

Toggle the table of contents

Vespasian

Vespasian (/vɛˈspɛrɜ(i)ən, -ziən/; Latin: *Vespasianus* [vɛspasiˈaːnɔs]; 17 November 9 AD – 23 June 79) was Roman emperor from 69 to 79. The fourth and last emperor who reigned in the Year of the Four Emperors, he founded the Flavian dynasty that ruled the Empire for 27 years. His fiscal reforms and consolidation of the empire generated political stability and a vast Roman building program.

Vespasian was the first emperor from an equestrian family and only rose later in his lifetime into the senatorial rank as the first member of his family to do so. Vespasian's renown came from his military success;^[6] he was legate of Legio II Augusta during the Roman invasion of Britain in 43 and subjugated Judaea during the Jewish rebellion of 66.^[7]

While Vespasian besieged Jerusalem during the Jewish rebellion, emperor Nero committed suicide and plunged Rome into a year of civil war known as the Year of the Four Emperors. After Galba and Otho perished in quick succession, Vitellius became emperor in April 69. The Roman legions of Roman Egypt and Judaea reacted by declaring Vespasian, their commander, the emperor on 1 July 69.^[8]

In his bid for imperial power, Vespasian joined forces with Mucianus, the governor of Syria, and Primus, a general in Pannonia, leaving his son Titus to command the besieging forces at Jerusalem. Primus and Mucianus led the Flavian forces against Vitellius, while Vespasian took control of Egypt. On 20 December 69, Vitellius was defeated, and the following day Vespasian was declared emperor by the Senate.^[9]

Little information survives about the government during Vespasian's ten-year rule. He reformed the financial system of Rome after the campaign against Judaea ended successfully, and initiated several ambitious construction projects, including the building of the Flavian Amphitheatre, better known today as the Roman Colosseum. Through his general Agricola, Vespasian increased imperial expansion in Britain. Vespasian is often credited with restoring political stability to Rome following the chaotic reigns of his predecessors. After he died in 79, he was succeeded by his eldest son Titus, thus becoming the first Roman emperor to be succeeded by his natural son and establishing the Flavian dynasty.

Early life

Vespasian (born Titus Flavius Vespasianus, pronounced [ˈtʰɪtʊs ˈflaːwi vɛspasiˈaːnʊs]; born in a village north-east of Rome called Falacrinae.^[10] His father was undistinguished and lacking in pedigree. Vespasian was the son of a Roman moneylender, debt collector, and tax collector. His mother belonged to the equestrian order in society, with her father rising to the camp and her brother becoming a Senator.^[11]

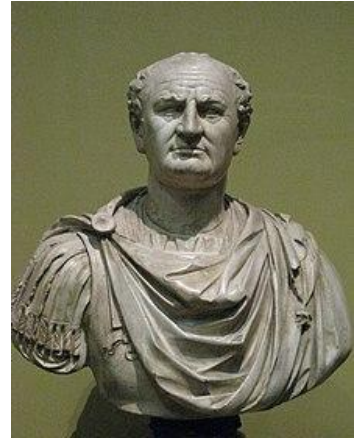
He was educated in the countryside, in Cosa, near what is today Anseona, Italy, under the guidance of his paternal grandmother, so much so that even when he became emperor, he often returned to the places of his childhood, having left the former villa exactly as it had been.^[12]

Early in his life he was somewhat overshadowed by his older brother, Titus Flavius Sabinus, who had entered public life and pursued the *cursus honorum*, holding an important military command in the Danube.

Military and political career

Early career

Vespasian



Roman emperor	
Reign	1 July 69 – 23 June 79
Predecessor	Vitellius
Successor	Titus
Born	Titus Flavius Vespasianus <div></div> 17 November 9 AD ^[1] <div></div> Falacrinum, Italy
Died	23 June 79 (aged 69) ^[4]

Legio II Augusta was a legion of the Imperial Roman army that was founded during the late Roman republic. Its emblems were the Capricornus, Pegasus, and Mars. It may have taken the name "*Augusta*" from a victory or reorganizati



Domitian

Names	Titus Flavius Vespasianus
Regnal name	Imperator Caesar Vespasianus Augustus ^[5]
Dynasty	Flavian
Father	Titus Flavius Sabinus
Mother	Vespasia Polla

In preparation for a praetorship, Vespasian needed two periods of service in the minor magistracies, one military and the other public. Vespasian served in the military in Thracia for about three years. On his return to Rome in about 30 AD, he obtained a post in the vigintivirate, the minor magistracies, most probably in one of the posts in charge of street cleaning.^[13] His early performance was so unsuccessful that Emperor Caligula reportedly stuffed handfuls of muck down his toga to correct the uncleaned Roman streets, formally his responsibility.^[11]

During the period of the ascendancy of Sejanus, there is no record of Vespasian's significant activity in political events. After completion of a term in the vigintivirate, Vespasian was entitled to stand for election as quaestor; a senatorial office. But his lack of political or family influence meant that Vespasian served as quaestor in one of the provincial posts in Crete, rather than as assistant to important men in Rome.^[13]

