian emperors paid equal attention to earlier numismatic equestrian images.

Contextualizing Flavian Numismatic Representations with Other Equestrian Forms

Two formats of horses and riders appear frequently on Roman coins.[119] The riders lift their right hand, and the horses either lift one foreleg or rear with both forelegs raised. The rearing horse format most frequently represents Domitian. The most prominent application of this format correlated with Domitian's principate appears on tombstones of the Roman cavalry, such as that of Tiberius Claudius Maximus, who won military decorations under Domitian and Trajan by capturing the Dacian king Decebalus [fig. 32].[120] At the top of the stela, Maximus riding horseback tramples Decebalus. In the lower register are his military decorations (*armillae*) gifted by Domitian and Trajan, and continuing to the bottom is an inscription he dedicated for himself, stating his various equestrian offices and promotion, including those under Domitian. Many of these tombstones identify members of the Roman military who connected personally with the horse-and-rider image, for their tombstones feature this motif prominently and often as the only sculptural decoration. Maximus, for example, chose to commission a sculptor to depict himself on

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[119] The most popular form of equestrian representation, as minted on many Roman coins, begins appearing early under Philip II of Macedon. Plutarch (*Vit. Alex.* 3.5) relates that Philip's horse won in the races in the 106th Olympics in 356 BCE, perhaps leading to the popularity of equestrian images for Philip. See for examples: a silver *tetradrachm*, American Numismatic Society, inv. 1967.152.197, 14.36g; an AR one-fifth *tetradrachm* or *tetrobol*, 14.17mm, 2.40g; LeRider 43.2; Mueller 495.

[120] Drama, Greece, Archaeological Museum of Drama; M. Speidel, "The Captor of Decebalus: A New Inscription of Philippi," *Journal of Roman Studies* 60 (1970), 142-153; V. A. Maxfield, *The Military Decorations of the Roman Army*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 162-167 and pl. 8a; P. Connolly, *Tiberius Claudius Maximus: The Cavalryman*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). For the inscription Maximus dedicated for himself, see *Année Épigraphique* (1985), 721 and *Année Épigraphique* (1969), 583.

a rearing horse attacking a fallen opponent in the pose used for Domitian's type V equestrian coins.

This rearing format of equestrian image becomes characteristic of tombstones commissioned for members of the *equites*, but particularly with members of each *ala*, or wing squadron, according to inscriptions.[121] The dedication of an equestrian statue representing Fabius Hermogenes, as described earlier, serves as another example for such a connection. Cavalrymen's tombstones frequently pair EQ for *equites* with the motif of rearing horse and rider trampling an enemy. That this motif is not one of the standard poses for honorific imperial equestrian statues suggests its symbolism was considered more suitable for military representations, particularly for cavalrymen.[122] Judging from tombstones of the *equites*, the rearing horse motif had long been a quintessential characteristic of the equestrian soldier's public identity.[123] A relief detail from the Column of Trajan (scenes 89 and 90) clearly distinguishes Trajan from his mounted guard, the *equites singulares Augusti*, via manipulation of the horses' poses [fig. 33].[124] Trajan's horse lifts only one hoof in a pose matching the Campidoglio Marcus Aurelius, but the horses of his guards all rear with two hoofs in the air. The sculptor thus constructs the different identities and meaning through unification of the riders' portraits, the horses' formats, action, and location rather than focusing only on body positions.

A pertinent detail couched in the commentary of the biographer Suetonius represents how an emperor may interpret one of these cavalrymen's tombstones depicting a rider and horse.[125] Nero, after receiving constant criticism for his lyre playing, flees from Rome, and on his journey,

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[121] For an overview of the characteristics of tombstones, often belonging to members of the different *ala*, see A. S. Anderson, *Roman Military Tombstones*, (Bucks, UK: Shire Publications, 1984).
[122] The pose of Domitian's Misenum statue, however, may reflect specific associations with cavalrymen in addition to evoking Alexander's Granicus monument type.
[123] Images of the rider and horse on tombstones is often cited as representative of the Thracian hero or rider deity, but the soldiers employing this iconography are not always of Thracian origins. It is important to note Rome's debt to Thracian horsemen and horses, since Thrace is a significant supplier of cavalry.
[124] Scenes 89 and 90; see C. Cichorius, *Die Reliefs der Traianssäule. Zweiter Tafelband: "Die Reliefs des Zweiten Dakischen Krieges", Tafeln 58-113*, (Berlin: Verlag von Georg Reimer, 1900).
[125] The biographical story is admittedly ancient hearsay and suffers from the known senatorial bias Suetonius expresses against unpopular emperors such as Nero. The story, nevertheless, proffers some valuable insight into how equestrian monuments were perceived.

sees an equestrian monument with a Roman rider overthrowing a Gallic opponent. Understanding this monument as an omen, Nero is emboldened and then lifts his hands to the sky in praise:

> "But, perturbed by some messages pressing on others, he returned to Rome; (he was) only barely on his journey and restored to his senses when he noticed a small omen, on a monument was carved a Gallic soldier being dragged by the hair by a Roman cavalryman, at the very sight he leaped with joy and praised the sky."[126]

The type of equestrian monument Nero sees is unspecified. A funerary relief from the stela of a cavalryman with a rearing horse trampling an enemy is most probable given their frequent placement along provincial roads where Nero is described in the text.[127] Suetonius does not explain Nero's reaction in detail, and he calls the omen *frivolo*, indicating a relatively small-scale monument. This description, nonetheless, sheds light on one ancient viewer response to the rearing equestrian image as a sign of Roman power seated in the cavalry and contemporary with Flavian Dynasty.[128]

