

1. Reading Civil War in Frontinus' *Strategemata*: A case-study for Flavian Literary Studies

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To avoid having to touch upon the detestable memory of the civil wars (*ac ne... ad civilium bellorum detestandam memoriam progredi cogar*) by looking at too many home-grown examples of this sort, I will confine myself to just two Roman examples which reflect well on some very illustrious families without evoking public sorrow (*ita nullum publicum maerorum continent*)... (Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta memorabilia* 3.3.2)¹

Part way through his collection of *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, Valerius Maximus famously stops short, just as his section on *patientia* ('endurance') is getting going. Most sections of the text boast a healthy number of Roman *exempla*, followed by a smaller number of foreign tales. This section tells just two Roman stories (compared with seven foreign ones) before Valerius decides that enough is enough: additional Roman *exempla* on this topic might test the *patientia* of author and reader, because they would lead to detestable recollections of Rome's civil wars. As Valerius presents it here, civil war is both a distinctively Roman problem and a taboo subject, although one never far away from the Roman consciousness: a festering historical wound, not to be casually uncovered in the quest for exemplary anecdotes.²

Frontinus' *Strategemata* takes a different approach. This collection of specifically military *exempla* is first and foremost a didactic handbook, part of a well-established military writing tradition; but it draws also on historiography and the *exempla* tradition, and on Valerius' text in particular. Indeed, it is in some senses an enormous expansion of just one section of

¹ All translations in this chapter are my own. I am grateful to Lauren Ginsberg and Darcy Krasne not only for including me in their stimulating Celtic Classics Panel in 2014 but also for their feedback and patience during the drafting of this chapter. My thinking on civil war in the Flavian era has been greatly enhanced by the conversations I continue to enjoy with Emma Buckley and Tommaso Spinelli on this and many related topics.

² On this passage and Valerius' distaste for the civil wars throughout the work, see Gowing 2005, 55-6 and 2010, who notes (250-1) that amongst other Tiberian authors 'the civil wars were a very, very hot topic', but also points to the example of Crematius Cordus (*Tac. Ann.* 4.34-5) whose story 'is important evidence for the anxiety the memory of the civil wars could produce'. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 41 (and Osgood 2006: 1 on this passage), where Suetonius tells us that Claudius omitted everything after Caesar's assassination in a history he wrote, on the overbearing advice of his mother and grandmother, picking up his narrative again with the 'civil peace' that followed those years of conflict because writing frankly and honestly about the civil wars was impossible.

Memorable Deeds and Sayings (7.4, dedicated to *strategemata* – ‘stratagems’), and some conspicuous echoes of Valerius’ opening preface in the introduction to Frontinus’ first book positively invite comparison.³ Frontinus was writing a couple of generations later, when a recent bout of civil wars – the factional fighting that caused so much upheaval at Rome and abroad in 68–70 – arguably made civil strife an even more sensitive topic than it was for Valerius and his contemporaries, well into Domitian’s reign.⁴ Rather than recoil from it, however, Frontinus regularly transports his readers to episodes from different civil wars, and clusters of civil war *exempla* even dominate some sections of his treatise. Josephus (in his *Jewish War*) and Tacitus (in his *Histories*) both confront readers with the details/horrors of near-contemporary campaigns.⁵ In contrast, Frontinus generally steers clear of recent events – perhaps an overlap of sorts with Valerius Maximus after all.⁶ However, in a way that might be comparable with the interest shown by Statius, Valerius Flaccus, Silius Italicus and other contemporaries in *past* episodes of internal sedition and civil strife, Frontinus returns repeatedly to the conflicts that accompanied the collapse of the Republic and the rise to power of a series of increasingly autocratic individuals; precisely the conflicts from which Valerius averts his/our eyes.

This chapter considers how we might read Frontinus’ treatment of civil strife both within the *Strategemata* as a whole and in relation to the text’s wider Flavian context. How eye-catching – or inconspicuous – are the civil war anecdotes that Frontinus incorporates into his

³ On these parallels, and the competitive edge to Frontinus’ engagement with Valerius, see esp. Gallia 2012, 192.

⁴ As Tuck 2016, 112 notes, while Vespasian and Titus’ success in the Jewish-Roman war enabled them to divert some attention from their role in the civil war of 68-9, Domitian could not exploit it in the same way, having taken no part in it: ‘One way in which Domitian created continuity with Vespasian and Titus was by emphasising his role during the civil war, in which he had figured more directly.’ Domitian may himself have written an epic on civil war (Hardie 2003, 140). Woolf 1993 brings out particularly clearly the fragile veneer of Vespasian’s emphasis on foreign campaigning, and the inevitable evocation of civil – not just foreign – war in the Flavian *pax Romana*. But see below for further reflection on the possible fading of anxiety (if not of memory) under Domitian, and Ginsburg 2017, 190-3 for a nuanced account of the evolution of responses to civil war in the aftermath of 68-9.

⁵ See Ash 2010, however, on Tacitus’ parallel interest in Republican civil wars as a kind of route map to the civil wars of his own generation (and beyond).

⁶ Like Valerius, Frontinus includes very few *exempla* from the Imperial period (Turner 2007, 431-2; Gallia 2012, 203-4; Malloch 2015).

collection? Do particular narrative threads build up between them, or is the civil nature of their conflicts submerged by other themes and agenda? Does the *Strategemata* reflect or engage with specifically contemporary concerns about civil strife? Was it even influenced by – might it perhaps have influenced – contemporary literary treatments of this topic? How much is this a text about war generally (or generals generally), a universalising survey of timelessly successful stratagems that transcends specific temporal and cultural co-ordinates; and how much is it a distinctively Flavian meditation on war and generalship – *imperator*-ship, even? Indeed, how might a reading which foregrounds the *Strategemata*'s treatment of civil war – and discusses its possible Flavian dimensions – not just depend upon but contribute to the study of its Flavian context, both literary and historical?

Beyond those questions lie some deeper ones, about the methodological and interpretative trends that currently dominate Flavian literary studies. The last couple of decades have produced a profusion of highly contextualised and interconnected readings of various Flavian texts. A welcome turnaround after years of neglect, this intense focus on the surviving literary corpus and its very 'Flavian-ness' often entails a degree of circularity, as such an approach does in literary studies of many other periods too: literary leitmotifs that appear to dominate the works of both Statius and Valerius Flaccus (for instance) get adduced to testify to apparently defining features of the wider context against which those (now quintessentially) Flavian texts are then read. This circularity is not just inevitable, it is also productive – up to a point. The advantages of highly contextualised readings vastly outweigh the disadvantages. However, it can sometimes take on a self-fulfilling momentum, whereby what we piece together of 'the Flavian context' can grow legs and run away with us, obscuring details and difference in individual texts and skewing our picture of whole bodies of literature and whole periods.

My own reading of Frontinus' *Strategemata* will frequently gravitate towards some of the contextual super-themes that have come to dominate Flavian literary studies;⁷ but it will also make a point of stepping back from them to consider other possibilities, as a way of reflecting on the pitfalls and challenges inherent in relating the content of a 'Flavian' text to its Flavian context. A central aim of the chapter is to put the *Strategemata* firmly on the Flavian map, to integrate this overlooked treatise into Flavian literary studies. Its late inclusion in these studies makes it a good case study for thinking afresh about a recurring 'Flavian' theme (civil war) and for scrutinising our interpretative habits when it comes to reading the 'Flavian-ness' of that theme and the texts that discuss it. In bringing Frontinus' treatise into dialogue with the other material examined in this volume I thus hope to address an issue that is central to all of our discussions.

'Civil war': a theme or a construct?

A word on 'civil war' itself, before we delve into the details of the *Strategemata*. We often talk and write sweepingly of civil war, as if it is a stable and easily definable concept. Our ancient sources – and many modern studies – indicate the opposite. The historian Appian (for instance) might argue for a clear-cut caesura in 88 BC when Sulla marched on Rome and when decades of infighting (*stasis*) finally broke out into 'proper' civil war (*polemos*);⁸ modern historians might introduce studies of civil war with a working (and inevitably subjective) definition of what they are prepared to include in that category;⁹ but the variation between approaches and ideas, ancient

⁷ Bernstein 2016 offers a handy overview.

⁸ App. *BC* 1.7.58, on which see Osgood 2006, 5; Price 2015; Börm 2016, 19. Cf., e.g., Cicero, *De Rep.* 1.31 and Tac. *Hist.* 2.38 for different takes on when/how factional in-fighting evolved into civil war.

⁹ E.g. Flower 2010 (following Appian); Börm 2016; also Lange 2016, 20-7, who offers a useful outline of different perspectives and whose volume as a whole nicely illustrates the blurred edges around definitions of civil war. See also the opening chapters of Armitage 2017.

and modern, reveals a spectrum, not a binary, between civil war and other kinds of conflict (as other chapters in this volume discuss). It was in Augustus' interests, of course, both to demarcate civil war as trauma in the past (e.g. *Res Gestae* 34.1) and to blur distinctions between the civil and non-civil aspects of the conflicts that brought him to power; but it was not only his influence that caused near-contemporary authors to hesitate over the definition, and to explore and exploit the slippage between the two. In different ways, Cicero, Sallust, Caesar, Livy and Virgil all reveal ongoing ambiguity about what counts as (and how readers might be expected to respond to) 'civil' war.¹⁰ In our period, Josephus' *Jewish War* foregrounded internal sedition (Roman and Jewish) as a recurring theme,¹¹ and also fudged distinctions between civil and foreign conflicts.¹² Shortly afterwards, Tacitus famously characterised the Flavian era as one that saw *trina bella civilia, plura externa ac plerumque permixta* ('three civil wars, more foreign ones, and several that were hybrid versions of the two', *Hist.* 1.2).¹³ 'Civil war' was an imprecise and maleable concept, perhaps the more so after the events of 68-9 than earlier in the Principate.

In their introduction to *Citizens of Discord*, B.W. Breed, C. Damon and A. Rossi write that 'The burden of civil war on Roman minds would be hard to overestimate. Civil wars, more than other wars, sear themselves into the memory of societies that suffer them.'¹⁴ While I agree that 'civil war' was a recurring topos and as such (as they rightly suggest) an ever-present 'intertext' against which other events might always be read, it does not necessarily follow that it evoked the same levels of emotion all the time. Lucan is perhaps more responsible than any other Imperial author for the fetishisation of civil strife as a distinctive and horrifying trauma, an

¹⁰ On the slippage between civil and foreign war in Caesar's *Bellum Civile* for example, see Batstone/Damon 2006, 117; on the intertwined nature of civil and non-civil war in Virgil, see (amongst many others) Quint 2010.