Next he needed to gain a praetorship, carrying the Imperium, but non-patricians and the less well-connected had to serve in at least one intermediary post as an aedile or tribune. Vespasian failed at his first attempt to gain an aedileship but was successful in his second attempt, becoming an aedile in 38. Despite his lack of significant family connections or success in office, he achieved praetorship in either 39 or 40, at the youngest age permitted (30), during a period of political upheaval in the organisation of elections. His long-standing relationship with freed-woman Antonia Caenis, confidential secretary to Antonia Minor (the Emperor's grandmother) and part of the circle of courtiers and servants around the Emperor, may have contributed to his success.^[13]



Vespasian leading his forces against the Jewish revolt, a miniature in a 1470 illuminated manuscript version of the history of Josephus

Invasion of Britannia

Upon the accession of Claudius as emperor in 41, Vespasian was appointed legate of Legio II Augusta, stationed in Germania, thanks to the influence of the Imperial freedman Narcissus. In 43, Vespasian and the II Augusta participated in the Roman invasion of Britain, and he distinguished himself under the overall command of Aulus Plautius. After participating in crucial early battles on the rivers Medway and Thames, he was sent to reduce the south west, penetrating through the modern counties of Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall with the probable objectives of securing the south coast ports and harbours along with the tin mines of Cornwall and the silver and lead mines of Somerset.

Vespasian marched from Noviomagus Reginorum (Chichester) to subdue the hostile Durotriges and Dumnonii tribes,^[14] and captured twenty oppida (towns, or more probably hill forts, including Hod Hill and Maiden Castle in Dorset). He also invaded Vectis (now the Isle of Wight), finally setting up a fortress and legionary headquarters at Isca Dumnoniorum (Exeter). During this time he injured himself and had not fully recovered until he went to Egypt. These successes earned him triumphal regalia (ornamenta triumphalia) on his return to Rome.

Later political career

His success as the legate of a legion earned him a consulship in 51, after which he retired from public life, having incurred the enmity of Claudius' wife, Agrippina, who was the most powerful and influential figure in her husband's reign.^[11] He came out of retirement in 63 when he was sent as governor to Africa Province. According to Tacitus (ii.97), his rule was "infamous and odious" but according to Suetonius (Vesp. 4), he was "upright and, highly honourable". On one occasion, Suetonius writes, Vespasian was pelted with turnips.

Vespasian used his time in North Africa wisely. Usually, governorships were seen by ex-consuls as opportunities to extort huge amounts of money to regain the wealth they had spent on their previous political campaigns. Corruption was so rife that it was almost expected that a governor would come back from these appointments with his pockets full. However, Vespasian used his time in North Africa making friends instead of money, something that would be far more valuable in the years to come. During his time in North Africa, he found himself in financial difficulties and was forced to mortgage his estates to his brother. To revive his fortunes he turned to the mule trade and gained the nickname mulio (muleteer).^[15]

Returning from Africa, Vespasian toured Greece in Nero's retinue, but lost Imperial favor after paying insufficient attention (some sources suggest he fell asleep) during one of the Emperor's recitals on the lyre, and found himself in the political wilderness.



Roman Emperor Nero sends Vespasian with an army to put down the Jewish revolt, 66 AD (depiction of 1503)

Jewish–Roman War

In 66 AD, Vespasian was appointed to suppress the Jewish revolt underway in Judea. The fighting there had killed the previous governor and routed Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria, when he tried to restore order. Two legions, with eight cavalry squadrons and ten auxiliary cohorts, were therefore dispatched under the command of Vespasian while his elder son, Titus, arrived from Alexandria with another.

During this time he became the patron of Flavius Josephus, a Jewish resistance leader captured at the Siege of Yodfat, who would later write his people's history in Greek. Ultimately, thousands of Jews were killed and the Romans destroyed many towns in re-establishing control over Judea; they also took Jerusalem in 70. Vespasian is remembered by Josephus (writing as a Roman citizen), in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, as a fair and humane official, in contrast with the notorious Herod Agrippa II whom Josephus goes to great lengths to demonize.

While under the emperor's patronage, Josephus wrote that after the Roman Legio X Fretensis, accompanied by Vespasian, destroyed Jericho on 21 June 68, Vespasian took a group of Jews who could not swim (possibly Essenes from Qumran), fettered them, and threw them into the Dead Sea to test the sea's legendary buoyancy. Indeed, the captives bobbed up to the surface after being thrown in the water from the boats.

Josephus (as well as Tacitus), reporting on the conclusion of the Jewish war, reported a prophecy that around the time when Jerusalem and the Second Temple would be taken, a man from their own nation, *viz.* the Messiah, would become governor "of the habitable earth". Josephus interpreted the prophecy to denote Vespasian and his appointment as emperor in Judea.^{[16][17]}

Year of the Four Emperors (69)

After the death of Nero in 68, Rome saw a succession of short-lived emperors and a year of civil wars. Galba was murdered by supporters of Otho, who was defeated by Vitellius. Otho's supporters, looking for another candidate to support, settled on Vespasian. According to Suetonius, a prophecy ubiquitous in the Eastern provinces claimed that from Judaea would come the future rulers of the world. Vespasian eventually believed that this prophecy applied to him, and found a number of omens and oracles that reinforced this belief.^[18]

Although Vespasian and Titus resolved to challenge for the Principate in February 69, they made no move until later in the year. Throughout the early months of 69, Vespasian convened frequently with the Eastern generals. Gaius Licinius Mucianus was a notable ally. Governor of Syria and commander of three legions, Mucianus also held political connections to many of the most powerful Roman military commanders from Illyricum to Britannia by virtue of his service to the famous Neronian general Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo. In May 69, Mucianus formally implored Vespasian to challenge Vitellius. His appeal was followed by Vespasian's official proclamation as Emperor in early July. Under instructions from the prefect Tiberius Alexander, the legions at Alexandria took an oath of loyalty to Vespasian on 1 July. They were swiftly followed by Vespasian's Judean legions on 3 July and thereafter by Mucianus' Syrian legions on 15 July.^[19]