Another strategic element inherent to all equestrian forms is the representation of motion meant to imitate the actions of horses and particularly the specific handling of horses in public performances. This attention to movement expresses the utility of horses in travel, battle, public ceremony, and triumphal processions. For example, the reverse of Nero's *decursio sestertius* type from Lugdunum discussed above evidently represents the *decursio equitum* [fig. 14]. Formal visual parallels between Domitian's type III equestrian image and depictions of the *decursio* exercise may also be found on the relief adorning two sides of the base of the Column of Antoninus Pius, most notably in the top left horseman carrying a *vexillum*. Yet, the funereal

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[126] Suet. *Nero*. 41.2.

[127] Suetonius also details the extent to which Domitian addressed the military for fear of revolution, most notably under Lucius Antonius. The emperor constantly dispensed military pay raises, likely to maintain support of soldiers and the cavalry. This connection between practice and images is more apparent with Trajan and later emperors.

[128] The interpretation of this image by Nero does not necessitate imperial power. This is a significant issue in that such images may serve as a public motivator uniting soldiers, generals, and the emperor through images of victory. The enemy represented by the monument need not be specific in order for these images to be more broadly symbolic, for Nero associates the Gaul with his critics in Rome. Suetonius's own familiarity with and interpretation of this type of monument must also be considered since the author does not state his source for Nero's provincial itinerary.

context is quite different from any equestrian representation of Domitian [fig. 34].[129] These two examples, nonetheless, feature poses shared with Domitian's type III equestrian coins that are otherwise not clearly explained except by action, likely from a public ceremony. On the reverses of coins depicting Domitian's successors, formats similar to types III and VI begin appearing more frequently, but these images are identified in the legend or exergue as either the *profectio*, *expeditio*, *reditus*, or *adventus*, all military ceremonies of the emperor illustrated by equestrian images.[130]

Visual parallels alone do not explain the significance of Domitian being connected with military service, other than for the promotion of *virtus*. Cicero, praising the Galatian King Deiotarus, provides a significant link between the appearance of mounted rulers with the impression of great control and a high level of training as warriors. Of Deiotarus Cicero says:

> "those endeavors in which he had steeped himself from an early age, not dancing but to be good in arms and to use his horse best, yet those all had failed him now in his old age. Thus we used to wonder when many men had lifted him on his horse, how an old man could stay on it: in fact, this youth who was my soldier in Cilicia and was a comrade in Greece, how he used to ride in that my army with his own choice group of cavalry! What leaps he used to take! How he used to show his skill! What a parade he made! How his zeal and enthusiasm for the success of that cause would not yield to anyone!"[131]

While this passage does not speak explicitly to visual attributes of equestrian sculptures, its relevance lies in Pliny's mention of Simon, the first writer on equitation.[132] Pliny documents an equestrian statue dedicated to Simon because the statue type retains its base meaning, rooted in the act of skilled horseback riding and its connections with the Roman cavalry, rather than only being an honorific statue form. The precise movement of horses in equitation showcases the

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[129] Rome, Musei Vaticani, Cortile delle Corazze. H. 2.48m. For a full discussion of the *decursio* scene on the column and in Roman art more broadly, see L. Vogel, *The Column of Antoninus Pius*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 56-81.

[130] Scholars typically connect the trampling enemy type for these succeeding emperors with triumph or the commemoration of victory. The text in the exergue, however, often identifies service as a *pontifex maximus*. Klose (2015), rightly I think, draws attention to the problems of methodology in analyzing images of emperors on horseback. Although various coin reverses share the forms of horse and rider, the text varies drastically and must not be considered solely reliable for identifying the images.

[131] Cic. *Deiot.* 28.

[132] Plin. *HN* 34.19.76.

control, precision, and strength required by the successful rider and soldier.[133] When the emperor rides horseback in public, the ride thus becomes a parade of power and skill. The display of specific gestures is crucial. Seneca the Elder privileges the gesture of the raised open hand as a sign of god-like beneficence: "does not he stay quite close to those who conduct themselves by the nature of the gods, and who is beneficent, lavish, and powerful for the better?"[134] The display of clemency in a military representation is equally critical, for Seneca describes clemency as the guarantor of state safety and what differentiates emperors from tyrants.[135] Cicero and Seneca both also refer to the longstanding tradition of cavalry training and the social cues all leaders were expected to follow when riding on horseback. Equestrian statues capture this display of power in action, including details such as gestures, in order to achieve full symbolic potential which is further emphasized by their highly visible placement in key locations.

From this examination of the historical application of equestrian motifs, it is clear that the naturalism employed for equestrian statues is meant to capture a wide range of both equine and human motions. These actions carved into stone or cast in bronze convey particular social functions and status.[136] Roman emperors, and particularly Domitian, carefully reused these older equestrian formats in their numismatic equestrian images. After situating equestrian images in their socio-historical contexts, one may better understand the use of this motif by the Flavian emperors. The various historical forms of equestrian images pair identity formation via a rider's portrait with action crystallized in the horse's pose, but equestrian statues anchor the rider in specific locations which add greater contextualized meaning, whether commemorating the individual for a beneficent gift to the city or as triumphant from war. Representations of emperors serving Rome on horseback embody leadership, military victory, imperial power and its restraint

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[133] This level of skill was praised highly in the Republic, which the Flavians invoke through their use of public art.
[134] Sen. *De Clem.* 1.19.9.
[135] Sen. *De Clem.* 1.11.4-1.12.3
[136] See R. Brilliant, *Gesture and Rank in Roman Art: The Use of Gestures to Denote Status in Roman Sculpture and Coinage*, (New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1963).

with clemency, and ceremonial action in a single format. Re-examining the ways in which Statius presents Domitian's equestrian statue in the Forum Romanum confirms that the statue subsumes these earlier equestrian formats.

