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ROMAN EMPIRE
DURING THE REIGN
OF THE FLAVIANS
PRINCIPAL TRENDS OF
DEVELOPMENT AND THREATS

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Introduction*

The year 69 AD is most certainly a turning point in the history of the early Roman Empire. Not only because the events of that and the previous year demonstrated vividly where the *arcana imperii* are to be found,¹ to use the phrase of Tacitus'. Also, not because the Julio-Claudian dynasty became history. The turning point was marked by another event, even more important historically: the Vespasianus' coming to power. If, hypothetically, Galba had managed to hold on to the throne, or had it been either of the two remaining usurpers, Otho or Vitellius, to gain it, then most likely the current assessment of the post-Neronian era would be completely different.

Sergius Sulpicius Galba (born 24 Dec. 3 BC.), the son of a consul (*suff.*) of the year 5 BC,² came from an old patrician family with republican roots.³ His mother, Mummia Achaica, was a great-granddaughter of L. Mummius, the conqueror of Corinth in the year 146 BC.⁴ Adopted by his stepmother Livia Ocellina (which accounts for his full name after the adoption: L. Livius Ocella Ser. Sulpicius Galba),⁵ he entered the circle of Livia, the wife of Augustus and the mother of Tiberius,

* This study was carried out under a grant from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education no. NN108 058335, entitled: „Transformation of the Roman Empire in Flavian Times”. Translated by Szymon Nowak.

¹ Tac. *Hist.* I 4: „evulgato imperii arcano posse principem alibi quam Romae fieri”.

² A. Degrassi, *I Fasti consolari dell'Impero Romano*, Roma 1950, 5.

³ D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle. Grundzüge einer römischen Chronologie*, Darmstadt 1996, 102-103; *DNP* 4 (1998), 746-747.

⁴ See *PIR*¹ S 722.

⁵ Suet. *Galba* 4; *PIR*¹ S 723.

who considerably influenced his career. In 33 AD he performed the function of an ordinary consul (*cos. ord.*),⁶ and then, in 39, became the commander of the military forces in Upper Germania. As a *comes*, Galba accompanied emperor Claudius during the latter's expedition to Britain (43/44). In 44-46 he was the proconsul of Africa. For the successes achieved in Germania and Africa, he received *ornamenta triumphalia* (approx. 46), and was admitted to three priest colleges (*XVvir sacris faciundis, sodalis Augustalis, sodalis Titius*). The ultimate stage of Galba's career prior to his ascent to the throne was the governorship of the province Hispania Tarraconensis (years 60-68), where he had been sent by Nero.

In comparison with Galba, Otho and Vitellius make a feeble appearance in terms of aristocratic tradition. The first senator (in the rank of a praetor) in the family of Salvii was Otho's grandfather,⁷ courtesy of Livia's patronage,⁸ while the first consul (*cos. suff.*), in 33, was his father, L. Salvius Otho,⁹ admitted by emperor Claudius to the circle of patricians.¹⁰ His mother, Albia Terentina, came from an equestrian family. In his *cursus honorum* Otho achieved merely praetorship, and, consequently, a praetorian governorship in Lusitania, bearing in mind, however, that at the moment of his death in 69, Otho ((born 28 Apr. 32)) was only 37 years old.

P. Vitellius,¹¹ the grandfather of Vitellius, was just an equite in the rank of procurator.¹² On the other hand, L. Vitellius,¹³ his father, made

⁶ A. Degrassi, *Fasti*, 10.

⁷ D. Kienast, *Kaisertabelle*, 105; *DNP* 9 (2000), 107-108.

⁸ *PIR*¹ S 108: „per gratiam Liviae Augustae, in cuius domo creverat, senator est factus”.

⁹ A. Degrassi, *Fasti*, 10.

¹⁰ *PIR*¹ S 107: „A Claudio adlectus inter patricios (a. 48)”.

¹¹ *PIR*¹ V 503; *DNP* 12/2 (2002), 263 [II 5].

¹² *PIR*¹ V 503: „eques Romanus, domo Nuceria, rerum Augusti procurator”.