Vitellius, the occupant of the throne, had the veteran legions of Gaul and the Rhineland. But the feeling in Vespasian's favour quickly gathered strength, and the armies of Moesia, Pannonia, and Illyricum soon declared for him, and made him the *de facto* master of half of the Roman world.^[20]

While Vespasian himself was in Egypt securing its grain supply, his troops entered Italy from the northeast under the leadership of Marcus Antonius Primus. They defeated Vitellius' army (which had awaited him in Mevania) at Bedriacum (or Betriacum), sacked Cremona and advanced on Rome. Vitellius hastily arranged a peace with Antonius, but the Emperor's Praetorian Guard forced him to retain his seat. After furious fighting, Antonius' army entered Rome. In the resulting confusion, the Capitol was destroyed by fire and Vespasian's brother Sabinus was killed by a mob.^[21]

At Alexandria, on receiving the tidings of his rival's defeat and death, the new emperor at once forwarded supplies of urgently-needed grain to Rome, along with an edict assuring he would reverse the laws of Nero, especially those relating to treason. While in Egypt, he visited the Temple of Serapis where he reportedly experienced a vision. Later, he was confronted by two labourers, who were convinced that he possessed a divine power that could work miracles.^[22]

The *praefectus Aegypti* was Tiberius Julius Alexander, who had been governor since Nero's reign.^{[23]:13} He proclaimed Vespasian emperor at Alexandria on 1 July 69 AD.^{[23]:13}

The prefect was himself of Hellenized Jewish descent and related to Philo of Alexandria.^{[23]:13} The importance of the Egyptian grain harvest (Latin: *claustra annonae*, lit. 'key to the grain supply') to Rome helped Vespasian assert control over the whole empire.^{[23]:13}



Vespasian sestertius, struck in 71 to celebrate the victory in the first Jewish-Roman war. Obverse: IMP. CAES. VESPASIAN AVG. P. M., TR. P., P. P., COS. III. The legend on the reverse says: IVDEA CAPTA, "Judeaea conquered" – S. C.



Map of the Roman Empire during the Year of the Four Emperors (69). Blue areas indicate provinces loyal to Vespasian and Gaius Licinius Mucianus.

Vespasian was the first emperor (and pharaoh) since Augustus to appear in Egypt.^{[24]:13} At the hippodrome of Alexandria he was hailed as pharaoh; recalling the welcome of Alexander the Great at the Oracle of Zeus-Ammon of the Siwa Oasis, Vespasian was proclaimed the son of the creator-deity Amun (Zeus-Ammon), in the style of the ancient pharaohs, and an incarnation of Serapis in the manner of the Ptolemies.^{[24]:13–14}

As Pharaonic precedent demanded, Vespasian demonstrated his divine election by the traditional methods of spitting on and trampling a blind and crippled man, miraculously healing him, according to Egyptian religious elites.

Emperor (69–79)

Aftermath of the civil war

Vespasian was declared emperor by the Senate while he was in Egypt on 21 December 69; the Egyptians had declared him emperor in the summer. In the short-term, administration of the empire was given to Mucianus who was aided by Vespasian's son, Domitian. Mucianus started off Vespasian's rule with tax reform that was to restore the empire's finances. After Vespasian arrived in Rome in mid-70, Mucianus continued to press Vespasian to collect as many taxes as possible.^[25]

Vespasian and Mucianus renewed old taxes and instituted new ones, increased the tribute of the provinces, and kept a watchful eye upon the treasury officials. The Latin proverb *Pecunia non olet* ("Money does not stink") may have been created when he had introduced a urine tax on public toilets.

Before Vespasian, this tax was imposed by Emperor Nero under the name of *vectigal urinae* in the 1st century AD. However, the tax was removed after a while; it was re-enacted by Vespasian around 70 AD in order to fill the treasury.^[26] Vespasian's policy was not well received by his son. Writing about Vespasian in their history books, Dio Cassius and Suetonius mentioned "When [Vespasian's] son Titus blamed him for even laying a tax upon urine, he applied to his nose a piece of the money he received in the first instalment, and asked him if it stunk. And he replying no, 'And yet,' said he, 'it is derived from urine". Since then, this phrase "Money does not stink" has been used to whitewash dubious or illegal origin of money.^{[27][28][26][29][30][31]}

In early 70 Vespasian was still in Egypt, the source of Rome's grain supply, and had not yet left for Rome. According to Tacitus, his trip was delayed due to bad weather.^[32] Modern historians theorize that Vespasian had been and was continuing to consolidate support from the Egyptians before departing.^[33] Stories of a divine Vespasian healing people circulated in Egypt.^[34] During this period, protests erupted in Alexandria over his new tax policies and grain shipments were held up. Vespasian eventually restored order and grain shipments to Rome resumed.^[25]