Statius on Equestrian Images

Statius provides vivid formal descriptions of the *Equus Domitiani* situated among relevant buildings and various surrounding equestrian images. Statius first identifies the statue by three technical terms focused on construction and materiality of the statue: first as the *moles* ("mass, large structure, monument") superimposed by the colossal emperor; second, as *opus* ("work"), the product of loud physical labor in the Forum; third, as *effigies* ("effigy, portrait image"), establishing its imitative, artistic nature.[137] *Moles*, *opus*, and *effigies* are also the three terms Vergil applies to the Trojan horse in the *Aeneid*, setting up a relationship to earlier mytho-historical equestrian statue formats well known to different audiences.[138] That Pallas's hands may be the source of Domitian's statue reinforces both a military connection and divine authority.[139] By employing both *moles* and *colosso*, Statius directly compares and contrasts Domitian's statue to the colossal statue that represented Nero/Sol until the face was reworked by circa 75 CE.[140] Both Pliny the Elder and Martial, authors contemporary with Statius, allude to the colossal statue of Nero as *moles*.[141]

Addressing Domitian next as Germanicus, the title he assumes after campaigning against the Chattians and Dacians, is appropriate for the supposed date of the poem, but the title also

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[137] Stat. *Silv*. 1.1.1; 1.1.3; 1.1.4. "*Moles*," "*opus*," and "*effigies*," *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, combined edition, ed. P. G. W. Glare, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).
[138] Verg. *Aen*. 2.150 (*molem*), 2.184 (*effigiem*), 2.185 (*molem*), 2.235 (*operi*).
[139] This allusion to Minerva is also related to the goddess as Domitian's public patron deity.
[140] Plin. *HN* 34.41-42. Also see E. Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation*, 66-67, particularly notes 170 and 171 for greater bibliography on Nero's colossal statue. Statius also alludes to the colossal statues of Zeus and Herakles at Tarentum, both works by Lysippus, who has already been noted as the sculptor of the Granicus equestrian statue of Alexander/Caesar. See Plin. *HN* 34.40.
[141] Mart. 1.70.5-9 describes the colossal statue of Nero near the end of his first book of *Epigrams* in which he begins to describe an ascent to the Domus Flavia on the Palatine past where the colossus was located. By the time Martial writes, however, the colossus is presumed to have already been transformed into Sol/Helios. For greater discussion of the parallels, see Geyssen, 25-27. Statius also describes Domitian's portrait looking up at new construction on the Palatine following fire, signaling this area as a significant topographical point of reference in the poem.

speaks to Domitian's attempts at bolstering his military image.[142] Following in the footsteps of Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, Domitian adopts the name to advertise his alleged military success in Germany, but also likely to allude to the military prowess of the original Germanicus of the Julio-Claudian family.[143] Statius further adds military character to the statue by describing the delight of seeing Domitian as the "gentle rider … [and his] face mixed with signs of war and governing peace."[144] This description may also indicate an ambiguous public perception of Domitian's attempts to cultivate an image of somewhat antithetical notions of peace and war.[145]

"The base (also "seat, location, setting") is equal to the work," Statius says next.[146] The base and location of the statue deserve equal attention, but only after Statius describes in detail Domitian in the guise of a general. Statius signals the colossal size of the base on which the statue stands, described as exhausting the ground. This juxtaposition underscores, even elides military characterization with the role of location in honoring Domitian. Statius next includes a series of topographical allusions evoking important political moments from Roman history, but particularly equestrian imagery. These topographical allusions, located around the Forum, highlight the equestrian statue of Domitian and how it functions in its environment because Statius bases each allusion on comparable, yet distinct forms of equestrian and equine images.

The Senate and People dedicated Domitian's statue in order to honor the emperor presumably as celebration of his alleged success over the Rhine, whose anthropomorphic form lay below the horse's hoof.[147] From this line, scholars generally deduce that the type VI coin reverse represents a statue because underneath the front hoof of the horse may be a head. One of the rhetorical questions opening the poem suggests that Domitian's horse looked the way the

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[142] Stat. *Silv.* 1.1.5.
[143] This title becomes more frequent in appearance for Domitian's coin legends.
[144] *Silv.* 1.1.15-16.
[145] These two elements seem to adhere to a broader Flavian visual program; see M. Vasta, "Flavian Visual Propaganda," *Constructing the Past*, 8.1 (2007), 107-138. http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/constructing/vol8/iss1/10.
[146] Stat. *Silv.* 1.1.22: *par operi sedes.*
[147] Stat. *Silv*. 1.1.50-51. The statue is later called *munere*, a gift or tribute (1.1.99-100).

Dacians saw him in the highlands.[148] The line is ambiguous about the pose, but Domitian clearly rides in military guise.