¹¹ Mason 2009, 326-30; also Mason's chapter in this volume.

¹² On this, see e.g. Edmondson 2005, 8, and (for a different take) Mason 2005b. On the slippage between *bellum iustum* and *bellum civile* (and optimism/pessimism about the Flavian dynasty and its rise to power) in Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*, see Buckley 2010.

¹³ On Tacitus' blurring of boundaries in the *Histories*, see esp. O'Gorman 1995.

¹⁴ Breed *et al.* 2010, 4.

extension of but also apart from and much worse than other kinds of war.¹⁵ Lucan influenced the Flavian epicists in all sorts of ways;¹⁶ but it is my hypothesis in what follows that he may have influenced us scholars even more on this particular issue. Building on Alain Gowing's arguments about gaps in treatment and the gradual forgetting or exhaustion of civil war as a topic of interest from Tiberius to Lucan,¹⁷ I explore the possibility that civil war was not only a more ambiguous phenomenon but also a less conspicuous and troubling part of cultural discourse in the later Flavian period than many modern studies recognise, and I argue (as some evidence for that) that Frontinus' *Strategemata* reveals an ambivalent rather than super-anxious attitude to it.

In fact, Frontinus' treatise blurs the boundaries between civil and non civil conflict in ways that might get readers asking (not for the first time, but perhaps with growing uncertainty) 'What IS civil war?', as well as 'How much do we Romans really need to worry about it?'. A quick read-through of the text will reveal that Frontinus uses the phrase *bellum civile* in just a smattering of anecdotes (1.3.2, 1.5.9, 1.10.4, 2.1.11, 2.5.40, 3.14.1, 4.2.1, 4.5.2), almost exclusively in connection with the fighting between Caesar and Pompey.¹⁸ One might conclude that this conflict figures as THE Civil War in his book – the archetype, or perhaps the only conflict that truly deserves such a name.¹⁹ For the speed-reader, in other words, civil war might

¹⁵ For a particularly penetrating analysis, see Henderson 1987, recapitulated in 1998, 168-70.

¹⁶ On this, see esp. Stover 2012, 3 and Ginsburg 2017, 193, with further references *ibid.* n. 65. See also O'Gorman 1995 for Lucan's possible influence on Tacitus' *Historiae*. It could be argued that Lucan and Tacitus between them not only bookend but distort our readings of the Flavian texts they sandwich, with their memorably pessimistic characterisations of different bouts of civil strife.

¹⁷ See esp. Gowing 2010, 257 on the urge to remember civil war sometimes colliding with the urge to forget. While noting the 'cultural imperative' to write about civil war as a way of working through 'national traumas', he underlines the lack of writing on civil war from Tiberius to Nero (when it was reignited as a literary topic by Lucan), pointing out that the subject of civil war may at times become exhausted, as well as being potentially dangerous or 'simply unpleasant' to dredge up.

¹⁸ There are just a couple of exceptions: at 4.2.1, where the *exemplum* refers to the civil war that followed Caesar's assassination; and at 1.10.4, which is hard to date (Laederich 1999 *ad loc.*) but may relate to events around or just after the Battle of Actium.

¹⁹ When he opens some of his anecdotes with the phrase *Caesar bello civile...*, Frontinus is not referring to Caesar's commentaries on the civil war, of course, but to Caesar's activities during this conflict; but see below, n. 43, where I note a couple of *exempla* that directly evoke Caesar's text. As I explain the next section, reading the *Strategemata* is

appear to be packaged neatly, discretely, as a relatively isolated phenomenon. As we will see, however, these episodes are surrounded by a huge variety of other *exempla* from a bewildering range of foreign, civil and less-easy-to-define conflicts. Accounts of foreign campaigns, internal sedition, revolts amongst allies and strife between Roman leaders sit alongside each other and invite comparison. Frontinus offers little commentary of his own, and his civil war anecdotes do not prompt us to particular outrage or horror by evoking topoi such as the *furor* or ‘madness’ of civil strife.²⁰ That said, the text as a whole (as I have argued in König 2017) foregrounds above all the chaos and unpredictability of war, a supertheme that often dominates narratives of civil strife, and it sets the military capability of powerful individuals (far more than nations) in direct competition with each other.²¹ The reader might read the *Strategemata* in more than one way, in other words, and what emerges depends very much on our viewpoint. Frontinus puts hundreds of different narratives into dialogue with each other and leaves readers to make what they will of the connections and interplay that build up between them.²² That makes it an excellent laboratory for exploring the interpretative role that we play in constructing (or deconstructing) ‘civil war’ as a (particularly Flavian?) theme.

Frontinus’ *Strategemata*

an inevitably intertextual experience, so readers might well think of Caesar’s *Civil Wars* as well as Caesar’s civil war when Frontinus uses such phrasing. We might even reflect on the role that writing (Caesar’s and others’) played in crystalising his conflict with Pompey as *the* defining civil war.

²⁰ On these topoi among others, see e.g., Breed *et al.* 2010, 4-5; also Tac. *Hist.* 2.38 for a near-contemporary collection (*deum ira, rabies, scelus*); O’Gorman 1995 on the language of civil war in Lucan and Tacitus; and Federica Bessone’s chapter in this volume on the emergence of a civil war ‘koine’.

²¹ As Börm 2016, 20 notes, ‘the issue underlying all Roman civil wars from the time of Augustus at the latest was, ultimately, to procure or preserve monarchy.’ While Frontinus’ *exempla* take us to many different Roman and non-Roman contexts, where confrontations between individual commanders are clearly part of much greater clashes between whole nations, there is no getting away from the emphasis the text places on the agency and power of individual *imperatores*, which might prompt reflection on the rise and fall of *Imperatores* as I discuss further below.

²² I draw here on research I am conducting jointly with Nicolas Wiater on interplay between battle narratives in antiquity: <https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/visualising-war/>.

It is still often the case that when people talk of ‘Flavian literature’, they mean ‘Flavian epic’.

That said, literary studies of the period are increasingly inclusive, welcoming not just Martial but also outliers like Quintilian and Josephus, alongside Pliny the Elder and – at a push – Tacitus and Suetonius (whose inclusion somewhat distorts the ‘Flavian’ lens, of course). And yet Frontinus, an enormously prominent statesman and the author of two if not three Flavian-era texts, continues to languish in the footnotes of most Flavian studies – and sometimes not even there.²³

The latest major overview of Flavian Rome is a case in point: Frédéric Hurlet’s survey of Flavian ‘sources’ towards the start of the 2016 Wiley-Blackwell *Companion to the Flavian Age of Imperial Rome* does not even consider Frontinus as an author ‘worthy of passing mention’ (how it describes Quintilian), and Frontinus barely gets a look-in anywhere else in that volume – or, indeed, in Boyle and Dominik’s monumental *Flavian Rome*, let alone in more specialist readings of Flavian literature.²⁴ There are obvious – if unsound – reasons why his texts have not been much read alongside other Flavian works. His Flavian-era treatises do not flag their ‘Flavian-ness’ particularly conspicuously. Frontinus does not foreground the emperor’s centrality to his text with an opening invocation/dedication, for instance, unlike, e.g., Valerius Flaccus’ *Argonautica* (1.7–21) or Statius’ *Thebaid* (1.16–33). More generally, compare the *Strategemata*’s few passing mentions of Flavian-period exploits with the more sustained

²³ On Frontinus’ career, see Eck 1982, 47–52; Rodgers 2004, 1–5. Tac. *Ag.* 17.2 comments on his ‘great’ achievements as governor of Britain under Vespasian; Aelianus Tacticus attests to his military and literary reputation (*Tact.* pr. 3); cf. also Pliny, *Ep.* 5.1, where the Flavian Frontinus is described as one of the most highly regarded men of his day. In addition to the *Strategemata*, Frontinus wrote an earlier ‘Science of Warfare’, a treatise on land surveying, and (under Nerva and Trajan) an account of Rome’s aqueduct network. It is difficult to date his land surveying treatise in particular, but this and his military works are most likely of Flavian date, with the *Strategemata* at least being clearly Domitianic.

²⁴ See also Frontinus’ omission from Edmondson’s survey of the ‘period of great literary creativity under the Flavians’ (2005, 12–13). In Boyle/Dominik 2003, F. features just once in a footnote (43, n. 136) concerning Domitian’s military activities, where the *Strategemata* is not mentioned for its own sake but as evidence of something else; his absence from Evans 2003 seems particularly perverse.

engagement in, say, Statius' *Silvae* and many of Martial's *Epigrams*.²⁵ His works also tend to be pigeon-holed/written off as (merely) 'technical' treatises, not 'proper' literature, hence the lack of engagement with them in discussions of other, more obviously 'literary' or wide-ranging texts. And yet the *Strategemata* is about very much more than successful generalship and military stratagems, and it flags its embeddedness in a range of Greek and Roman literary traditions right from the start.

It markets itself first and foremost as a didactic endeavour: one that distils the hands-on experience of former generals into a handy handbook to which future or aspiring generals might turn in search of inspiration or reassurance about the stratagems they are trying to come up with:

Since I, alone amongst those studying it, have attempted to draw up a science of military matters, and since I seem to have achieved my objective, as far as my efforts could manage, I feel that the project I have begun still requires me to collect together in a serviceable handbook (*expeditis amplectar commentariis*) the clever deeds of generals (*sollertia ducum facta*) which the Greeks have gathered together under the one name 'strategemata'. For in this way, future generals will be surrounded by examples of wisdom and foresight, and through them their own ability to think up and execute similar deeds will be nourished. A further benefit will be that a commander able to compare his stratagem with tried and tested experiments need not worry about the outcome of his own ingenuity.²⁶

Real military engagements are at the heart of the *Strategemata*, then, as both its substance and its ultimate end-goal – at least for readers who were militarily active themselves.²⁷ Frontinus himself had an impressive military career behind him: as well as conquering parts of Wales during his stint as governor of Britain, he was clearly involved in some of Domitian's campaigns in Germany (as e.g. *Strat.* 1.3.10 and 2.11.7 suggest). His strategic experience is perhaps in evidence in the military metaphors he uses to talk about his strategic arrangement of the *exempla* into different books and subsections that correspond to different stages and features of battle – something that enhances the practical feel of the text, for it enables readers (or so Frontinus claims) to consult the work for answers to specific questions:

²⁵ On the *Strategemata*'s limited engagement with its Flavian context, see esp. Turner 2007.