In addition to the uprising in Egypt, unrest and civil war continued in the rest of the empire in 70. Judea had been rebelling since 66. Vespasian's son, Titus, finally subdued the rebellion with the capture of Jerusalem and destruction of the Jewish Temple in 70. According to Eusebius, Vespasian then ordered all descendants of the royal line of David to be hunted down, causing the Jews to be persecuted from province to province. Several modern historians have suggested that Vespasian, already having been told by Josephus that he was prophesied to become emperor whilst in Judaea, was probably reacting to other widely known Messianic prophecies circulating at the time, to suppress any rival claimants arising from that dynasty.^[35] Titus attended the consecration of a new Apis bull at Memphis in 70, and Vespasian's reign saw imperial patronage given to Egyptian temples: at the Dakhla Oasis in the Western Desert as well as Esna, Kom Ombo, Medinet Habu, Silsila in the Nile Valley.^{[24]:14} By contrast, the Jewish temple at Leontopolis was sacked in 73.^{[24]:14}

In January 70, an uprising occurred in Gaul and Germany, known as the second Batavian Rebellion. This rebellion was headed by Gaius Julius Civilis and Julius Sabinus. Sabinus, claiming he was descended from Julius Caesar, declared himself Emperor of Gaul. The rebellion defeated and absorbed two Roman legions before it was suppressed by Vespasian's son-in-law, Quintus Petillius Cerialis, by the end of 70.

Arrival in Rome and gathering support

In mid-70, Vespasian first went to Rome, dating his tribunician years from 1 July 69.^[9] Vespasian immediately embarked on a series of efforts to stay in power and prevent future revolts. He offered gifts to many in the military and much of the public.^[36] Soldiers loyal to Vitellius were dismissed or punished.^[37] Vespasian also restructured the Senatorial and Equestrian orders, removing his enemies and adding his allies.^[38] Regional autonomy of Greek provinces was repealed.^[39] Additionally, Vespasian made significant attempts to control public perception of his rule.

Propaganda campaign

We know from Suetonius that the "unexpected and still quite new emperor was lacking *auctoritas* [English: backing, support] and a certain *maiestas* [English: majesty]"^[40] Many modern historians note the increased amount of propaganda that appeared during Vespasian's reign.^[41] A component of the propaganda was the theology of victory, which legitimized the right to rule through

successful conquest.^[42] This revolved around Vespasian's victory in Judea.^[42] Stories of a supernatural emperor who was destined to rule circulated in the empire.^[15] Nearly one-third of all coins minted in Rome under Vespasian celebrated military victory or peace.^[43] The word *vindex* was removed from coins so as not to remind the public of rebellious Vindex. Construction projects bore inscriptions praising Vespasian and condemning previous emperors.^[44] A temple of peace was constructed in the forum as well.^[38] Vespasian approved histories written under his reign, ensuring biases against him were removed.^[45]

Vespasian also gave financial rewards to writers.^[46] The ancient historians who lived through the period such as Tacitus, Suetonius and Josephus speak suspiciously well of Vespasian while condemning the emperors who came before him.^[47] Tacitus admits that his status was elevated by Vespasian, Josephus identifies Vespasian as a patron and saviour. Meanwhile, Pliny the Elder dedicated his *Natural Histories* to Vespasian's son, Titus.^[48]

Those who spoke against Vespasian were punished. A number of Stoic philosophers were accused of corrupting students with inappropriate teachings and were expelled from Rome.^[49] Helvidius Priscus, a pro-Republic philosopher, was executed for his teachings.^[50] Numerous other philosophers and writers had their works seized, destroyed and denounced for being deemed too critical of Vespasian's reign, some even posthumously.^[50]

Construction and conspiracies

Between 71 and 79, much of Vespasian's reign is a mystery. Historians report that Vespasian ordered the construction of several buildings in Rome. Additionally, he survived several conspiracies against him. Vespasian helped rebuild Rome after the civil war. He added the temple of Peace and the temple to the Deified Claudius.^[38] In 75, he erected a colossal statue of Apollo, begun under Nero, and he dedicated a stage of the theatre of Marcellus. He also began construction of the Colosseum, using funds from the spoils of the Jewish Temple after the Siege of Jerusalem.^[51] Suetonius claims that Vespasian was met with "constant conspiracies" against him.^[52] Only one conspiracy is known specifically, though. In 78 or 79, Eprius Marcellus and Aulus Caecina Alienus attempted to kill Vespasian. Why these men turned against Vespasian is not known.

Roman expansion in Britain

Agricola was appointed to the command of the Legio XX Valeria Victrix, stationed in Britain, in place of Marcus Roscius Coelius, who had stirred up a mutiny against the governor, Marcus Vettius Bolanus. Britain had revolted during the year of civil war, and Bolanus was a mild governor. Agricola reimposed discipline on the legion and helped to consolidate Roman rule. In 71, Bolanus was replaced by a more aggressive governor, Quintus Petillius Cerialis, and Agricola was able to display his talents as a commander in campaigns against the Brigantes in northern England.

Death

In his ninth consulship Vespasian had a slight illness in Campania and, returning at once to Rome, he left for Aquae Cutiliae and the country around Reate, where he spent every summer; however, his illness worsened and he developed severe diarrhea.

With the feeling of death overwhelming him on his deathbed, he incited: "Vae, puto deus fio." ("Dear me, I think I'm becoming a god").^[53] Then, according to Suetonius' *The Twelve Caesars*:

Taken on a sudden with such an attack of diarrhoea that he all but swooned, he said: "An emperor ought to die standing," and while he was struggling to get on his feet, he died in the arms of those who tried to help him, on the ninth day before the Kalends of July [June 23], at the age of sixty-nine years, seven months and seven days.