The poetics of *Silvae* 1.1 also emphasize the different ambiguous registers of meaning associated with each equestrian image and its context in relation to topographical location.[149] Each allusion is meant both to praise Domitian and to conjure up contemporary social issues and/or important historical occasions, a notion that Martha Malamud finds to be true elsewhere in the works of Statius.[150] Statius describes monuments framing the background or sidelines of the Forum and addresses the significance of location as context for Domitian's statue. For example, allusions to the Temples of Concord and of Divus Vespasian and the Basilica Aemilia, literal architectural frames for the Forum Romanum in Flavian Rome, draw on notions of past greatness and Domitian's own abilities as emperor.[151] Statius sometimes skips over larger, more important monuments (e.g., the *Curia*, *rostra*, *tabularium*, and the Temple of Saturn) in the vicinity. This conspicuous omission of important places should encourage the attentive audience to examine the text more closely, particularly with the Curia. The deliberate omission of monuments unrelated to equine and equestrian imagery, nonetheless, emphasizes the equestrian statue. I here only discuss in depth three allusions in the poem relating explicitly to equestrian imagery.

The Lacus Curtius, immediate neighbor to Domitian's statue, becomes a hallowed spot in the Forum Romanum early in Roman history.[152] Livy recounts the story of Marcus Curtius, a Roman *equester* who rides his horse into a chasm of the earth to save the city.[153] Statius describes the Lacus Curtius as the immediate neighbor to the *Equus Domitiani*.[154] More relevant for Statius, however, is a marble copy of a circa second century BCE Republican bronze relief plaque,

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[148] Stat. *Silv*. 1.1.6-7.
[149] See J. C. Houseman, "Excavating *Silvae* 1.1 of Statius," (master's thesis, University of Florida, 2014).
[150] See M. A. Malamud, "Happy Birthday, Dead Lucan: (P)raising the Dead in *Silvae* 2.7," *Ramus 24*:1 (1995): 169-198.
[151] See the appendix for the text of the poem with commentary on the allusions.
[152] Stat. *Silv*. 1.1.66-67. Richardson, "Lacus Curtius," 1992; "Lacus Curtius," *LTUR*, vol. 3, 166-167.
[153] Liv. 7.6.
[154] For fuller discussion on the poetic role of Curtius in *Silv.* 1.1, see K. Coleman, "Mythological Figures as Spokespersons in Statius' *Silvae*," F. de Angelis and S. Muth (eds.), *Im Spiegel des Mythos, Bilderwelt und Lebenswelt*, (Wiesbaden: L. Reichert, 1999), 67–80.

discovered in 1553 and depicting an equestrian youth fully clad in military attire [fig. 35].[155] Through his use of Curtius and allusion to the *lacus*, Statius either highlights the *virtus* of the heroic rider and Domitian or sets Domitian's vanity in contrast to Curtius's heroic military sacrifice as a member of the equestrian class.[156] By examining the commemorative equestrian plaque relief, we gain some insight into details of Domitian's equestrian coins. The rippled sculpting of the rider's cloak and the horse's tail represent and emphasize forward motion as Curtius and the horse dive into the *lacus*. Similar details appear in Domitian's coins, most notably in type III although other types exhibit some attention to motion. From these examples, emphasis on action in both text and image is clearly important for Domitian's representations.

Statius also alludes to the Temple of Castor and Pollux solely by formal visual cues, referring to horse imagery associated with the twins.[157] Castor's horse Cyllarus rather than Castor himself is singled out as the beholder of Domitian's statue in the poem. The Dioscuri often are associated with their horses both on coins and in sculpture, but they also were patrons of the *equites*.[158] This allusion is significant for interpreting Domitian's equestrian representations in the archaeological record because the poetic description matches the earliest surviving coin type representing the emperor on horseback. In this same section of the poem Statius also alludes to Arion, the swiftest and most faithful military horse in Latin literature, reiterating a military presentation. Arion is known also as the most faithful military horse because he never would

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[155]Rome, Campidoglio Tabularium, inv. 1020814; Musei Capitolini, Palazzo dei Conservatori, Braccio Nuovo, inv. 826; F. Coarelli, *Rome and Environs: An Archaeological Guide*, trans. by J. J. Clauss, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 69-71.

[156] Statius may be accessing the significance of public water fixtures as political sources of legitimacy for rulers and other elite patrons, which is likely closely linked with the honor of equestrian statues placed on top of aqueducts. See E. G. Lytle, "Water, Aemulatio, and Legitimization: Republican and Augustan Fountains in the City of Rome" (PhD diss., Emory University, 2015), 12-56. Sulla, who also was represented in the Forum Romanum by an equestrian statue, was identified in antiquity as the patron for the second phase of the Lacus Curtius.

[157] Stat. *Silv.* 1.1.53-54.

[158] It is also important to recall Cicero's note (*Phil.* 6.13) of a longstanding Republican practice of equestrian dedications at this temple.

dismount his rider Adrastus.[159] The allusion is subtle, but it speaks to the issue of reusing equestrian statues for new portraits.