¹³ *PIR*¹ V 500.

an impressive, though perhaps not a rapid senatorial career, obtaining ordinary consulship thrice (34, 43, 47),¹⁴ on two occasions in the company of emperor Claudius. A governor in Syria (35-39);¹⁵ for the period of Claudius' campaign in Britain (43), he was officially, by virtue of *cura imperii*¹⁶ conferred on him, the emperor's deputy in Rome. In the years 47/48, he performed the function of a censor, together with Claudius. He also entered the circle of the *patricii*.¹⁷ After his death, P. Vitellius was honoured with a state funeral and a statue placed in the Forum Romanum.¹⁸ Generally speaking, the Vitellii moved up greatly in the world during the Julio-Claudian era, which they owed, among others, numerous connections by marriage to the leading aristocratic families of Rome.¹⁹ The future emperor, Aulus Vitellius (born 7th Sep. 12 or 15 AD) gained ordinary consulship in 48 (his brother L. Vitellius became deputy consul in the same year),²⁰ in all probability held proconsulship of Africa in 60-61, and in December 68, on Galba's mandate, assumed the governorship of Upper Germania. He belonged to *fratres Arvales*.²¹

Titus Flavius Vespasianus could not hope to compete, not even with Otho and Vitellius.²² The social disparity was tremendous due to the fact that Vespasian was a *homo novus*; his father, a centurion's son, probably

¹⁴ Suet. *Vit.* 2.4; A. Degrassi, *Fasti*, 10, 12, 13.

¹⁵ See E. Dąbrowa, *The governors of Roman Syria from Augustus to Septimius Severus*, Bonn 1998, 38-41.

¹⁶ Suet. *Vit.* 2, 4; Cass. Dio LX 21.

¹⁷ Tac. *Ann.* XI 25.2. Cf. E. Dąbrowa, *The Governors of Roman Syria*, 41.

¹⁸ Suet. *Vit.* 3.1; G. Wesch-Klein, *Funus publicum. Eine Studie zur öffentlichen Beisetzung und Gewährung von Ehrengräbern in Rom und den Westprovinzen*, Stuttgart 1993, 25-26; E. Dąbrowa, *The Governors of Roman Syria*, 41.

¹⁹ E. Dąbrowa, *ibidem*.

²⁰ A. Degrassi, *Fasti*, 14.

²¹ D. Kienast, *Kaisertabelle*, 106-107; *DNP* 12/2 (2002), 260.

²² Suet. *Vesp.* 1: „gens Flavia obscura illa quidem, ac sine ullis maiorum imaginibus.”

an equite, was a tax collector and a financial profiteer,²³ his mother, Vespasia Polla, was the daughter of an equite from Nursia. Vespasian and his elder brother, Titus Flavius Sabinus (T. Flavius Sabinus)²⁴ were the first representatives of the gens Flavia (*homines novi*), who received entries in *album senatorum*.²⁵ And, for the time being, it was of no consequence that both attained consulship (suffect), Sabinus²⁶ in 47, and Vespasian²⁷ in 51, that Sabinus crowned his career with the rank of a urban prefect (*praefectus Urbi*),²⁸ while Vespasian with the triumphal decorations (*ornamenta triumphalia*) awarded by Claudius and the outstanding military campaign in Judaea²⁹. As Vespasian ascended the throne, the Roman consciousness underwent a colossal transformation, which even a little earlier would have had defied imagination: the ship of state was taken over by a man whose family was nowhere near the old Roman aristocracy, and of fairly humble origins³⁰. The age-old tradition decreed that in Rome the power was due to the „true” aristocracy, whereas with Vespasian’s ascension it went into the hands of an upstart. This contradicted the widespread conviction that only the descendants of consuls and censors have the right to the imperial throne, not sons of insignificant fathers from the equestrian order³¹. Vespasian’s career, and his accession to the throne is nothing other than

²³ *PIR*² F 351; *RE* VI, 2 (1909), no. 165 col. 2610; no. 206 col. 2626; *DNP* 4 (1998) [II 39]; D. van Berchem, *Un banquier chez les Helvètes*, Ktema 3, 1978, 267-274.

²⁴ *PIR*² F 352; *DNP* 4 (1998), 550 [II 40].

²⁵ See B. Levick, *Vespasian*, London-New York 1999, 4-13.

²⁶ *DNP* 4 (1998), 550 [II 40] with relevant literature.

²⁷ Suet. *Vesp.* 4; A. Degrassi, *Fasti*, 14; P. Weynand, *RE* VI, 2 (1909), col. 2628; *DNP* 12/4 (2002), 126.

²⁸ Suet. *Vesp.* 1; *PIR*² F 352.