²⁶ On the *Strategemata*'s preface, see Santini 1992; Gallia 2012, 193-4.

²⁷ See below, n. 29, on the wider range of Frontinus' readers.

My effort centres around the challenge of setting out precisely whichever example is required, in any given circumstance, as if in response to questions. For, having surveyed the categories, I have prepared a set of suitable examples as one might prepare a plan of campaign (*praeparavi opportuna exemplorum veluti consilia*).

The list of subheadings which Frontinus includes at the start of each book, outlining the different topics under which different *exempla* have been collected, reinforces this sense that one might dip in and out of the treatise on the hunt for useful know-how.²⁸

What follows in the main body of the text is a roll-call of famous and not-so-famous generals, a vast collection of over 500 examples of successful strategic ploys, almost all of them beginning with the triumphant general's name – in a manner perhaps faintly reminiscent of the *Fasti Triumphales* (the list of Rome's triumphant generals which Augustus had inscribed on marble and set up in the Roman forum).²⁹ Frontinus' emphasis on the commander at the start of each anecdote particularly focuses attention on these figures as *the* agents of success. If we take one lesson away from the *Strategemata*, it is that a commander's quick-wittedness, cunning and decisiveness repeatedly win the day (a point we will return to). Frontinus' formulaic presentation of these hundreds of anecdotes, all stripped down to easily digestible essentials, maintains the impression given in his prefaces that what the text offers us is a series of simple military lessons, all drawn directly from real history. On the surface at least, the *Strategemata* appears to function just as it presents itself, as an instructive conduit between past deeds and present and future action – indeed, between past victors and present/future commanders. Real military events are textualised here, Frontinus suggests, with a view to nourishing future military episodes that may one day be (written down as?) history.

²⁸ Modern readers must not be misled by our familiarity with modern (codex) reference manuals, of course, into thinking that these 'contents pages' functioned quite as ours do; on this point in relation to Pliny's *Natural History*, see Doody 2001, and on a range of Latin 'contents pages' (but not Frontinus') Riggsby 2007.

²⁹ Cf. Gallia's suggestion (2012, 200) that Frontinus' roll-call of famous faces might be compared to the gallery of statues of *summi viri* in the *Forum Augustum*.

But of course the *Strategemata* is not just a catalogue of instructive military deeds for future replication; it is also a miscellany of anecdotes, harvested from the vast swirl of cultural memory and from many different literary works – for the entertainment as well as instruction of a range of readers.³⁰ As Frontinus tells us, he has trawled through the huge body of historiography (not just history) so that we do not have to, transferring all useful nuggets into his own work. In the main body of the text we read about Hannibal, Scipio, Alcibiades, Coriolanus, Spartacus, Xerxes, Pyrrhus and Fabius Maximus (among many others), but along the way we will also recognise the hand of Livy, Nepos, Julius Caesar, Polybius and plenty more such authors (usually with a twist: Frontinus’ excerpting technique is often a distorting one, which extracts, distils and re-spins episodes we are vaguely familiar with from other sources). The stories may be stripped down to their instructive essentials, but they still get the reader recognising and thinking comparatively about other texts. As Rebecca Langlands has emphasised, in relation to Valerius Maximus, *exempla* collections are inherently intertextual.³¹

The preface to Book 1 specifically invites reflection on whole genres and writing traditions, and on the *Strategemata*’s relationship to them. In its opening sentence Frontinus flags his own (potentially innovative) contribution to the field of military writing, and his gloss of *sollertia ducum facta* – as ‘what the Greeks have grouped together under the term *strategemata*’ – arguably draws attention to the Latin take-over of that Greek tradition by sandwiching the Greek contribution with more recent Latin terminology and authorial activity. If more evidence were needed that Frontinus was interested in the evolution of a specifically Latin tradition of

³⁰ On the mixed readership of military handbooks in general (and their parallels with as well as differences from historiography) see Campbell 1987, esp. 27. While some readers may have turned to the *Strategemata* for pragmatic guidance, many would have been reading with more leisurely intellectual agenda.

³¹ My reading of the internal dynamics of Frontinus’ *Strategemata* has much in common with Langlands’ analysis of the didactic dynamics of Valerius and other *exempla* collections, particularly the active role they make readers play in comparing different *exempla* with each other; on this, see esp. Langlands 2008; 2011; and *forthcoming*.

military writing, one might look at the very first *exemplum* of the collection which depicts Cato – exemplary general, but also the man credited with founding the Latin military writing tradition³² – *writing* (*Strat.* 1.1.1). Frontinus also engages competitively with less ‘technical’ literary traditions: the *exempla* tradition (which he claims leaves readers ‘befuddled’ by ‘a great heap of material’), and historiography more generally. Far from being merely a ‘technical’ treatise, Frontinus’ *Strategemata* thus draws on and oscillates between a number of different genres, and clearly anticipates a readership that will do likewise. Understanding this is crucial to understanding the text’s internal dynamics.

As well as engaging with literary issues, the *Strategemata* also prompts reflection on cultural and political topics of immense contemporary interest – from the nature and foundations of Roman *imperium* to models of leadership and Domitian himself (the text is full of *imperatores* who were or wanted to be kings, dictators, even emperors). Frontinus organises his material strictly according to military themes. The chronological or teleological narratives that we are familiar with from other texts are thus broken up as *exempla* from lots of different times and places are brought together in a series of very different configurations, under headings like ‘Finding out the enemies’ plans’, ‘Escaping from difficult places’, and ‘Choosing a time for battle’. As the text jumps backwards and forwards across time and space, a collection of recurring and seemingly universal strategic leitmotifs begins to build up, over and above the specific lessons contained within individual sections: the enduring importance of surprise, the value of discretion, the perennial need for firmness with one’s troops, and so on. Macro battle narratives emerge, in other words, through the collation of lots of micro battle narratives.

However, readers might also recognise some more widely recurring rhetorical or literary (not just militarily instructive) leitmotifs, or recurring *topoi* in ethical and political debate (stories

³² Veg. *Epitome* 2.3.

of self-denial, the role played by chance, the distrust and dissimulation that often characterises powerful leaders, for instance). As Frontinus' *exempla* mount up, in other words, and as the reader notes (or makes) all sorts of connections between them, the patterns and interpretative threads that emerge not only feed off but also point the reader back out to wider discourses beyond the military sphere. The *Strategemata* is a text which offers readers a (potentially bewildering) multitude of answers to a series of simple strategic questions; and its disorientating re-presentation of hundreds of historical anecdotes (out of their historical contexts) entails a lot of proactive reading on the part of the reader, lots of critical comparison and piecing together, which invites reflection on many broader topics and brings the treatise into dialogue with many other texts.³³ Indeed, it demands that we read it more proactively ourselves alongside the whole range of works and discourses with which Frontinus' readership might have been familiar, especially near-contemporary ones, and not simply as an isolated/narrow technical treatise.

It is not just that we *can* read Frontinus' *Strategemata* alongside other Flavian texts, in other words, but that we must, if we are to read it on its own terms. And when we do, its civil war anecdotes not only coalesce into an intriguing narrative strand (perhaps of our own making) but also prompt wider reflection on the treatment of civil strife in contemporary literary culture.

Strat. 1.1: 'On Concealing One's Plans'

The first section of the *Strategemata* (1.1: *De occultandis consiliis*) offers a good flavour of the internal dynamics of the whole work – and a good opportunity for outlining the difficulties of reading its treatment of civil strife.³⁴ Straight after his opening anecdote about Cato the Elder

³³ For a fuller discussion of this, see König 2017.

³⁴ It might be going too far to suggest that 'concealment of plans' becomes a metatextual as well as strategic lesson in the *Strategemata*'s opening section, but Cato's deceptive writing to multiple (but unwitting) audiences in the text's very first anecdote may at least alert readers to the dangers of reading things only at face value and in isolation

(who outwitted a group of enemy commanders by writing letters to them all at once), Frontinus moves us back in time at *Strat.* 1.1.2 to an episode from the start of the fourth century BC, when Himilco (a Carthaginian general) was embarking on an ultimately doomed campaign in Sicily, against Dionysius of Syracuse. There is no Roman in sight here; but Sicily, the site of Rome's first skirmishes with Carthage and the first overseas territory that Rome acquired, might make readers think forward to the Punic Wars and to Rome's eventual victory over other doomed Carthaginian generals – not least after Frontinus' mention of Cato at 1.1.1 (he of *Carthago delenda est* fame³⁵). The third *exemplum* (1.1.3) then transports us to those very wars: specifically, to an episode from the Second Punic War when the Roman commander Gaius Laelius came up with a cunning ruse in Syphax's Carthaginian camp (Syphax, of course, had previously supported the Romans against the Carthaginians, but changed sides shortly before this episode; the deception that Laelius deploys is thus set against a wider backdrop of deception and betrayal, prefiguring the to-and-fro between allies and enemies that recurs throughout the *Strategemata*). On the one hand, we jump backwards and forwards in time and space, to three quite separate conflicts and three distinctive stratagems devised by three unconnected commanders; on the other hand, the juxtaposition of these three *exempla* and the narrative threads that build up between them get us thinking right from the start of the treatise not just about military stratagems but about Roman military history, Roman *imperium* and Rome's rise to power.

Strategemata 1.1.4 then takes us back in time again, to the period when Rome was ruled by (some rather unappealing) kings. That in turn is followed by more time-travel, as we fast-forward once again to three episodes from the late first century BC, concerning Roman

from other narratives and readers.

³⁵ Livy, *AUC* frag. 49; Pliny *NH* 15.20; Plutarch *Life of Cato the Elder* 26-7.

commanders who all conducted successful campaigns abroad (here we see Caesar in Egypt, Ventidius in Parthia, and Pompey being outmanoeuvred in the Third Mithradatic War) but whose campaigns were also mixed up with the civil wars that led eventually to the establishment of the Principate. And then comes Domitian (at *Strat.* 1.1.8), practising concealment en route to Germany (like all the commanders in this section ‘On Concealing One’s Plans’), and acting – Frontinus stresses – for the good of the empire as a whole:

The Emperor Caesar Domitianus Augustus Germanicus, wanting to crush the Germans who had risen up in arms and aware that they would begin the battle better prepared if they had got wind of the arrival of so great a general, used a census of the Gauls as the cover story for his journey; launching an unexpected campaign through this ruse, he crushed the ferocity of these savage tribes and in so doing served the wider interests of the provinces.