— Suetonius, *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, "Life of Vespasian" §24^[54]

He died on June 23, 79 AD, and was succeeded by his sons Titus and then Domitian.

Legacy

Vespasian was known for his wit and his amiable manner alongside his commanding personality and military prowess. He could be liberal to impoverished Senators and equestrians and to cities and towns desolated by natural calamity. He was especially generous to men of letters and rhetors, several of whom he pensioned with salaries of as much as 1,000 gold pieces a year. Quintilian is said



Roman aureus depicting Vespasian as Emperor. The reverse shows the goddess Fortuna. Caption: IMP. CAESAR VESPASIANVS AVG. / FORTVNA AVGVST



Relief depicting an animal sacrifice, from an altar of the Temple of Vespasian in Pompeii

to have been the first public teacher who enjoyed this imperial favor. Pliny the Elder's work, the *Natural History*, was written during Vespasian's reign, and dedicated to Vespasian's son Titus.^[55]

Vespasian distrusted philosophers in general. It was the talk of philosophers, who liked to glorify the Republic, that provoked Vespasian into reviving the obsolete penal laws against this profession as a precautionary measure. Only Helvidius Priscus was put to death after he repeatedly affronted the Emperor with studied insults which Vespasian initially tried to ignore.^[56] The philosopher Demetrius was banished to an island and when Vespasian heard that Demetrius was still criticizing him, he sent the exiled philosopher the message: "You are doing everything to force me to kill you, but I do not slay a barking dog."^[57]

According to Suetonius, Vespasian "bore the frank language of his friends, the quips of pleaders, and the impudence of the philosophers with the greatest patience". He was also noted for his benefactions to the people. Much money was spent on public works and the restoration and beautification of Rome: the Temple of Peace (also known as the Forum of Vespasian), new public baths^[58] and the great show piece, the Colosseum.^[59]

Vespasian debased the denarius during his reign, reducing the silver purity from 93.5% to 90%. The silver weight dropped from 2.97 grams to 2.87 grams.^[60]

In modern Romance languages, urinals are named after him (for example, *vespasiano* in Italian, and *vespasienne* in French),^[61] probably in reference to a tax he placed on urine collection (useful due to its ammoniac content; see Pay toilet).

Family and personal life

Ancestors and relatives

His paternal grandfather, Titus Flavius Petro, became the first to distinguish himself, rising to the rank of centurion and fighting at Pharsalus for Pompey in 48 BC. Subsequently, he became a debt collector.^[11] Petro's son, Titus Flavius Sabinus, worked as a customs official in the province of Asia and became a moneylender on a small scale among the Helvetii. He earned a reputation as a scrupulous and honest "tax-farmer". Sabinus married up in status, to Vespasia Polla, whose father had risen to the rank of prefect of the camp and whose brother became a Senator.^[11]

Sabinus and Vespasia had three children, the eldest of whom, a girl, died in infancy. The elder boy, Titus Flavius Sabinus, entered public life and pursued the *cursus honorum*. Vespasian on the other hand, seemed far less likely to be successful, initially not wishing to pursue high public office. He followed in his brother's footsteps when driven to it by his mother's taunting.^[11]

Marriage and children



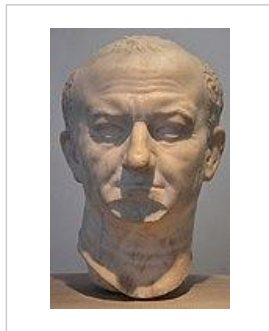
Construction of the Flavian Amphitheatre, better known as the Colosseum, was begun by Vespasian and finished by his son Titus.

During this period he married Flavia Domitilla, the daughter of Flavius Liberalis from Ferentium and formerly the mistress of Statilius Capella, a Roman equestrian from Sabratha in Africa.^[62] They had two sons, Titus Flavius Vespasianus (born 39) and Titus Flavius Domitianus (born 51), and a daughter, Domitilla (born c. 45). His wife Domitilla and his daughter Domitilla both died before Vespasian became Emperor in 69. After the death of his wife, Vespasian's long-standing mistress, Antonia Caenis, became his wife in all but formal status, a relationship that continued until she died in 75.^[11]

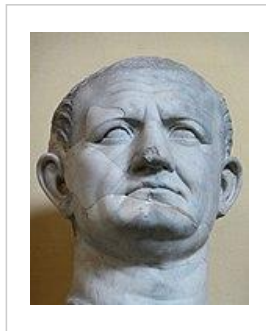
Gallery



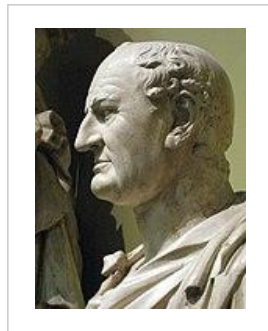
Portrait bust of Vespasian wearing the civic crown, Palazzo Massimo, Rome



Portrait bust of Vespasian from Ostia, 69–79 AD, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, Rome