²⁹ *PIR*² 398; *DNP* 12/4 (2002), 125-130.

³⁰ Suet. *Vesp.* 1.

³¹ *Ibidem*, 210, 212-213. Cf. Tac. *Hist.* I, 52: „merito dubitasse Verginium equestri familia, ignoto patre, imparem, si recepisset imperium, tutum, si recusasset;

the crowning event of the „social revolution, which accompanied the transformation of the Republic into the principate of Augustus.”³²

On 1st July 69, the Egypt-based legions swore an oath of allegiance to the name of Vespasian.³³ Two days later, (on 3rd July) his own legions in Palestinian Caesarea followed suit, and the Syrian legions on 5/6th July. Thus opened the last act of the civil war known as „the year of four emperors”.³⁴ The fourth emperor had just entered the game. Hardly six months later, on 20th December 69, Vespasian’s forces took Rome. The following day, the senate sanctioned his rights to the throne and, during the same session or several days later, passed the famous resolution, known as *lex de imperio Vespasiani*,³⁵ under which the power over the entire Imperium Romanum went to Vespasian.

Vitellio tres patris consulatus, censuram, collegium Caesaris et imponere iam pridem imperatoris dignationem et auferre privati securitatem.”

³² B. Levick, *Vespasian*, 4.

³³ Suet. *Vesp.* 6.

³⁴ Cf. P.A.L. Greenhalgh, *The Year of Four Emperors*, London 1975; J. Nicols, *Vespasian and the partes Flavianaes*, Wiesbaden 1978 (Historia-Einzelschriften 28), 57-85; E. Flaig, *Den Kaiser herausfordern. Die Usurpation im Römischen Reich*, Frankfurt-New York 1992, 356-416 („Die Usurpation Vespasians,“); B. Levick, *Vespasian*, 43-64; K. Wellesley, *The Year of Four Emperors, with introduction by Barbara Levick*, London-New York 2000³; G. Morgan, *69 A.D. The Year of Four Emperors*, Oxford 2006.

³⁵ Tac. *Hist.* IV 3. 3: „at Romae senatus cuncta principibus solita Vespasiano decernit”; P. Weynand, *T. Flavius Vespasianus*, RE VI, 2 (1909), col. 2640-2642; G. Barbieri, *Lex de imperio Vespasiani*, Dizionario Epigrafico IV (1946-1985), 750-758; P.A.Brunet, *Lex de imperio Vespasiani*, JRS 67, 1967, 95-116; C. Nicolet, *La Tabula Siarensis, la lex de imperio Vespasiani, et le jus relationis de l'empereur au sénat*, MEFRA 100, 1988, 827-866; Fr. Hurlet, *La Lex de imperio Vespasiani et la légitimité augustéenne*, Latomus 52, 1993, 261-280; M. Griffin, *The Flavians*, [in:] CAH² XI (2000), 11-13; B. Levick, *Vespasian*, 86; eadem, *The Lex de Imperio Vespasiani: the parts and the whole*, [in:] *La Lex de Imperio Vespasiani e la Roma dei Flavi*, eds. L. Capogrossi Colonesi, E. Tassi Scandone, Roma 2009, 11-22; M. Pani, *L'imperium del Principe*, [in:] *ibidem*, 187-203.

At the time, the new emperor was in Egypt,³⁶ attentively watching the course of events. He arrived in Rome only in the autumn (most probably in the middle of November) of the year 70.³⁷ In all likelihood this was planned in advance and the move was inscribed in the scenario of the power seizure. The forces which marched into Italy had gone with Licinius Mucianus,³⁸ Vespasian's right hand and the co-author of his success, who inspired the latter to take over the throne.³⁹ It was he who for more or less a year held the actual power in Rome, laying the ground for the arrival of the new ruler.

The amount of problems to be tackled was immeasurable. The frontiers were far from quiet. In Britain, *crebris belli civilis rumoribus*,⁴⁰ the matters began to deteriorate owing to Venutius, the former husband of Cartimandua, the queen of the Brigants, who was radically anti-Roman⁴¹. The turmoil in Germania,⁴² which had started already

³⁶ *RE* VI, 2 (1909), col. 2646-2647; A. Henrichs, *Vespasian's visit to Alexandria*, *ZPE* 3, 1968, 51-80.