Domitian is followed by another Punic War *exemplum* (1.1.9: a Roman commander outwitting Hasdrubal and Hannibal, ‘the shrewdest Carthaginian generals’³⁶); then we look at an encounter between the Athenian Themistocles and his Spartan foes (1.1.10), before ending with three more Romans (1.1.11–13 – if 1.1.11 is not a later interpolation). The penultimate example concerns an episode from the Sertorian War – perhaps more a rebellion than a full-blown civil war (I discuss this further below), but whichever way one looks at it, a conflict that saw Roman statesmen fighting each other. The section ends with another Roman general and statesman from the same era – Marcus Licinius Crassus – one-time ally of both Caesar and Pompey.

The connecting factor uniting all the *exempla* in this section is the strategic lesson that is to be gleaned from them: the value of keeping one’s plans to oneself, with illustrations of the many different military contexts and ways in which that might be effected. As in other sections, the text’s to-and-fro across time and space supports that didactic focus; indeed, in papering over chronological, cultural, social and political differences, it may even keep distracting cultural and political subtexts at bay. We learn (inter alia) that concealment of plans has always been (*is*

³⁶ Cf. Val. Max. 7.4.4 and Livy 27.43-9.

always) useful, in lots of different situations, and that it is not a skill or technique that has been practised by one nation, era or general more than any another. We learn to exchange narrow, particularising perspectives (revolving around, e.g., particular kinds of ‘hero’ or particular historical periods) for the bigger picture: to see Romans and Carthaginians, long-dead kings and more recent *imperatores* in much the same light as each other, on a strategic continuum that largely overrides partisan narratives. Frontinus’ economical and homogenising narrative style contributes to that, affording no room for the contextual specifics or cultural contrasts which Livy and Valerius Maximus (for instance) like to draw to our attention.

Alongside that universalising message, however, we might pick out other currents, some of which at least are hinted at by the text. For instance, Roman *exempla* bookend the section and dominate it numerically: Rome *does* end up taking centre stage, as a long-lived military power whose commanders have been thinking up successful stratagems from the time of Rome’s highly mythicized monarchy to the present day. (And with Cato leading off, as a model of both military action and military writing, we might even be tempted to pull together a subtext about the superiority of Roman military ‘science’, not just practice.) In terms of leadership models, on the other hand, we move from the elder Cato – a figure famous both for great military successes and for his integrity (verging on severity) in private and public life – to the more controversial Crassus, who led Roman forces to one of Rome’s heaviest defeats in the battle of Carrhae and whose accumulation of wealth and political alliances made him an ambiguous political figure in the late Republic. What, if anything, might we make of that textual trajectory, especially if we factor in the little cluster of *exempla* at 1.1.5–7 which revolve around the campaigning that accompanied the dying days of the Republic, followed in 1.1.12 by Metellus Pius fighting Sertorius in Spain (at an earlier date, perhaps even prefiguring those later conflicts)? On his own,

Ventidius could stand as a fine exemplar, a general whose successful Parthian campaigns earned him a triumph no less. With Caesar and Pompey flanking him, however, and indirectly at loggerheads (in Caesar's *exemplum*, he has just finished Pompey's forces off – although Frontinus makes no explicit mention of that), our thoughts might turn to the wider context, and the disturbing messiness of it all, which saw great Roman generals repeatedly embroiled in conflict with each other.³⁷ We do not *have* to read anything significant into this cluster of *exempla*, but if we have been reading (say) Caesar's own account of his activities in Egypt (esp. *BC* 3.107-12), Lucan's *Bellum Civile* or Josephus' *Jewish War* recently, we might make some connections. We might feel reminded right at the start of the *Strategemata* that internal discord/civil war was (is?) as significant a part of Rome's history as foreign (particularly Punic) campaigns, perhaps even that civil strife sometimes masqueraded as or blurred into foreign conflicts, and vice versa (a standout theme at the start of Tacitus' *Histories*, as I noted above, but a phenomenon observable in many other texts). We might also notice the role played by powerful individuals in that (something which Flavian epic clearly thematises, and an issue foregrounded also by Josephus and Tacitus in different ways³⁸). There are no minor figures in Frontinus' opening section: almost all of the commanders were powerful politicians in their own spheres, and several were kings... or (aspiring) *principes*.

This brings us to a perennial problem dogging all Flavian studies: what to do with Domitian, whose inclusion must mean that Frontinus wants us to think about him, and by extension about the Flavian present not just the Republican and pre-Republican past. He keeps excellent strategic company here, and on some level benefits hugely from the comparison.

³⁷ Also in the background to the episode narrated at 1.1.5, of course, is the Egyptian civil war in which Caesar was embroiled; Manolaraki in this volume discusses the ongoing resonances of civil war in Egypt under the Flavians.

³⁸ See esp. Mason 2009 on Josephus' interest in succession as well as monarchy; and Ash 1999 on Tacitus' reflections on leadership models in the *Histories*.

Frontinus rarely makes authorial interventions in the *Strategemata*; his pointed praise of Domitian at 1.1.8 is an exception to his general rule.³⁹ But does this *tantus dux* (a phrase which demands some measuring up against the others in the section) really deserve more admiration than his fellow commanders, either for this stratagem in particular or for his campaigns more generally?⁴⁰ We might read Frontinus' treatment of Domitian as a genuine or at least as a conventional tribute to his emperor; but we might also bear in mind that this is a section which (for all its universalising momentum) prompts reflection on the history of Rome, and on the trajectory of Cato to Crassus, perhaps even the trajectory of Tarquin the Proud to Domitian (for those two exemplars sandwich the cluster of Caesar, Ventidius and Pompey at 1.1.5–7, perhaps suggestively so).

However one reads Frontinus' treatment of Domitian (and we will come back to this question towards the end of my chapter), the *Strategemata*'s opening section as a whole presents us with a series of impressively resourceful generals from all around the Mediterranean world, exemplars who can teach the reader useful and indeed universal strategic lessons. This is how almost every section of the *Strategemata* works, offering a wide range of models which prompt both micro and macro reflections on the conduct of different aspects of battle. There is no getting away from the fact that certain clusters of *exempla* at *Strat.* 1.1.1 foreground particularly powerful individuals, however, whose manoeuvrings ultimately brought war upon Rome itself.

Frontinus' presentation of Caesar in Egypt, Ventidius in Parthia, and Pompey being outwitted by Mithridates may in fact smother the whiff of civil war that these characters carry

³⁹ Turner 2007, 427; Malloch 2015, 90, who discusses Frontinus' other positive mentions of Domitian.

⁴⁰ How does Domitian's stratagem match up, for example, against the momentous events of the following narrative (1.1.9), which Frontinus flags as an almost iconic victory of Roman *consilium* (he had used the verb *consulo* to characterise Domitian's thinking at 1.1.8) over Rome's greatest enemy?

with them, by foregrounding their campaigns on foreign soil.⁴¹ The *Strategemata* may even *neutralise* the trauma of civil war here and elsewhere in the *Strategemata*, by presenting it as something which many great leaders had been intermittently involved with down the ages, and as something not so very different – indeed, strategically indistinguishable – from other kinds of campaign. Frontinus does not make heavy weather of civil conflicts as CIVIL conflicts here, and his readers might conceivably have been reassured to see civil strife contextualised and almost disarmed in this way, made part of a series of *exempla* from which future generals might glean useful military lessons. The text may even reflect a wider recovery from the trauma of civil war that was already underway. Perhaps Frontinus’ inclusive, almost flattening treatment of civil conflict is evidence that the subject was not quite so sensitive as some readings of Statius, Valerius Flaccus and Silius have suggested.⁴²

The text might work in the other direction too, however, by (incautiously? deliberately? even provocatively?) exposing the festering sore that Valerius Maximus suggested should be kept out of sight. Indeed, as well as bringing historical civil conflicts into the frame, Frontinus’ opening section might even faintly evoke the civil-war origins of Domitian’s own dynasty through its juxtaposition of the emperor with that series of *exempla* at 1.1.5–7. That is what a reader familiar with other Flavian texts (and – above all? – with Flavian literary scholarship) might be tempted to suggest, at any rate; interpretation is so often a matter of perspective. But how does the rest of the *Strategemata* pan out? To what extent does civil strife rear its head in the rest of the treatise, and with what effects?

⁴¹ Cf. Gowing 2005, 60-1 on the way in which Valerius Maximus smothers the civil war dimension of Pompey’s activities at 6.2.6, ‘softening some of its potentially risky meanings’. While Frontinus does something similar in many individual *exempla*, the collocation of connected anecdotes might in fact work against that, as I discuss below.

⁴² Cf. Fuecechi’s chapter in this volume on the possibility that some Flavian epic may in fact be part of a recovery or ‘innoculation’ too, ‘metabolizing’ the nightmare of civil war inherited from Lucan.

Isolated Episodes or a Recurring Theme?

The third book of the *Strategemata* contains relatively few examples of civil war stratagems, perhaps unsurprising for a book focused on sieges.⁴³ Book 4 – which has a different feel from the other three books, being structured around ethical concepts (*disciplina*, *continentia*, *iustitia*, and so on) rather than more pragmatic ‘how-to’ topics – contains a similarly small number: five from the conflicts that accompanied Caesar’s rise and fall,⁴⁴ plus an *exemplum* featuring Sertorius’ reflections on how best to vanquish the whole Roman army, bit by bit (4.7.6).⁴⁵ There is also the anecdote at 4.3.14, narrating a Domitianic success during the Batavian revolt, which I discuss in the final section of this chapter. In both of these books, the small smattering of civil war anecdotes blend in *and* stick out a bit from the other anecdotes in their sections. Civil war is not a dominant theme, but it rears its head from time to time, in ways that point (unnervingly perhaps) to continuity with other kinds of conflict. Generals of all types behave in similar ways to each other within each section; indeed, as elsewhere in the treatise, we see Pompey, Caesar and co. applying the same strategic nous in civil and non-civil contexts and being promoted as strategic

⁴³ There are just six *exempla* from civil war conflicts in Book 3: 3.13.7 and 3.13.8 (detailing the ways in which Hirtius and Brutus stayed in touch while Brutus was under siege at Mutina); 3.14.1 (where one of Pompey’s soldiers outwits Caesar’s troops), 3.14.3 (where Hirtius gets supplies of salt past Antony’s blockades at Mutina), 3.14.4 (a follow-on *exemplum* again featuring Hirtius), and 3.17.4 (where Caesar is ambushed by Pompey while trying to besiege some of his troops). In addition, 3.17.8 details an episode involving Pompeius Strabo (father of Pompey the Great) during the Social War.