Restored original portrait of Vespasian. Vatican Museums, Rome

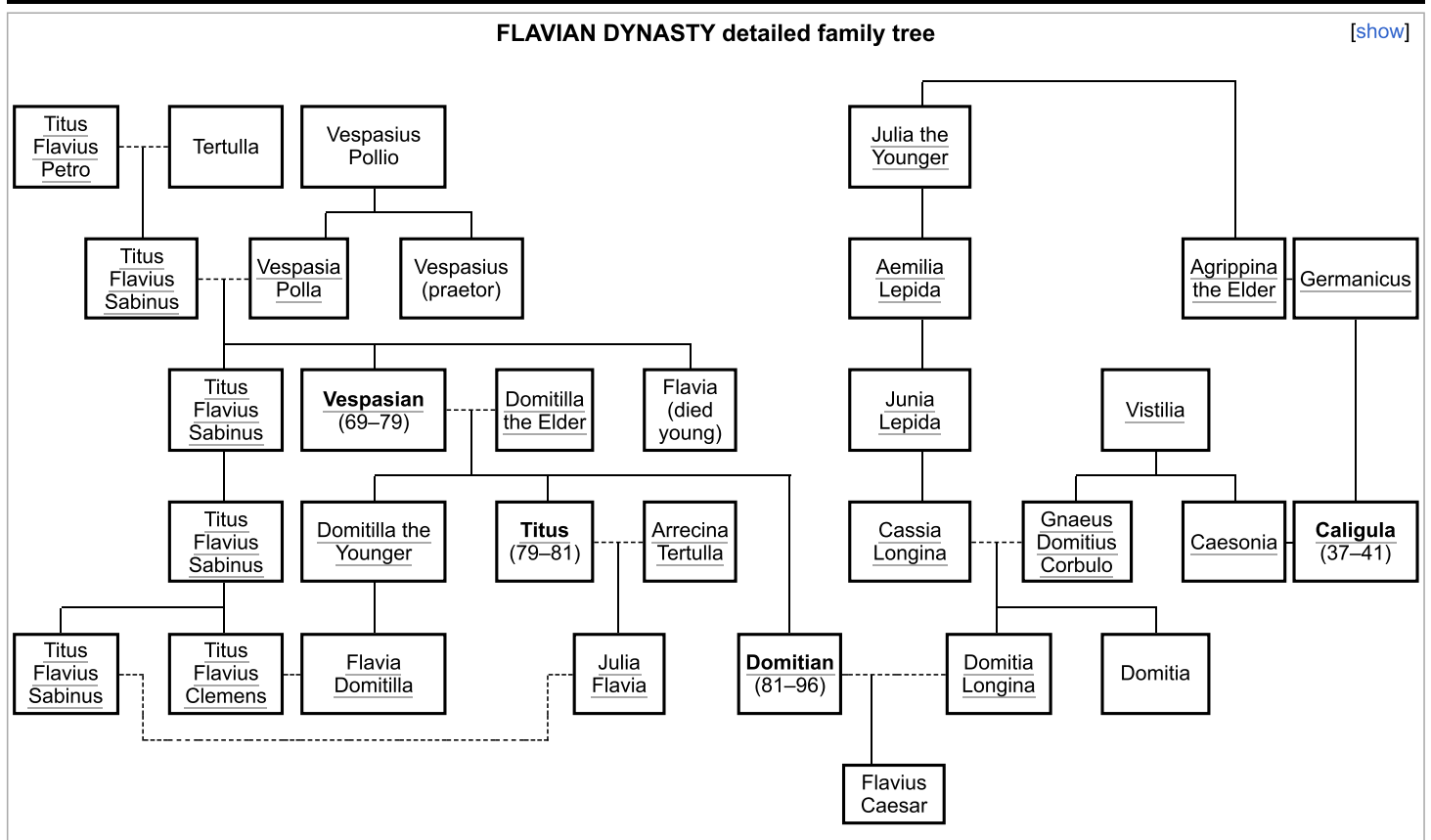


Bust of Vespasian, Pushkin Museum, Moscow



Bust of Vespasian, c. 80 AD, Farnese Collection, Naples National Archaeological Museum