³⁷ Vespasian left Alexandria before he received the news of the fall of Jerusalem (8th Sept.), therefore the event must have taken place at the beginning of September 70 at the latest; most likely he sailed on a grain transport which took him to Rhodes or Knidos; thence he sailed to Greece, reached Corinth via Saronic Gulf, then to Korkyra and further to Brundisium. The voyage lasted just under two months, so he arrived in Brundisium towards the end of October or in the beginning of November. Vespasian entered Rome in the middle of November; Ch.L. Murison, *Rebellion and Reconstruction*, 149; see on the other hand D. Kienast, *Kaisertabelle*, 108, who dates Vespasian's *adventus* in Rome for the first half of October 70; B. Levick, *Vespasian*, 91, is in turn inclined to assume „the end of September”.

³⁸ *PIR*² L 216; *RE* VI 2 (1909), col. 2643.

³⁹ Tac. *Hist.* II 76.2: „ego [= Mucianus] te, Vespasiane, ad imperium voco”.

⁴⁰ Tac. *Hist.* III 44-45.

⁴¹ Tac. *Hist.* III 45: „regnum Venutio, nobis bellum relictum”; B. Levick, *Vespasian*, 107.

⁴² Tac. *Hist.* III 46.1: „Turbata per eosdem dies Germania, et socordia ducum, seditione legionum, externa vi, perfidia sociali prope adflicta Romana res”.

before the proclamation of Vespasian,⁴³ was due to the uprising of the Batavians, the so-called uprising of Civilis, which was initially clearly anti-Roman, and then, when the insurgents were joined by the Trevers and the Lingons, and, after the death of Vitellius by a part of the Roman army,⁴⁴ became also distinctly anti-Flavian. Except for Mogontiacum, all legionary camps on the Rhine fell into the hands of the insurgents, including the double fortress of Vetera (Xanten), whose soldiers were in their majority slaughtered.⁴⁵ The governor of Upper Germania, Hordeonius Flaccus,⁴⁶ died at the hands of soldiers who could not come to terms with the defeat of Vitellius. Only in autumn (September/October) of the year 70 was the situation brought under relative control. Menace was ripe on the borders on the lower Danube, where the Dacians and the Sarmatians took advantage of the fact that a major part of the forces departed for Italy. Among the casualties of these hostilities was the governor of the province of Moesia, Fonteius Agrippa,⁴⁷ sent by Vespasian, and killed at the beginning of the year 70. In Asia Minor, Anicetus, the freedman of Polemon, king of Pontus, was behind the unrest instigated *Vitelli nomine*.⁴⁸ The warfare in Judaea continued⁴⁹. From beyond the eastern borders, the Parthians kept

⁴³ E. Flaig, *Den Kaiser herausfordern. Die Usurpation im römischen Reich*, Frankfurt-New York 1992, 537.

⁴⁴ Account of events: Tac. *Hist.* IV 12-37, 54-79; V 14-26.

⁴⁵ *DNP* 12/4 (2002), p. 142 *s.v.* Vetera.

⁴⁶ Tac. *Hist.* IV 36; *PIR*² H 202; *RE* VIII (1913), col. 2405-2408.

⁴⁷ Jos. Flav. *BJ* VII 4.3; Tac. *Hist.* IV 54.1; *PIR*² F 466; *DNP* 4 (1998), 587 [II 2]; T. Sarnowski, *Wojsko rzymskie w Mezji Dolnej i na północnym wybrzeżu Morza Czarnego* [*The Roman army in Lower Moesia and on the northern coast of the Black Sea*], Warszawa 1988 (Novensia 3), 30-31.

⁴⁸ Tac. *Hist.* III 47.2-48.3; *PIR*² A 590; B. Levick, *Vespasian's reorganization of the Greek East: recovery and advance under the Flavians*, *CAH*² XI (2000), 604-611 detailed: 605.