⁴⁴ 4.2.1, featuring Brutus and Cassius; 4.5.2, where ‘amid the tumult of civil war’ (*in tumultu civilium armorum*) Caesar deals brutally with sedition amongst his troops; and 4.7.32, which shows us the armies of Caesar and Pompey physically fighting each other. In addition, 4.7.14 narrates an episode that readers might recognise from Caesar’s *Bellum Civile* (BC 3.101); and while Frontinus’ ‘Caesar used to say’ (*C. Caesar dicebat...*) at 4.7.1 depicts him speaking rather than writing, perceptive readers might again recognise a nudge to BC 1.72, where Caesar himself expands on the principle of starving the enemy to spare his own troops a fight.

⁴⁵ Frontinus’ phrasing sets Sertorius up in opposition to the whole Roman army from the start, and the climax of the *exemplum* visualises Sertorius tearing it to pieces (*lacerabit et carpet*). This *exemplum* is also narrated at 1.10.1. The penultimate anecdote of Book 4 (4.7.41) takes us back to the Social War. The final *exemplum* (commentators assume) refers to Quintus Caecilius Metellus Macedonius’ activities in Hispania in 143 BC, not a conflict which pitched Romans against Romans; however, Frontinus names its ‘hero’ only as Q. Metellus, and given the volume of *exempla* across the text which touch on Sertorius’ activities in Spain, readers might be forgiven if their thoughts fly also to Metellus Pius’ activities in Spain (which are detailed at 1.1.12, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.3.5 and 2.13.3). The thrust of this final *exemplum* is that generals must always be prepared for the unexpected, a recurring theme of the *Strategemata* which helps to characterise war generally as a chaotic and unpredictable business.

models regardless of the context. These parallels teach useful strategic lessons; but may also lead to some uncomfortable reflections – for example, about how easily strategic skill can be deployed in the wrong directions. In Book 4, which contains a higher proportion of Roman (and indeed Imperial-era) anecdotes than the rest of the treatise, a reader might be reassured to see so few civil war anecdotes; the statistics establish Rome's conflicts with Carthage as the defining feature of her past, with civil conflict only intermittently disruptive. On the other hand, the sudden sight of Sertorius plotting to destroy the whole Roman army or Caesar's troops having to shield their faces from Pompey's swordsmen might remind us, not least through the element of narrative surprise, that Roman military activity (and Rome's leading military commanders) can turn dangerously inwards unexpectedly.

In Books 1 and 2 civil conflict crops up more frequently, albeit (as for Books 3 and 4) rather unevenly: some sub-sections contain no such anecdotes, while others feel more dominated by them. Take *Strat.* 1.5, for instance, where several of the *exempla* on the theme 'Escaping from Difficult Locations' take us to the conflicts between Caesar and Pompey and Sertorius' Spanish campaigns, with one of Sulla's successes in the Social War also thrown in.⁴⁶ Like Sertorius' rebellion, the Social War was not a civil war as such, but a conflict which saw Rome and its Italian allies fighting each other and a prelude to some 'proper' civil war, in which Sulla would play a leading role.⁴⁷ Frontinus' juxtaposition of full-blown civil war with more nebulous types of conflict arguably blurs the boundaries between the two – in ways which might soften the

⁴⁶ *Strat.* 1.5.1, 5, 8, 9, 17; a different kind of internal rebellion crops up at 1.5.20-22 where Spartacus features as the 'hero' of a small cluster of *exempla*. On Spartacus' revolt as indicative of the wider disruption within Italy at the time, see e.g. Steele 2013, 116.

⁴⁷ On the Social War and Sulla's campaigns as watershed events in the history of Roman civil war (arguably, the first 'real' civil wars of the Republic, which triggered everything that followed) see Flower 2010, 78-9 and Lange 2016, 25.

impact/lessen the extraordinariness of particularly iconic civil war episodes, but which might also make civil war feel like a pervasive, even invasive phenomenon.

Consider next *Strat.* 1.7, a short section on ‘How to disguise the absence of things which we lack or to find substitutes for them’. It begins with a renowned Roman commander finding a clever way of getting elephants across a river during the First Punic War, and then offers us a parallel story in which Hannibal came up with a similar ruse during the Second Punic War. (More on that parallelism shortly.) The next *exemplum* also showcases Carthaginian cunning, but these opening anecdotes are followed by a brief reference to Julius’ Caesar’s siege of Marseille (1.7.4), and then an equally fleeting visit to the aftermath of Mutina (that civil war milestone where Octavian emerged as a force to be reckoned with) where we see Mark Antony – in conflict with his own countrymen – deploying similar ingenuity and resourcefulness as the commanders in the preceding and subsequent *exempla*. The brevity of the narratives at 1.7.4 and 5 (in fact also at 1.7.6) is perhaps significant; Frontinus does not dwell on details or context. We turn next to an episode from the Third Servile War, 1.7.6, and have Spartacus held up as an *exemplum* to emulate alongside Alexander the Great, the subject of the next and final *exemplum* – that famous story in which he denied himself a measure of water rather than drink when his men could not.⁴⁸

The whole section at *Strat.* 1.7 thus juxtaposes Roman, Carthaginian and a variety of other commanders, with civil war coming into focus only briefly. Nonetheless, by crossing back and forth between these different kinds of *exempla*, and by drawing attention to their similarities as well as their differences (above all to the similarities in leadership), this section underlines parallels or irons out distinctions between external and internal conflicts, as if they are on a par or part of the same phenomenon; indeed, as if the likes of Spartacus are as admirable or inspiring as the great Alexander himself. Internal strife is (smoothly? almost imperceptibly?) blended with

⁴⁸ Variations of this story are found in Plurarch, *Alex.* 42.4-6; Polyæn. 4.3.25; and Curt. 7.5.9-12.

more conventionally impressive or less controversial campaigning, in a way that perhaps submerges the civil war dimension; but – equally possible – those juxtapositions and parallelisms may also jar with the Roman reader. As I have noted, Frontinus generally refrains from passing judgement on the episodes he narrates, preferring didactic concision over *enargeia*; as a result, each anecdote individually tends to have a detached, unemotional feel. Read in juxtaposition with other contrasting ones, however, they (and the lack of ethical commentary or moral/political/social differentiation) may become more shocking, and may prompt readers to think afresh about the differences between *bella civilia/externa/permixta* (to use Tacitus' categories) and possible leadership models.⁴⁹ Interplay between Frontinus' narratives elicits a different emotional response – or, to put it another way, teaches different lessons – from the individual *exempla* themselves.

Strategemata 1.8 offers further illustration of this. It begins with Coriolanus and his attempts to sow internal discord and 'wear down the unanimity of the Romans' (*consensus Romanorum distringeret* – a rare moment in the treatise where Frontinus' language becomes almost judgemental). It then goes on to juxtapose various Punic *exempla* with *exempla* in which Italian states formed alliances against Rome, or Rome ravaged the land of other Italians, throwing in an episode from Caesar's civil wars along the way (1.8.9). Revolt, deception and shifting loyalties are standout themes in this section, with commanders of all backgrounds deploying similarly cunning ruses against each other. Strategic success passes backwards and forwards between groups and nations, with a particularly vivid demonstration of how rapidly allies might become enemies and how often trust is abused in the run of anecdotes from 1.8.5-

⁴⁹ I am indebted to both Daniel Chiritoiu (Cambridge, 2017) and Matthew Myers (Nottingham, 2018) whose PhD theses which I was privileged to examine have helped advance my own thinking on *enargeia* in military narratives.

9.⁵⁰ There is no moralising commentary: just the same neutral presentation for all *exempla*, which (as at 1.7) are juxtaposed in both flattening and contrasting ways. In anecdote 1.8.2, for instance, Hannibal behaves rather like Coriolanus in 1.8.1, trying to sow division and distrust amongst the Romans. As individuals, Coriolanus and Hannibal are both presented here as potentially inspiring models of a particular kind of strategic leadership. In juxtaposition, the contrasting contexts and the very different impact of their similar ruses (Coriolanus disrupting the harmony of the Roman state; Hannibal failing to undermine the noble reputation of his Roman counterpart) might lead readers to reflect on the differences between types of commander and conflict, and on Rome's patchy record in both regards. Meanwhile, the placement of that Caesarian civil war narrative at 1.8.9, after a series of anecdotes in which the difference between ally and enemy becomes increasingly blurred, might appear to gloss over the 'civil' nature of Caesar's campaign (by presenting it on a continuum with other kinds of conflict) but it might also invite readers to read the preceding anecdotes as all on a spectrum with civil war themselves.

Section 1.9 pursues the theme of desertion and rebellion within the Roman empire by presenting four *exempla* in which generals devised ways of quelling mutinies amongst their own troops. All four *exempla* depict Roman generals having to wage a campaign, almost, against their subordinates (internal sedition thus emerges as a particularly Roman problem). And the final example transports us to the heart of Julius Caesar's camp during the civil war, so that we get a picture of internal sedition within the context of wider internal strife.⁵¹ The following section (*Strat.* 1.10, on 'How to restrain an intemperate demand for battle' – another theme that throws

⁵⁰ Woolf 1993, 189 underlines the topicality of this after 68-9, when inter-city rivalries flared up into armed conflicts 'and provincials allied with barbarians against other provincials'.

⁵¹ Additionally, 1.9.2 and 3 both concern events – and commanders – connected with different civil wars. As Ash 1999 illustrates, relations between commanders and subordinates are a revealing topos in many civil war narratives (Caesar, Appian, Cassius Dio), and one that becomes particularly politicised in Tacitus' *Histories*.

up conflict between generals and their troops) continues in the same vein. 1.10.1, for example, depicts Sertorius dealing with dissent among his own men, who are all too eager to engage in battle against their fellow Romans: more internal tension, within the wider context of inter-Roman antagonism.⁵² In *exemplum* 1.10.4 a foreign general hammers home (to his presumably impatient troops in the first instance, but also to us as readers) the self-defeating impact of ‘the divisions caused by Rome’s civil wars’ (*dissociatum armis civilibus populum Romanum*): he refuses to engage in battle with the Romans for fear of bringing the their warring parties together, and vividly illustrates that principle by setting two dogs on each other before introducing a lone wolf, against whom the dogs unite. (While the wolf represents the Dacian general and his army, at first glance at least, readers conscious of the Romulus and Remus myth might be prompted by it to read Roman in-fighting and self-destruction back in time to the city’s very foundations.)