Flavian family tree



See also

- Stele of Vespasian
- List of Roman emperors

- Pecunia non olet

References

1. Suetonius, *Vesp.*, 2. "Vespasian was born [...] on the evening of the fifteenth day before the **Kalends** of December, in the consulate of **Quintus Sulpicius Camerinus** and **Gaius Poppaeus Sabinus**, five years before the death of **Augustus**."
2. Suetonius, *Titus* 11: "[He died] two years two months and twenty days after succeeding Vespasian".
3. Cassius Dio LXVI.18: "For he lived after this only two years, two months and twenty days".
4. Suetonius gives 23 June (*VIII. Kal. Iul.*). However, he also states that he died "at the age of sixty-nine years, seven months and seven day", i.e. he died on 24 June, although it's possible that he's using **inclusive counting**. Cassius Dio (66.17 (https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/66*.html)) states that he "reigned ten years lacking six days", i.e. he died on 25/24 June. Both authors date Titus' ascension on 24 June.^{[2][3]}
5. Cooley, p. 490.
6. *The Mammoth Book of Roman Whodunnits* (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/53474742>). Edited and had non-fictional passages written by Michael Ashley, Introduction by Steven Saylor (1st ed.). New York: **Carroll & Graf Publishers**. 2003. p. 198. ISBN 0-7867-1241-4. OCLC 53474742 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/53474742>).
7. Levick, pp. 16–38.
8. Scott, Kenneth (1932). "On Suetonius' Life of Vespasian 12" (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/265251>). *Classical Philology*. 27 (1): 83. doi:10.1086/361434 (<https://doi.org/10.1086%2F361434>). ISSN 0009-837X (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0009-837X>). JSTOR 265251 (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/265251>). S2CID 161746778 (<https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:161746778>). Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20210522041208/https://www.jstor.org/stable/265251>) from the original on 22 May 2021. Retrieved 21 May 2021. "His tribunician power was reckoned from July 1, 69, the day when he was proclaimed emperor by the army"
9. Roberts (2007).
10. Suetonius, *Vesp.* 2
11. Morgan (2006), 170–3
12. Suetonius, *Vesp.*, p. 2
13. Levick (1999)
14. A History of Britain, Richard Dargie (2007), p. 20
15. Suetonius, *Vesp.* 4–5
16. Josephus, *War of the Jews* 6.5.4
17. Tacitus, *Histories* 5.13
18. Cassius Dio *Roman History* LXV.1 (https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/65*.html)
19. Caldwell, Thomas (2015). *The Career of Licinius Mucianus* (MA), pp. 118–149.
20. "The Internet Classics Archive | The Histories by Tacitus" (<http://classics.mit.edu/Tacitus/histories.3.iii.html>). *classics.mit.edu*. Retrieved 1 September 2022.
21. "The Internet Classics Archive | The Histories by Tacitus" (<http://classics.mit.edu/Tacitus/histories.3.iii.html>). *classics.mit.edu*. Retrieved 1 September 2022.
22. "The Internet Classics Archive | The Histories by Tacitus" (<http://classics.mit.edu/Tacitus/histories.3.iii.html>). *classics.mit.edu*. Retrieved 1 September 2022.
23. Ritner, Robert K. (1998). "Egypt under Roman rule: the legacy of ancient Egypt". In Petry, Carl F. (ed.). *Islamic Egypt 640–1517* (https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/CBO9781139053372A004/type/book_part). *The Cambridge History of Egypt*. Vol. 1 (1 ed.). Cambridge University Press. pp. 1–33. doi:10.1017/chol9780521471374.002 (<https://doi.org/10.1017%2Fchol9780521471374.002>). ISBN 978-1-139-05337-2. Retrieved 26 January 2021.
24. Ritner, Robert K. (1998). "Egypt under Roman rule: the legacy of ancient Egypt". In Petry, Carl F. (ed.). *Islamic Egypt 640–1517* (https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/CBO9781139053372A004/type/book_part). *The Cambridge History of Egypt*. Vol. 1 (1 ed.). Cambridge University Press. pp. 1–33. doi:10.1017/chol9780521471374.002 (<https://doi.org/10.1017%2Fchol9780521471374.002>). ISBN 978-1-139-05337-2. Retrieved 26 January 2021.
25. Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, LXV.2
26. "Feeling Overtaxed? The Romans Would Tax Your Urine" (<https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/04/160414-history-bad-tax-es-tax-day/>). *National Geographic News*. 14 April 2016. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20190306043845/https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/04/160414-history-bad-taxes-tax-day/>) from the original on 6 March 2019. Retrieved 4 March 2019.
27. "*The Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, by C. Suetonius Tranquillus;" (<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/6400/6400-h/6400-h.htm>). *www.gutenberg.org*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20181230052823/https://www.gutenberg.org/files/6400/6400-h/6400-h.htm>) from the original on 30 December 2018. Retrieved 4 March 2019.
28. "Dion Cassius: Histoire Romaine : livre LXVIII (bilingue)" (<http://remacle.org/bloodwolf/historiens/Dion/livre66.htm>). *remacle.org*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20130326004005/http://remacle.org/bloodwolf/historiens/Dion/livre66.htm>) from the original on 26 March 2013. Retrieved 4 March 2019.