Finally, the Temple of Venus Genetrix holds a special place in Imperial Roman public memory.[160] The temple originally was intended for Venus Victrix, but Julius Caesar's involvement in the Battle of Pharsalus resulted in minor changes. Caesar instead dedicated the temple to Venus Genetrix, drawing attention to the Julian family's lineage through Aeneas and eschewing military imagery after civil war. Statius likely alludes to the designation of this temple as a visual marker of Caesar's and later emperors' divine origins.[161] As discussed earlier, Caesar is thought to have placed his own equestrian statue in the temple's courtyard. Rather than commissioning a new statue, Statius suggests that Caesar expropriated the pre-existing statue of Alexander the Great created by Lysippus to commemorate the Battle of Granicus. Through this action, he visually demonstrates power through sculpture and reinforces divine lineage through proximity to Venus. By alluding to this statue, Statius underscores the very mutability of equestrian sculpture. It is tempting to consider whether or not Domitian reused the Lysippan Alexander/Caesar equestrian statue. Statius, however, claims that the older statue is quite different, standing away from the Forum Romanum.[162] This allusion remains key for understanding the politicized role that location plays with equestrian statues.

Use of equestrian images for Domitian, then, acquires (or at least urges the perception of) military honor and power in order to maintain stability and protection by the emperor's mounted guard in Rome and abroad. Statius's diction is more telling: *imitatus habitus animosque equestris*,

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[159] For further discussion of Arion in *Silvae* 1.1 and the *Thebaid*, see C. E. Newlands, "Straight from the Horse's Mouth: Arion in *Silvae* 1.1," *Museion* 11 (2011), 341-360. This notion of the faithful horse associated with powerful leaders was applied also to Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar before Statius says the same of Domitian's horse.
[160] Stat. *Silv*. 1.1.84-85.
[161] It is not coincidental that Domitian rebuilds this temple after a fire because it reinforces notions of peace achieved through war, divine lineage, military honor, and public awareness of spoliation. Statius, and presumably other Romans, were aware of Caesar's alleged recycling of Alexander's equestrian statue.
[162] Stat. *Silv*. 1.1.84-90.

"having imitated the dress and courage of an equestrian (horse, rider, or statue)."[163] What Statius means specifically by *equestris*, whether suggesting a member of the equestrian class, a cavalryman, or a statue, is unclear. Imitating a statue makes no sense, and so the text leaves readers presuming the two former options. Statius also includes *habitus animosque*, signaling that Domitian himself is dressed in the garb of a cavalryman and that his countenance seems courageous. From this description we may presume that Domitian does not wear a toga or the same tunic of Marcus Aurelius but more likely a cuirass with *pteruges* as shown in the Alexander statuette from Naples or the Misenum Domitian/Nerva bronze statue. The act of imitation therefore is critical for understanding Domitian's equestrian images because Statius highlights various ways in which Domitian's equestrian statue in the Forum Romanum, if not also numismatic representations, imitates pre-existing equine or equestrian forms.[164]

The connections between Domitian's equestrian representations and the cavalry are more than visual similarities seen in equestrian tombstones, such as that of Tiberius Claudius Maximus, and more than superficial imitation. Parallels appear also in social and political overlaps frequently noted by Statius in the *Silvae*. For example, *Silvae* 4.1 documents *turmae*, squadrons of about thirty horsemen each, rejoicing among the attendees of Domitian's banquet.[165] Suetonius also notes how Domitian made more public offices available to both freedmen and the *equites.*[166] Brian Jones points to Domitian's increasing involvement with the equestrian class and his significant transformation of the processes by which *equites* climbed the social latter into the Senate.[167] The equestrian class thereafter becomes increasingly powerful, overlapping in military and social issues.[168]

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[163] Stat. *Silv.* 1.1.46.
[164] Suet. *Dom*. 19.1 describes Domitian as rarely riding a horse on the battlefield, suggesting that his equestrian portrayal is likely symbolic rather than realistic.
[165] See, for example, Stat. *Silv.* 4.1.25.
[166] Suet. *Dom*. 7.2.
[167] B. Jones, *Domitian and the Senatorial Order: A Prosopographical Study of Domitian's Relationship with the Senate, A.D. 81-96. (Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society)*, (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1979). For the importance of the involvement of senators versus equestrians in

Statius and Suetonius corroborate that Domitian more than any emperor before him consistently courted and employed members of the equestrian class in public and private events with the privileges of Senators.[169] Michael Speidel even posits that Domitian founded his own group of the *equites singulares Augusti*, originally chosen from provincial *alae* but now serving as imperial guards for the first time.[170] Statius seems to have been keenly aware of Domitian's attention to the *equites* in going so far as to address the statue as *imitatus equestris*. Because the *Equus Domitiani* stood in the Forum Romanum primarily among older Republican and Augustan commemorative monuments, such as the Basilica Aemilia and Basilica Julia but particularly close to the still active Curia with Senators who increasingly came from equestrian backgrounds under Domitian, the statue should be understood as speaking to older equestrian forms but also to its contemporary contexts and audiences. The strongest topographical connections that Statius addresses are the Temple of Castor and Pollux, which consistently served as a beacon for the *equites* and their equestrian statue dedications, and the Lacus Curtius relief plaque depicting the courage (*animos*) of a young knight (*equestris*) dressed in traditional equestrian garb (*habitus*) with the military cloak (*chlamys*). Domitian's own equestrian images expropriate the formats of what is essentially the logo for the equestrian class throughout the first century. For this reason, Domitian's equestrian formats should also be considered as having a particular visual and political resonance with cavalrymen.

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command of troops, see J. B. Campbell, *The Emperor and the Roman Army: 31 BC – AD 235*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 317-362.