There are many other kinds of anecdotes around and about the ones I have highlighted here (e.g. Jugurtha in Africa, Agesilaus in Lydia and Thebes); but Frontinus’ occasional clustering of *exempla* that revolve around civil conflict and internal strife suggest that Frontinus himself saw civil war as a significant theme when he was composing the *Strategemata* (one civil war story made him think of another, even as he arranged his material according to stratagem-types). It also intermittently flags that theme for the reader, from the first book onwards, so that it becomes a recurring topic for those who read the treatise all the way through. Readers cherry-picking answers to specific strategic questions might admittedly miss this; but those who scroll from section to section, enjoying the variety, build-up and interaction between different anecdotes, might end up seeing civil war as a prominent, even perennial (Roman) phenomenon,

⁵² As I noted above, this *exemplum* crops up again in Book 4.

and Rome itself as a state bristling with soldiers and generals periodically intent on each other's destruction.

Strategemata 2.5

That is perhaps nowhere more apparent than at *Strategemata* 2.5.31–40. This part of the treatise ('On Ambushes') begins with an anecdote showcasing Romulus (2.5.1): another moment in the text where we recognise that, for all the universalising messages about generalship which the treatise teaches, Rome and Romanness is under the microscope. The bulk of the section narrates anecdotes from lots of different foreign conflicts (Roman and non-Roman), but a sequence of *exempla* towards the end puts the spotlight firmly on internal strife/civil war. (At 2.5.40 Frontinus uses that very phrase – *bello civili* – in case we had not noticed.) This sequence begins with a particularly lengthy account of Sertorius' persistence in ambushing Pompey's troops during the Sertorian War (2.5.31), which climaxes with Pompey suffering a double catastrophe (*duplex damnum*) and having no other option but to stand by and watch as disaster falls upon his men. Sertorius' 'cleverness' is strategically impressive (something we might emulate); but the narrative also becomes uncharacteristically emotive for the *Strategemata*, thanks not least to the unusual level of detail which Frontinus goes into. He then concludes the *exemplum* by reminding us that this was the first of many encounters between Sertorius and Pompey, and by noting that Livy put the death toll on Pompey's side at ten thousand men (plus the whole baggage train): such Roman-on-Roman conflict was costly as well as repetitive.

The next *exemplum* (2.5.32) takes us to the closing stages of the Sertorian conflict, as Pompey outmanoeuvres Perperna (who had just assassinated Sertorius: there are Romans turning on each other in between Frontinus' *exempla*, not just within them). And just as that conflict is

settled (temporarily, at least; Frontinus' narrative comes back to it several more times – at 2.7.5, 2.12.2, 2.13.3 and 4.7.6 – as if it is never quite over), we turn our attention first to an *exemplum* from Pompey's Mithridatic campaigns, before heading back to the year after Pernera's assassination (72 BC) to an episode from the slave rebellion led by Spartacus.⁵³ All the famous civil war faces of the first century BC then turn up (including those we met in the *Strategemata*'s opening section): Ventidius (2.5.36–7), Julius Caesar, Afranius (2.5.38), Mark Antony and Pansa (2.5.39), among others. We move roughly chronologically through their various campaigns, climaxing with the struggles between Pompey's and Caesar's factions into which (among others) King Juba I of Numidia was drawn (2.5.40).⁵⁴ In tracing this temporally short but geographically far-reaching trajectory, the text not only makes civil war the defining feature of that particular era; it also gets us to look at Rome's different civil wars (indeed, at the whole spectrum of 'civil war', from rebellions to outright conflict) from a variety of angles, even to ask 'What counts as 'civil war'?' given its many different faces.

Arguably, the striking concentration of civil war *exempla* at *Strat.* 2.5.31–40, together with Frontinus' emphasis on continuity (perhaps even domino-effect from one conflict to another) and loss of life, foregrounds internal strife not just as a significant theme but as a potentially sensitive subject – the more so, if we read these anecdotes in dialogue with other Latin texts, as Frontinus' references to Livy and allusions to other works (in particular, Caesar's *commentarii* and Valerius Maximus' *exempla* collection) occasionally encourage us to do. When Frontinus notes at 2.5.31 that Livy put the death toll so high, for example, he reminds readers of the existence of other, more detailed accounts, which do not simply flesh out but often

⁵³ At as 2.5.31, Frontinus underlines the (staggering) loss of life, again with reference to Livy: 'Livy recounts that thirty-five thousand soldiers were killed, along with their commanders...'; but Frontinus also identifies Spartacus' troops here as 'barbarians' and Crassus' troops as Romans, reducing the internal-strife dimension of the episode.

⁵⁴ Chronological organisation of *exempla* is not a standard feature of the *Strategemata*; this section therefore stands out in that respect.

complicate or put a different spin on the stories that Frontinus tells so briefly. Rather than (or as well as) saving readers the bother of reading Livy et al. (as Frontinus claims he does in the preface to Book 1), those allusions to other texts invite readers to map what they read in the *Strategemata* against a broader network of narratives, and the resulting intertextuality often activates more emotive topoi and discourses than the *Strategemata* itself goes in for. Intertextual interplay between narratives enriches – and complicates – both the micro and macro stories that Frontinus’ treatise tells.

Carthaginian Conflicts and Civil War at *Strategemata* 2.3

At *Strategemata* 2.3 (to look at one final illustrative section) we might be particularly tempted to read Frontinus’ work in dialogue with epic as well as historiography, and with Flavian as well as pre-Flavian texts. There are some loose parallels, for instance, between Frontinus’ treatise and Silius Italicus’ (possibly later) *Punica*.⁵⁵ Punic *exempla* recur again and again in the *Strategemata*, and Hannibal crops up more often than any other general. Throughout the text, in fact, we see Roman stratagems and triumphs repeatedly followed (indeed, frequently matched) by Carthaginian ones – and vice versa – in a seemingly endless to-and-fro. At *Strat.* 2.3, for example, we begin with a couple of Roman successes at 2.3.1 and 4, involving two different Scipios; but they are swiftly followed by Carthaginian triumphs, not least at Cannae at 2.3.7, and then on different fronts at 2.3.9 and 10 (with 2.3.8 – a Roman success – thrown in between them). In these oscillating *exempla*, Roman and Carthaginian generals behave in similar ways to each other, adopting variations of each others tactics (like the Roman-Carthaginian parallelism at

⁵⁵ Gallia 2012 is currently the only study to offer some sustained comparison of these two texts; other recent readings of the *Punica* (e.g., McGuire 1997, 88-146; Dominik 2003; Marks 2005; Touahri 2009; Tipping 2010, and Stocks 2014) overlook the potentially illuminating overlaps between Silius and Frontinus. Stocks’ chapter in this volume on the politics of (decisive) individualism and brotherhood in the *Punica* points to some obvious opportunities for comparative analysis.

1.7.1–2 and 1.8.1-2, mentioned above). Strategically, there is little to choose between them; sometimes one has the upper hand, sometimes the other. The on-going to-and-fro between these two nations and the commanders who represent them hammers home the repetitive, unpredictable nature of these Punic conflicts, and of military conflict generally. Victories are invariably followed by defeats, and successful strategists are always only one episode away from being outmanoeuvred themselves in turn.⁵⁶ A lesson that perhaps contextualises (normalises – or brings into sharper relief?) the to-and-fro we see between Roman commanders in the civil war context.⁵⁷

Civil war keeps a relatively low profile in *Strat.* 2.3, but episodes from civil conflicts are intermittently juxtaposed with Punic and other *exempla*, as in other sections, as if they are on a continuum with each other. At 2.3.5, for instance, we move straight from an *exemplum* in which Scipio Africanus outwits Hasdrubal to an *exemplum* in which Metellus Pius adopts a similar stratagem (and formation of troops) to defeat a fellow Roman, Hirtuleius, in the Sertorian War. At 2.3.11 we are told that ‘Sertorius employed the same tactics in Spain [as Xanthippus in the first Punic War] in his campaign against Pompey.’ Pompey himself crops up in a non-civil campaign, at 2.3.14; similarly, Sulla, Mark Antony and Caesar also appear – fighting Macedonians, Parthians and Gauls – alongside *exempla* which gesture towards their involvement in episodes of civil strife. Sulla was involved in aspects of the Sertorian conflict, for example, and as we will see, we soon come to an *exemplum* in which Caesar and Pompey confront each other at Pharsalus (2.3.22). The text oscillates between images of Romans fighting foreign forces

⁵⁶ Cf. Lovatt 2016, 370-4 (following Beard 2003 on the double-edged nature of triumph in Josephus) who argues that scenes of triumph in Flavian epic inevitably evoke the potential for future defeat.

⁵⁷ For Sallust, of course, it was Rome’s victory over Carthage that triggered the beginning of her moral and political decline, leading ultimately to the kind of intra-state violence epitomised by Catiline (*BC* 10-13; *BJ* 41); Silius would later suggest something similar (*Pun.* 8.243-57, on which see Dominik 2003, 492 and 10. 657-8, on which see McGuire 1997, 57). This topos is worth bearing in mind given the recurring juxtaposition of Punic and civil war anecdotes across the *Strategemata*.

and images of them fighting each other, in other words, in ways that continue to underline the slippage between the two – and indeed the ways in which foreign and civil wars in Roman history tended to generate each other.