29. "At Least You Don't Pay Urine Tax... (1st C AD) – Ancient History Blog" (<https://ancientstandard.com/2007/06/04/at-least-you-don%E2%80%99t-pay-urine-tax%E2%80%A6-1st-c-ad/>). Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20190306043312/https://ancientstandard.com/2007/06/04/at-least-you-don%E2%80%99t-pay-urine-tax%E2%80%A6-1st-c-ad/>) from the original on 6 March 2019. Retrieved 4 March 2019.
30. "ItalianNotebook – Vespasian's Legacy" (<http://www.italiannotebook.com/art-archaeology/vespasian-urinals/>). *www.italiannotebook.com*. 27 January 2014. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20190306054501/http://www.italiannotebook.com/art-archaeology/vespasian-urinals/>) from the original on 6 March 2019. Retrieved 4 March 2019.
31. HeritageDaily (4 May 2016). "The Romans created a tax on urine" (<https://www.heritagedaily.com/2016/05/did-you-know-the-romans-created-a-tax-on-urine/110998>). *HeritageDaily – Archaeology News*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180701184709/https://www.heritagedaily.com/2016/05/did-you-know-the-romans-created-a-tax-on-urine/110998>) from the original on 1 July 2018. Retrieved 4 March 2019.
32. Tacitus, *Histories* IV
33. Sullivan, Phillip, "A Note on Flavian Accession", *The Classical Journal*, 1953, p. 67-70
34. Cassius Dio, *Roman History* LXV.8–9
35. e.g., Paul Barnett, *Jesus & the Rise of Early Christianity* p. 31; 1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, "JEWS".
36. Cassius Dio, *Roman History* LXVI.10
37. Suetonius, *Vesp.* 8
38. Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Vespasian 9
39. Suetonius, *Vesp.* 8; Philostratus II, *Life of Apollonius* 5.41
40. Suet., *Vesp.* 7.2.
41. M. P. Charlesworth, "Flaviana", *Journal of Roman Studies* 27 (1938) 54–62
42. Porter, Stanley E.; Pitts, Andrew W. (2018). *Christian Origins and the Establishment of the Early Jesus Movement*. Leiden: BRILL. p. 303. ISBN 978-90-04-37274-0.
43. Jones, William "Some Thoughts on the Propaganda of Vespasian and Domitian", *The Classical Journal*, p. 251
44. Aqueduct and roads dedication speak of previous emperors' neglect, *CIL* vi, 1257(*ILS* 218) and 931
45. Josephus, *Against Apion* 9
46. Suetonius, *Vesp.* 18
47. "Otho, Vitellius, and the Propaganda of Vespasian", *The Classical Journal* (1965), p. 267-269
48. Tacitus, *Histories* I.1; Josephus, *The Life of Flavius Josephus* 72; Pliny the Elder, *Natural Histories*, preface.
49. Cassius Dio, *Roman History* LXVI.12
50. Cassius Dio, *Roman History* LXVI.13
51. ALFÖLDY, GÉZA (1995). "Eine Bauinschrift Aus Dem Colosseum". *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*. **109**: 195–226.
52. Suetonius, *Vesp.* 25
53. Suetonius, *Life of Vespasian*, 23:4
54. "C. Suetonius Tranquillus, Divus Vespasianus, chapter 24" (https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Suetonius/12_Caesars/Vespasian*.html#24). *LacusCurtius*. Retrieved 29 April 2020.
55. Plin., *HN* **pref.**
56. Suetonius, *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, Vespasian 15
57. Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, Book XVI, 13
58. Fagan, Garrett G. (31 May 2002). *Bathing in public in the Roman world*. University of Michigan Press. p. 329. ISBN 978-0-472-08865-2.
59. Gunderson 2003: 640
60. "Roman Currency of the Principate" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20081101003844/http://www.tulane.edu/~august/handouts/601cprin.htm>). Archived from the original (<http://www.tulane.edu/~august/handouts/601cprin.htm>) on 1 November 2008. Retrieved 4 December 2018.
61. ICI.Radio-Canada.ca, Zone Politique -. "Plus de 3 M\$ pour une douzaine de " vespasiennes " modernes" (<http://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1027375/toilettes-publiques-ville-marie-autonettoyantes-vespasiennes-modernes-verifications-atmosphere>). *Radio-Canada.ca*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20170929231741/http://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1027375/toilettes-publiques-ville-marie-autonettoyantes-vespasiennes-modernes-verifications-atmosphere>) from the original on 29 September 2017. Retrieved 29 September 2017.
62. Suetonius, *Vesp.* 3

This article incorporates text from a publication now in the public domain: Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). "Vespasian". *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Vol. 27 (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Sources

Primary sources

- Tacitus, *Histories*, English translation
- Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Vespasian (https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Suetonius/12_Caesars/Vespasian*.html), Latin text with English translation
- Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, Books 64 (https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/64*.html), 65 (https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/65*.html) and 66 (https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/66*.html), Latin text with English translation
- Flavius Josephus, *The War of the Jews*, Books 2, 3 and 4, English translation

Secondary sources

- Cooley, Alison E. (2012). *The Cambridge Manual of Latin Epigraphy* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=VlghAwAAQBAJ>). Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-84026-2.
- Lissner, I. (1958). "Power and Folly: The Story of the Caesars". Jonathan Cape Ltd., London.
- Morgan, Gwyn (2006). *69 A. D. The Year of the Four Emperors* (<https://archive.org/details/69adyearoffourem00gwyn/page/170>). London: Oxford University Press. pp. 170–173 (<https://archive.org/details/69adyearoffourem00gwyn/page/170>). ISBN 978-0-19-512468-2.
- Levick, Barbara (1999). *Vespasian* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=ui4IDwAAQBAJ>). Oxford: Routledge. ISBN 978-0-415-16618-8.
- Roberts, J., ed. (2007). "Vespasian". *Vespasian (Titus Flāvius Vespāsiānus)* (<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192801463.001.0001/acref-9780192801463-e-2307?rskey=hEJm2u&result=2307%20Vespasian>). *Oxford Dictionary of the Classical World*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-172706-1.
- Caldwell, T. (2015). *The Career of Licinius Mucianus* (MA). The University of Melbourne. hdl:11343/91093 (<https://hdl.handle.net/11343%2F91093>).

Further reading

- *De Imperatoribus Romanis* (<http://www.roman-emperors.org/vespasia.htm>), biography
- Entry on Vespasian (<http://virtualreligion.net/iho/vespasian.html>) in historical sourcebook by Mahlon H. Smith
- Private collection (<http://www.forumancientcoins.com/gallery/thumbnails.php?album=241>) of coins minted by Vespasian
- *The Cipherment of the Franks Casket* (https://web.archive.org/web/20100712205746/http://homerios.godsong.org/FRANKS_CA_SKET.pdf); A. Simmons; Vespasian is depicted on the back side of the [Franks Casket](#)

External links

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vespasian&oldid=1158259730"

Toggle limited content width