[168] R. P. Saller, "Promotion and Patronage in Equestrian Careers," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 70 (1980) 44-63. See also U. Morelli, *Domiziano: Fine di una dinastia*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014). Morelli alludes to the rising power of the equestrian class, despite their inability to seize *imperium*, and provincial governors with support of the mounted imperial guard who could usurp the throne (e.g. Trajan). Under Trajan, the equestrian class gains even greater privileges and the mounted imperial guard grows significantly larger. See Bennett, *Trajan: Optimus Princeps*, 106-119. For discussion of the military decorations Domitian awarded equestrians, see V. A. Maxfield, *The Military Decorations of the Roman Army*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 162-167.

[169] Suet. *Dom*. 2.2: Domitian also actively pursued military action with auxiliaries, who formed the bulk of Rome's cavalry, in order to help the Parthian king Vologaesus and other eastern kings.

[170] Speidel, *Riding for Caesar*, 31-37.

Conclusions

Domitian's equestrian images in both coins and sculpture do not serve only as honorific dedications, nor do they reflect influence solely from Greek and Macedonian representations of Alexander and the conscientious spoliation of previous rulers' portraits. Upon being categorized by format and date and then compared to historical applications of similar equestrian forms, the six types of Domitian's equestrian images are better understood as serving different purposes throughout his career. These different formats used for representing the emperor possess distinct meanings rooted in historical precedents. This application of different equestrian formats is best understood as first as helping to establish the Flavian Dynasty following 69 CE and then to legitimize Domitian's leadership. After one reexamines Domitian's equestrian representations through the lens of *Silvae* 1.1, however, the social contexts in which the statue(s) and numismatic images function become clearer. Statius addresses formal similarities between other equestrian representations around the Forum Romanum so as to highlight different registers of meaning embedded in each comparison. Just as the equestrian statue is a mutable object rather than only an honorific dedication, so other equestrian images in Flavian Rome should be seen as polyvalent tools with meaningful variations rather than only as standardized triumphal symbols. These equestrian images concurrently imitate formats that had long been emblematic of Roman cavalrymen and laborious skill training in horsemanship.

Appendix I

Latin and English translations of Statius, *Silvae* 1.1; text adapted from E. Courtney, 1990.

quae superimposito **moles** geminata **colosso**
stat Latium **complexa forum**? caelone peractum
fluxit **opus**? Siculis an conformata caminis
effigies lassum Steropen Brontemque reliquit?
an te Palladiae talem, **Germanice**, nobis
effecere manus, **qualem modo frena tenentem**
Rhenus et attoniti vidit domus ardua Daci?
nunc age fama prior notum per saecula nomen
Dardanii miretur equi cui vertice sacro
Dindymon et caesis decrevit frondibus **Ide**:
hunc neque discissis cepissent Pergama muris,
nec grege permixto pueri innuptaeque puellae
ipse nec Aeneas nec magnus duceret Hector.
adde quod ille nocens saevosque amplexus Achivos,
hunc mitis commendat eques: iuvat ora tueri
mixta notis belli placidamque gerentia pacem.
nec veris maiora putes: par forma decorque,
par honor. exhaustis Martem non altius armis
Bistonius portat **sonipes** magnoque superbit
pondere, nec tardo raptus prope flumina cursu
fumat et ingenti propellit Strymona flatu.
par operi sedes. hinc obvia limina pandit
qui fessus bellis adsertae munere prolis
primus iter nostris ostendit in aethera divis;
discit et e vultu quantum tu mitior armis,
qui nec in externos facilis saevire furores
das Cattis Dacisque fidem: te signa ferente
et minor in leges iret gener et Cato castris.
at laterum passus hinc **Iulia** **tecta** tuentur,
illinc belligeri sublimis **regia** **Pauli**,
terga **pater** blandoque videt **Concordia** vultu.
ipse autem puro celsum caput aere saeptus
templa superfulges et prospectare videris,
an **nova** contemptis surgant **Palatia** flammis
pulchrius, an tacita vigilet face Troicus ignis
atque exploratas iam laudet Vesta ministras.
dextra vetat pugnas, **laevam** Tritonia virgo
non gravat et sectae praetendit colla Medusae.
ceu stimulis **accendit** **equum**, nec dulcior usquam
lecta deae sedes, nec si, pater, ipse teneres.
pectora, quae mundi valeant evolvere curas
et quis se **totis** **Temese** **dedit** **hausta** **metallis**.
it tergo demissa **chlamys**, latus **ense** quieto
securum, magnus quanto mucrone minatur
noctibus hibernis et sidera terret Orion.

moles…forum: *moles* and *colosso* set up the statues of horse and rider as both colossal in size overlooking the Forum Romanum

opus: the entire equestrian statue (and base)

effigies: the rider, Domitian's full-bodied portrait

Germanice: vocative address to Domitian, using the title Germanicus

qualem…Daci: A reference to Domitian on the battlefield in Dacia.