Frontinus also weaves lots of different nations into the picture that builds up of Punic conflicts, as he does in his presentation of civil war *exempla*. At 2.3.1, for instance, the Roman commander (Gnaeus Scipio) is in Spain, contending not only with *Afri* but also *Hispani*. At 2.3.10, the Carthaginian forces are led by a Spartan mercenary (as at 2.2.11); and at 2.3.16, Hannibal masses Italians, Gauls, Ligurians, Balearians, Moors and Macedonians, among his Carthaginian troops, against the Romans.⁵⁸ In view of the fact that in some surrounding *exempla* these different nationalities fight on different fronts against a variety of other enemies,⁵⁹ this mix of nationalities in Punic *exempla* takes on an extra significance (beyond reminding us how many different peoples were sucked into Rome's wars with Carthage – and indeed into Rome's eventual empire): for it exposes the ephemerality of shifting alliances between different peoples across history, a theme that recurs, as I have noted, in *Strat.* 2.5.⁶⁰ In juxtaposing Punic and non-Punic *exempla* in which overlapping sets of peoples, allies and enemies, repeatedly engage with (and betray) each other in different variations, the *Strategemata* presents all history (not just Roman-Carthaginian history, or indeed civil war history) as an endless succession of spats and alliances, conquests and desertions, between a revolving cast of characters, who team up with and confront each other *ad infinitum*. (This is a subtext we saw emerging also from section 1.8.)

Far from helping readers to distinguish between friends and foes, then, or offering us a story of enduring domination or imperial progress (or decline), the *Strategemata* breaks such

⁵⁸ We are told, too, that he cannot rely on all of them equally (he distrusts the Italians' loyalty and indifference, having dragged most of them from Italy against their will).

⁵⁹ E.g., Spartans against Lucanians and Persians at 2.3.12 and 13.

⁶⁰ Cf. Dominik's discussion later in this volume of the breaking of alliances as symptomatic of nascent civil war. As he notes, it is a problem thematised also in Silius' *Punica*.

predictable narratives down and rearranges history into a much more panoramic and disconcerting miscellany of episodes, which en masse emphasise how short-lived victory can be, how unpredictable war is, and how difficult it has always been to know who is on who's side – or who will be in the future (all this, in a treatise that is supposed to offer encouragement, not just instruction, to the generals who read it). In Silius's epic there is an element of conflation between Hannibal and Scipio, between Rome and her nemesis, and indeed between different allies and enemies; but the trajectory of the text shifts the momentum inexorably away from Hannibal and Carthage and towards the Romans in the end (and the success of their empire), via one particularly inspiring (and autocratic) leader, Scipio. That does not happen in the *Strategemata*. There are leaders (even autocrats) a-plenty (remember the text's emphasis on the decisiveness and cunning of individual leaders as the key to success), but no steady build-up to one decisive individual or national triumph. Instead, the different leaders pull the momentum of the many different conflicts in different directions, back and forth, and we watch the repetitive rise and fall of Mediterranean history in the process.

What if anything do we – as readers of Josephus, Statius, Silius and Tacitus (as well as of Livy, Caesar, Valerius Maximus et al.) – do with this? Do we simply read in it some universal lessons about the chaos of war, and the enormous challenges involved in being consistently successful as a general? The importance of quick thinking, and the ability to capitalise on chances when you get them, for example. The text is aimed primarily at contemporary and future generals, after all, by an author who had himself recently campaigned at the outer edges of Rome's empire, in places (the German borders especially) where to and fro between victory and setback were the norm, under Domitian no less than other emperors. Is the treatise as straightforwardly or universally didactic as that? Frontinus has excerpted and organised all of his

material strictly according to military time (battle-order), not according to any teleological chronology, precisely in order to focus on and bring out some timeless strategic lessons. But is that all that readers would have got out of it? Is it all that they would have looked for in it?

Or might they (or we) read some particularly Roman, even particularly Flavian flavours here, as elsewhere? Is my emphasis on chaos and unpredictability, on the continuity of fighting, the sense that there is fighting on all fronts, the blurring of allies and enemies, and the destabilising effects of all of that in fact a *product* of that very temptation, to find contemporary Roman narratives beneath the surface? (And if it is, does that set me apart from Frontinus' original readers – is it primarily those who are caught up in current trends of Flavian scholarship who are likely to make that manoeuvre, or might others including Frontinus' near-contemporaries have been acutely sensitive to these themes too?) If we want, we *can* extrapolate from the immediate Flavian context and from other Flavian-era texts to build up a dossier of both external and internal 'evidence' arguing that the *Strategemata* presents us with images of war and generalship that are *particularly* destabilising in the light of on-going border disputes and rebellions in Frontinus' day – and against the backdrop above all of the Flavians' rise to power and Domitian's increasingly autocratic tendencies. Images that not only reflect contemporary phenomena and concerns but potentially offer some oblique commentary on them, perhaps even challenging the presentation (in other texts, art, official rhetoric and other media) of Vespasian and his sons as deliverers of peace and stability.⁶¹ The roll-call of *imperatores* outwitting each other on seemingly endless repeat might vaguely trouble a readership still 'in recovery' from the civil wars of 68-70, or might (especially if one has been reading Tacitus' *Agricola* lately)

⁶¹ *Fortuna* (for instance) was an imperial virtue found on Domitianic coins as well as the coinage of Vespasian and Titus (Fears 1981, 901), with *Fortuna Redux* particularly suggesting analogies with Augustus and the restoration of peace (Boyle 2003, 7); but (as Osgood 2006, 5 notes) Fortune could also be spun as a more capricious, disruptive force in the context and aftermath of civil war. In that light, Frontinus' emphasis on unpredictability in the *Strategemata* might work against Flavian attempts to appropriate *Fortuna* as a symbol of restored stability.

foreground differences between the relative independence of former generals and those who serve under Imperial (especially late Flavian) regimes. We might even feed some of that back (in a circular way) into the wider study of Flavian war and Flavian war-literature, seeing in Frontinus' *Strategemata* parallels or even prequels to features of (say) Silius', Tacitus' and Josephus' texts. We could plausibly argue that, rather than being retrospectively *over*-interpreted or misread along (e.g.) anachronistically Tacitean lines,⁶² Frontinus' *Strategemata* in fact reflects and articulates a *Zeitgeist* which Tacitus himself goes on to pick up on and discuss far more explicitly, until it becomes a distinctively Tacitean tale.⁶³

We might also be tempered in that endeavour, however, by the recognition that many a military text down the ages has underlined the chaos and unpredictability of war, just as many a history has explored the overlapping nature of allies and enemies, and exemplary and less exemplary models. In the context of Punic and civil war *exempla* in particular, we would also do well to remember that reading parallels (and indeed a pessimistic trajectory) between Carthaginian and later civil conflicts was a habit of late Republican authors long before the likes of Silius and Frontinus put the two in implicit juxtaposition. Frontinus' presentation of both Punic and civil strife might owe more to his familiarity with those earlier writers than it does to any particularly Flavian discourses. Without heavy-handed guidance from the treatise itself (as I have noted, Frontinus' authorial absence is particularly striking in contrast to Valerius Maximus' more interventionist approach), we find ourselves attempting to sift historical, enduring, even timeless *topoi* from context-specific ones and vice versa, universals from Flavian particularities.

⁶² As, e.g., Malloch 2015, 84, n. 37 argues.

⁶³ On this possibility, see Buckley 2018 who (drawing particularly on Joseph 2012) explores the likelihood that the 'Tacitean' feel of Valerius Flaccus *Argonautica* is not simply down to our retrospective reading lenses but 'evidence of much broader, distinctively post-Julio-Claudian and obviously shared cultural discourse' that crossed between the Flavian and post-Flavian eras which Tacitus' writings tried so hard to separate.

Factoring Domitian In

That said, the second half of *Strat.* 2.3 picks up an unusually pro-Roman momentum. While the *Strategemata* generally frustrates attempts to identify subtexts about Roman superiority or imperial destiny, here we get a series of *exempla* in which a foreign stratagem is immediately answered by a successful Roman counter-stratagem, and Frontinus intrudes to offer some rare approbation of Roman commanders. Hannibal's formation of his (very mixed) troops at 2.3.16 is bettered by Scipio's 'shrewd' (*prudens*) organisation of Roman forces, for instance, in what readers will identify as the Battle of Zama, the decisive final victory that brought the 2nd Punic war to an end. Sulla's clever thinking (*ratio*) at 2.3.17 outclasses Archelaus' battle dispositions, and results in a Roman victory over the Macedonian forces. Romans triumph at 2.3.18 and 20; and Roman consuls counter Pyrrhus' battle arrangements *aptissime* ('very judiciously') at 2.3.21 with a different arrangement of their own which – while not resulting in a Roman victory – limited Roman losses, while inflicting far greater losses on the enemy.⁶⁴

At this point, however, as we draw towards the climax of this particular sub-section of the treatise, we are plunged suddenly into one of the most famous civil war battles of all, for 2.3.22 takes us to the decisive encounter between Caesar and Pompey at Pharsalus (which Lucan made a climactic episode in all sorts of ways):

Gnaeus Pompey, facing Caesar at Pharsalus, drew up three lines of battle... To meet this formation, Caesar also arranged his legions in three lines at the front and placed his left wing on the marshes to avoid being surrounded. On the right flank he positioned his cavalry... Finally, he held back six cohorts in reserve... And on the day nothing contributed more to his victory; for when Pompey's cavalry poured forward, these legions routed them with an unexpected sortie and handed them over for slaughter.

Frontinus' account agrees in very basic terms with what Caesar himself tells us about troop dispositions in the *De Bello Civili*,⁶⁵ although it is heavily compressed and simplified. The final

⁶⁴ This is the same Pyrrhus whose writings on generalship/warfare Frontinus cites at 2.6.10. He was an authority of the subject, which makes the Roman (partial) success here perhaps the more impressive.

⁶⁵ Caes. *BC* 3.88–89.

phrase of the *exemplum* feels (dare I say it) more Lucanesque, however. In the other *exempla* of 2.3 we see commanders and armies surrounding each other, routing each other, and only occasionally killing each other.⁶⁶ At the end of 2.3.22, the vocabulary and imagery step up a notch, for the *exemplum* ends both with a Roman victory (which offers a distorted parallel of the Roman victories celebrated at the ends of 2.3.16 and 17) and also with the ambush and slaughter of Roman cavalry units by their countrymen, who are handed over to be killed – *caedendumque tradiderunt* – in a macabre inversion of the celebration at the end of 2.3.21 of relatively light Roman losses (2.3.22 might thus be read as another ‘pyrrhic victory’ of sorts, but for Romans this time).⁶⁷ There is no explicit authorial approbation or condemnation here, but this *exemplum* has a certain shock-factor to it, not least because of the contrast it offers after the unusual build-up we have had of images of Roman superiority/success. For much of *Strat.* 2.3, Roman commanders triumph splendidly over a series of foreign enemies – but as the section comes to a close, they also keep turning on each other in bursts of increasingly brutal self-destruction.