Ide: legendary home of Cybele/Magna Mater with sacred pine wood; allusion focuses on materiality of the wooden Trojan horse

Bistonius…sonipes: *Bistonius* refers to Thracian horsemen, and *sonipes* addresses the clacking noise of the horse's hooves

par operi sedes: the base is as equally colossal as the statue.

primus iter nostris ostendit in aethera divis: possibly the Temple of Divus Julius Caesar

Iulia tecta: the Basilica Iulia

regia Pauli: the Basilica Aemilia

pater…Concordia: the Temple of Concord

nova…Palatia: Domitian's reconstruction on the Palatine Hill following a fire.

dextra…laevam: Statius addresses the role of each hand. The raised right hand, typical of equestrian statue iconography, "prohibits fighting," and the left goads the horse with reins rather than holding a statue of Tritonia or the head of Medusa, as might be expected of other colossal statues of figures such as Jupiter or Minerva.

accendit equum: inciting the horse to charge

totis…metallis: Domitian's statue seems to have had a large metal cuirass, cast from metal mined in Temese

chlamys…ense: The *chlamys* is a short Greek military cloak. Paired with the *chlamys* is the *ensis*, a sword

at **sonipes habitus animosque imitatus equestris**
acrius attollit vultus cursumque minatur;
cui rigidis stant colla iubis vivusque per armos
impetus, et tantis calcaribus ilia late
suffectura patent. vacuae pro cespite terrae
aerea captivi crinem tegit **ungula Rheni**.
hunc et Adrasteus visum extimuisset Arion,
et pavet aspiciens Ledaeus ab aede propinqua
Cyllarus: hic domini numquam mutabit habenas
perpetuus frenis atque uni serviet astro.
vix sola sufficient insessaque pondere toto
subter **anhelat** humus, nec ferro aut aere: laborant
sub genio, teneat quamvis aeterna crepido,
quae superingesti portaret culmina montis
caeliferique attrite genu durasset Atlantis.
nec longae traxere morae. iuvat ipsa labores
forma dei praesens, operique intenta iuventus
miratur plus posse manus. strepit ardua pulsu
machina; continuus septem per culmina ventis
it fragor et magnae figit vaga murmura Romae.
ipse loci custos, cuius sacrata vorago
famosique lacus nomen memorabile servant,
innumeros aeris sonitus et verbere crudo
ut sensit mugire forum, movet horrida sancto
ora situ meritaque caput venerabile quercu.
ac primum ingentes habitus lucemque coruscam
expavit maioris equi terque ardua mersit
colla lacu trepidans, laetus mox praeside viso:
'salvae, magnorum proles genitorque deorum,
auditum longe numen mihi. nunc mea felix,
nunc veneranda palus, cum te prope nosse tuumque
immortale iubar vicina sede tueri
concessum. semel auctor ego inventorque salutis
Romuleae: tu bella Iovis, tu proelia Rhenis,
tu civile nefas, tu tardum in foedera montem
longe Martem domas. quod sit e nostra tulissent
saecula, temptasses me non audente profundo
ire lacu, set Roma tuas tenuisset habenas."
Cedat **equus Latiae** qui contra **templa Diones**
Caesarei stat sede **fori** quem traderis ausus
Pellaeo, **Lysippe**, **duci**; mox Caesaris ora
mirata cervice tulit: vix lumine fesso
explores quam longus in hunc despectus ab illo.
quis rudis usque adeo qui non, ut viderit ambos,
tantum dicat equos quantum distare regentes?
non hoc imbriferas hiemes opus aut Iovis ignem
tergeminum, Aeolii non agmina carceris horret
annorumve moras: stabit, dum terra polusque,
dum Romana dies. hoc et sub nocte silent,
cum superis terrena placent, tua turba relicto
labetur caelo miscebitque oscula iuxta.

imitatus…equestris: the statue imitates the appearance/garb and courage of a cavalryman. The use of *animos-* may refer to the pose of the horse as rearing or charging.

aerea…Rheni: the bronze hoof of the horse is described as stepping on the hair of the captive Rhine. This allusion suggests that a sculpted head personifying the Rhine was placed underneath. The same practice is described for the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius.

anhelat: this verb describes the ground as breathing out like a volcano, for which the verbs is more typically used by other authors.

equus…fori: the horse of Alexander/Caesar yields before the Temple of Venus Genetrix (Latiae Diones)
Pellaeo…duci: Alexander the Great
natus…soror: deceased family members: infant son, Titus, Vespasian, and Domitia; perhaps alluding to the Templum Gentis Flaviae
Apelleae…cerae: paintings by Apelles, particularly multiple portraits of Philip and Alexander, all consecrated for display in the Forum Romanum by Augustus. The heads of Alexander were later replaced by Claudius, echoing the "decapitation" of Alexander's Lysippan equestrian statue. Other relevant paintings include Clitus on horseback, Castor and Pollux, the Macedonian King Archelaus on horseback, and the winning horse painting from a contest judged by horses
Atticus…senior: Phidias
Tarans: an ambiguous topographical allusion.
1) *Taras*/*Tarentum*, a city founded by Spartans, along the Via Appia in Apulia; housed colossal bronze statues of Zeus and a seated Herakles later taken to Rome by Fabius Maximus, the same man whose equestrian statue Plutarch places on the Capitoline
2) Also a religious precinct by the same name in the Campus Martius, north of the equestrian training grounds

ibit in amplexus **natus fraterque paterque**
et soror: una locum cervix dabit omnibus astris.
utere perpetuum populi magnique senatus
munere. **Apelleae** cuperent te scribere **cerae**,
optassetque novo simile te ponere **templo**
Atticus Elei senior Iovis, et tua mitis
ora **Tarans**, tua sidereas imitantia flammas
lumina contempto mallet **Rhodos** aspera **Phoebo**.
certus ames terras et quae tibi templa dicamus.
ipse colas; nec te caeli iuvet aula, tuosque
laetus huic dono videas dare tura nepotes.