It is mere coincidence that *exemplum* 2.3.22 – in which the man who established Rome’s first imperial dynasty triumphs over a fellow contender towards the end of a long period of chaotic and destructive civil war – is immediately followed by an *exemplum* in which *Imperator Caesar Augustus Germanicus* (i.e. Domitian) pops up (just as the cluster of civil-war-ish *exempla* at 1.1.5, 6 and 7 are followed by Domitian right at the start of the treatise)? It could be. The spread of *exempla* from 2.3.22–24 (the close of the section) takes us from Pharsalus in the 40s BC to the forests of the Chatti in 83AD to the great naval Battle of Mylae during the First Punic War, showcasing the effectiveness of different battle formations in very different contexts across more than three centuries of history. Variety – indeed, contrast – between *exempla* is part

⁶⁶ At 2.3.6, 7 and 14.

⁶⁷ Cf. Caes. *BC* 3.98, on Caesar’s *clementia* towards those who surrendered; also 3.99 on Pompey’s heavy losses compared to Caesar’s lighter ones.

of the point here: the text's pro-Roman momentum (Domitian and Gaius Duellius win further victories for the fatherland in their own *exempla*) is enhanced by the differences as well as the similarities between all these successful Roman stratagems. Domitian's appearance at 2.3.23 thus weaves him into a section which celebrates the diversity of Roman strategic cleverness, of Roman models of *imperatorship* indeed. Nonetheless, he is still positioned alongside two Roman *imperatores* (one of them, a nascent *Imperator*) with Roman blood on their hands. For all that his (rather vague) stratagem against the Chatti differs significantly from Pompey and Caesar's (complex, even textbook) manoeuvrings at Pharsalus, Domitian enters the stage in this section in the wake of civil slaughter.

Domitian's final appearance in the text – at 4.3.14 – also carries with it the faint odour of (more recent) civil war:

Under the auspices of the Emperor Caesar Domitianus Augustus Germanicus, in the war which Julius Civilis had initiated in Gaul, the extremely wealthy city of the Lingones – which had revolted to Civilis, and then begun to fear for its people as Caesar's army advanced – on discovering against expectation that nothing was plundered and no one lost any of his possessions, returned to their former obedience and handed seventy thousand of their soldiers over to me.

As I noted above, Book 4 is a little different from the other three books of the *Strategemata* (so much so that some have suggested it was not authored by Frontinus⁶⁸). In particular, it contains a higher percentage of Roman *exempla* than the rest of the treatise, and a higher number also of Imperial-period *exempla*. Thus, with its sudden turn to ethics, it prompts readers to reflect a little more closely on what it means to be a successful Roman *imperator* NOW, in the Flavian present not just the distant past. This particular *exemplum* is a good example of that, not least because

⁶⁸ The authorship of *Strat. 4* was questioned in the nineteenth century (Wachsmuth 1860; Wölfflin 1875); but Bendz 1938 argued in favour of identifying Frontinus as its author, and has since been followed by the majority of commentators (e.g., Goodyear 1982; Campbell 1987, 15; Wheeler 1988, 20; Campbell/Purcell 1996, 785; Turner 2007, 432; Gallia 2012, 204; Malloch 2015).

Frontinus himself turns up at the end as the real hero of the tale, although initially Domitian gets all the credit.⁶⁹

The episode under discussion took place during the Batavian revolt led by Julius Civilis – a ‘mixed’ conflict if there ever was one, in which former Roman allies rose up against Rome and exploited/involved themselves in the civil strife of AD 69-70 (siding vaguely with Vitellius along the way).⁷⁰ Frontinus’ narrative thus obliquely invokes some of the recurring themes of the text: shifting loyalties, broken alliances, desertion and rebellion, and blurred distinctions between foreign and civil conflict. It also plunges us specifically into the period following Vitellius’ death, before Vespasian had consolidated his claims to power – and so into the closing stages of the civil wars that brought the Flavians to power. (Given that, there is perhaps some irony – not just deferential courtesy – in Frontinus’ anachronistic use of all of Domitian’s imperial titles at the start of the story.) Frontinus’ narration of Domitian’s involvement in this stratagem (which in fact Frontinus himself oversaw, as the final word of the *exemplum* reveals by surprise: the Lingones handed their soldiers over *mihi*, ‘to me’) might be read positively: ‘under Domitian’s auspices’, clemency prevailed, allies were brought back on side, and order was restored. Given what readers know of the wider context, however (and given, perhaps, Tacitus’ later analysis of it: at *Hist.* 4.85–6 he suggests that the Batavian revolt triggered seeds of sedition within the Flavian imperial family and set Domitian on his tyrannical course), this anecdote might set off more negative trains of thought. It is possible, indeed, to read it as something of a climax in a

⁶⁹ On *Strat.* 4.3.14, and what we might read more generally into the smattering (but ongoing paucity) of Imperial-era *exempla* in the *Strategemata* (particularly *exempla* involving generals from outside the Imperial family), see Turner 2007, and Gallia 2012, 204-13, who argues that ‘[t]he *Strategems...* offers very little in the way of tangible proof of the continued vitality of the art of Roman generalship under the emperors.’

⁷⁰ As Joseph 2012, 35 notes, Josephus characterizes the Batavian revolt as a foreign war, a German attack on Rome; Tacitus, by contrast, emphasized its civil aspects (*Hist.* 4–5) and states its ‘mixed’ nature (*Hist.* 4.22.2: *mixta belli civilis externique facie*). O’Gorman 1995, 124-5 notes the narrative to-and-fro/hybridity at this point in Tacitus’ text, when attention shifts from *bellum civile* to *bellum Civilis*: ‘the transition from civil to external conflict, the period of mingling, reaches back into the sphere of civil war as well as forward into “straightforward” war’. On Silius’ treatment of the Batavian revolt, see Tipping 2010, 47–8.

long, slow build-up of autocratic and civil war threads that began in the *Strategemata*'s opening section and takes readers right through the text and up to the present day. That might not be 'right', just as it cannot simply be 'wrong'; rather, it is one of the interpretative options that opens up when we read the *Strategemata* in dialogue with the discourses that emerge from other Flavian-era texts and Flavian scholarship.⁷¹

People have been pulling different stories out of the *Strategemata* for centuries. It enjoyed great popularity in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, when it was incorporated into crusading manuals and many different works of political philosophy.⁷² In 1417 one Jean Gerson, tutor to the then Dauphin of France, listed the *Strategemata* alongside the Bible, other Christian texts, and works by Aristotle, Sallust, Livy, Valerius Maximus, Seneca, Vegetius and Augustine (inter alia), as a kind of literary 'Ark of the Covenant' that the young prince should absorb and carry metaphorically about with him 'through the desert of this world'.⁷³ It was translated time and again, sometimes supplemented by appendices of more up-to-date stratagems. In 1539, for instance, an Englishman called Richard Morysine addressed a translation of it to Henry VIII, promising that it would aid that 'moste high, excellent, and myghtye Prynce' by inspiring and instructing his military captains who 'have oft declared that they lytell nede any instructions, any bokes'.⁷⁴ Most recently, a pair of Greek students undergoing compulsory military service in the Greek army managed to persuade their commanding officer that the best use of their time (rather than the normal drills and exercises) was to produce a modern Greek translation of the

⁷¹ This is something that Malloch 2015 underestimates in his refutation of Turner 2007.

⁷² E.g., John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (Keats-Rohan 1993); Marino Sanudo Torsello's *Book of the Secrets of the Faithful of the Cross* (Lock 2011); and Christine de Pizan's *Book of Deeds of Arms and Chivalry* (Willard 1995; Forhan 2002, 150–7; le Saux 2004). Machiavelli, too, clearly drew on it (Wood 1967).

⁷³ Gerson, *Au précepteur du Dauphin, Constance, vers Juin 1417* (Glorieux 1960, 203–15; cf. Thomas 1930, 30–55, who dates the letter rather to 1408–10; also Mazour-Matusevich & Bejczy 2007).

⁷⁴ See also d'Assigny's 1686 translation, to which he appended a further collection of *exempla* from antiquity to his present day, plus a short essay on engines of war.

Strategemata; it was published in 2015.⁷⁵ The *Strategemata* was – is – universalising enough, in other words, to prove ongoingly instructive in many different military and political contexts; it has transcended its immediate Flavian context in many ways, and has been read over and over again (like many other ancient texts) for the lessons it can offer to other times and places.

I have also tried to show what we might learn by reading the *Strategemata* as a Flavian text, however, alongside and in dialogue with other Flavian literature, not least because that exercise in itself can prompt fruitful reflection on the process and challenges of connecting text to context, and vice versa. Indeed, in some ways the *Strategemata* might be thought of as a useful metaphor for that very process: for in the *Strategemata* we have a collection of narratives (extensive, but not comprehensive) which we as readers end up juxtaposing and comparing with each other to make meaning from their interconnections, just as we do with the wider body of texts, artefacts and traces of discourse that survive from the period. As we pick through the *Strategemata* (and that wider body of material), we end up accumulating an increasingly complex array of lessons and narrative threads – and far from getting one clear picture of civil war, or leadership, of military history or the Flavian present, we see how organic and evolving our vision of such things necessarily is, and how torn we and all of those narrative threads are between context-specific and more timeless, boundary-crossing dimensions.

The *Strategemata* reminds us – reassures us, perhaps – that war, civil strife, and autocratic leaders were not just a Flavian phenomenon, but issues of perennial concern and significance the world over, going right back in time. Its blurry, non-committal treatment of civil war might even indicate that this supposedly traumatic phenomenon was not quite the stand-out source of anxiety under Domitian that some studies have suggested (remember the progressive disappearance of civil war as the treatise goes on, and note too that my discussion has inevitably

⁷⁵ Pappas/Theotokis (2015).

foregrounded the *Strategemata*'s civil war *exempla* disproportionately). That said, Frontinus did not write civil war out of his treatise, nor did he write it out of the Flavian present (as Gowing suggests Velleius Paterculus and Valerius Maximus did for their own era, in deference to/praise of the emperor Tiberius⁷⁶). Indeed, Frontinus' frequent returns to the subject and suggestive juxtapositions might have fed off and into other even more sensitized Flavian treatments of the topic. The difficulty we face as readers lies not so much in identifying or constructing (or even in choosing between different) Flavian readings of civil war in the *Strategemata*; it is more in measuring those particularising strands up against the text's more wide-ranging dimensions.

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⁷⁶ Gowing 2010.

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