What mass, doubled by the colossus imposed above,
stands having embraced the Latian forum? Did the work
flow down from the sky completed? Or did the effigy,
fashioned by Sicilian furnaces, leave the exhausted
Steropes and Brontes? Or did the hands of Pallas sculpt you
for us, Germanicus, in such a way as the Rhine saw you holding
the reins and the steep home of the astonished Dacian?
Come on, let earlier fame known throughout the ages
wonder at the renown of the Dardanian horse, for
which Dindymon gave judgment with his sacred head
and Ida with shorn leaves. Pergamon with its torn walls
would not have seized this (horse), neither with the mingled
flock of boys and unwed girls, nor Aeneas himself, nor
Hector would have commanded it! Add on the fact that it
was harmful and enclosed the savage Achaeans, the horseman
commends this. He rejoices to look on the face mixed with signs
of war and bearing gentle peace. Nor should you think greater
of the true one: it is equal in appearance and glory, equal in honor.
The Bistonian steed carries Mars no more highly
with worn out limbs and takes pride in its great weight; nor taken
by its swift course does it blow near the river
and urge the Strymon on with its great breathing.
Its setting is equal to the work. Facing here, he opens the threshold
by the gift of his adopted son, he who is tired from war, who first
shows our deities the way into the heavens;
and he learns from your face how much gentler you are in arms,
you who, not easy to enrage in foreign fights, put faith in
the Chatti and Dacians. With you bearing the standard, both the
younger son-in-law and Cato would go to Caesar. But the steps
of your flanks look up at the Julian roofs, there by the lofty Basilica
of belligerent Paullus. Concord looks on with an agreeable face;
your father looks on the back. Your head itself surrounded by pure air
shines high over the temples, and you seem to be looking out for
whether the new Palatine arises more beautiful from the despised flames,
or whether the Trojan fire watches by its silent torch, and already Vesta
praises her investigated attendants. Your right hand prohibits fighting;
the Tritonian maiden does not weigh down your left, even holding forth
the head of Medusa beheaded: it incites the horse as if by goads.
There was never a sweeter seat for the goddess unless you yourself

held her, Father. And your chest! which is able to solve the world's problems,
to which Temese, exhausted of all her metals, gave over herself.
A cloak goes hung down your back, your side secured with a resting
sword, as great as the one with which Orion threatens in winter nights
and frightens the stars. But the steed, having imitated the appearance
and courage of an equestrian, fiercely raises its face and threatens
its course, for which the mane-hair stands rigid on its neck. Life and
ardor through its quarters, and its flanks lie spread out about to meet
the needs of spurs so great: in place of a clump of empty ground it
touches with its bronze hoof the head of the captive Rhine.
Both Arion (horse of Adrastus) would have feared this (horse)
and looking on from the nearby temple, Cyllarus, horse of Leda's son
Castor, grows afraid. This horse will never leave the reins of its master
Constantly being in its bridle, and it will serve for one star!
The foundations are scarcely sufficient, set down by such weight:
which would carry the peaks of a heaped up mountain
and would have endured to be strained by the knee of sky-bearing Atlas.
No long delays dragged on. The present beauty itself of the god
helps the labors, and the youth intent on the work are amazed
that the hands can do more. A steep scaffold rattles with the striking.
The noise goes continuous through the seven peaks of Mars and
overpowers the unsettled murmurs of great Rome. The guardian
of the area himself, whose name the sacred chasm and famous lake
preserve as memorable, as he senses the countless sounds even with
the bloody beating and that the forum bellows, he moves his
shaggy face in the sacred lake, and his head with the honorable oak
deserved. But at first he feared the immense form and gleaming
light of a greater horse. Hesitating three times he submerged
his high neck in the lake, soon happy because of the sight before him:
"Greetings offspring and creator of great gods; I heard of your
divinity from afar! Now my pool is propitious. Now it must be
honored since it has been granted that I know you and that I guard you.
Once I was the author and founder of Romulus' prosperity:
You win the wars of Jove; you win the battles of the Rhine.
You overcome the unspeakable civic issues, and in long war
you subdue the slow-climbed mountain into treaties.
Had our times not borne you, you would have tried to go
in the deep lake when I wouldn'3t dare, but Rome
would have held back your reins."
The horse, which stands opposite the Latin Dione's temple,
at the seat of Caesar's Forum, should yield, the horse which you,
Lysippus, dared to hand down to the Pellaean general,
the horse which soon wondered at the face of Caesar
on its neck. Scarcely should you seek out in faint light
how far down it looked on this man from that point.
Who is so crude that, when he has seen both,
will not say that the rulers are as different as the horses?
This work does not fear rainy storms or the triple fire of Jove,
nor the troops of Aeolus' prison, nor the delays of years. It will
stand, as long as there is the earth and sky, as long as there are
Roman days. Even here under the silent night, when earthlings

please the gods above, your crowd will fall from the departed
sky and will exchange kisses closely. Your son, brother, father,
and sister will go into your hugs. One neck will give a place
for all the stars. Constantly enjoy the gift of the people and
the great Senate. The waxes of Apelles would wish to paint you.
The elder Athenian would have wished to put you similar
in a new temple of Elean Jove; even gentle Tarentum
would prefer your face. Rhodes would prefer your stern eyes,
imitating starry flames, to a scorned Phoebus.
Determined, you should love the lands, and you yourself
should inhabit the temples which we call yours. The halls of
heaven should not delight you, happy you should see that
your grandsons offer incense to this gift.

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