⁴⁹ De facto until 74, i.e. to the conquest of Masada; B. Levick, *Vespasian*, 120; K. Bringmann, *Geschichte der Juden im Altertum. Vom babylonischen Exil bis zur*

a close watch of the events in Imperium Romanum, officially ready to provide military support to Vespasian.⁵⁰ The latter, however, was rather distrustful of their declarations.⁵¹

The army presented a problem.⁵² There were the soldiers who elevated Vespasian to power and awaited fitting reward. There were also those who fought on the other side – the side of Vitellius. The events indicated that the bitterness among the Rhine forces, caused by their defeat, was overwhelming.⁵³ It was essential to appease the mood of the troops, a task which required considerable dexterity. Especially in view of the deeply rooted conviction, inherent on both sides of the battlefield, that it is the army that decides who shall sit on the throne. Vespasian mitigated the crisis within the army partly with the redeployment of the troops, partly by disbanding some units and forming new ones in their place,⁵⁴ as well as dispersing the „Vitellian” soldiers into separate formations.⁵⁵ The praetorian guard, enlarged by Vitellius to 16 cohorts, was reduced by Vespasian to its former contingent, i.e. 9 cohorts. The demands of „his” soldiers were satisfied with land grants, in Italy and in

arabischen Eroberung, Stuttgart 2005, 259-260; on Masada see *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites*, Princeton 1976, 555-556.

⁵⁰ Suet. *Vesp.* 6; Tac. *Hist.* IV 51. See K.-H. Ziegler, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Rom und dem Partherreich*, Wiesbaden 1964, 78.

⁵¹ K.-H. Ziegler, *Die Beziehungen*, 78-81 (on Vespasian's policy towards Parthia). See also pertinent remarks of E. Dąbrowa, *Sur la création de la légion XVI Flavia*, *Latomus* 41, 1982, 615-616.

⁵² P. Weynand, *RE VI 2* (1909), col. 2687-2688; H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier: Vespasian, Titus und Domitian. Geschichte eines römischen Kaiserhauses*, München 1979, 92-96; C. Salles, *Les Flaviens. Vespasien, Titus, Domitien*, Paris 2002, 189-200.

⁵³ Tac. *Hist.* IV 37: although Vitellius is already dead, soldiers of the Upper Germanian army display his effigies; see E. Flaig, *Den Kaiser herausfordern*, 486-496.

⁵⁴ *RE VI 2* (1909), col. 2688. See also A. Garzetti, *Storia di Roma. L'impero da Tiberio agli Antonini*, Bologna 1960, 256-259; E. Flaig, *Den Kaiser herausfordern*, 496-502.

⁵⁵ E. Flaig, *ibidem*. See also H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier*, 92-96.

the provinces. The experience gained during the Batavian insurrection resulted in the policy of deploying auxiliary units (*auxilia*) far from the locations where they had been recruited.⁵⁶

The finances of the state were in a more than deplorable condition. Nero left the treasury empty. The events of the years 68-69 were the last straw.⁵⁷ Vespasian was facing the tremendous challenge of meeting the current needs, were it only the payment of gratuities to retiring soldiers. According to Suetonius,⁵⁸ Vespasian himself assessed the budgetary deficit to amount to the exorbitant sum of 40 billion sesterces. Should we, following the postulates of contemporary criticism, divide the amount by ten, then, in those days at least, the resulting four billion remain a mind-boggling number⁵⁹. It is estimated that the yearly revenue of the state at the time amounted to approximately one billion two hundred thousand sesterces.⁶⁰ The rational line Vespasian took with the issue, i.e. economies, consistent collection of existing taxes and the establishment of new ones,⁶¹ combined with the emperor's character features became the subject of numerous ridicules and anecdotes⁶². However, already during his stay in the East, Vespasian imposed a harsh financial regime⁶³, to which

⁵⁶ *RE* VI 2 (1909), col. 2688.

⁵⁷ A. Garzetti, *Storia di Roma*, 249-250.

⁵⁸ *Vesp.* 16.

⁵⁹ H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier*, 98-99.

⁶⁰ P.M. Rogers, *Domitian and the finances of state*, *Historia* 33, 1984, 61.

⁶¹ Meaning *fiscus Iudaicus*, *fiscus Alexandrinus* and *fiscus Asiaticus*, see below p. 27-29.

⁶² Suet. *Vesp.* 16; 19; 23; Cass. Dio LXV 8.4. See C. Salles, *Les Flaviers*, 95.

⁶³ Cf. Cass. Dio LXV 8. 3-4: „In the first place, he collected large sums from them in various ways, overlooking no source however trivial or however reprehensible it might be, but drawing upon every source, sacred and profane alike, from which money could be secured. He also renewed many taxes that had fallen into disuse, increased many that were customary, and introduced still other new ones. And he adopted this same course later in the rest of the subject territory, in Italy, and in Rome itself. Hence the Alexandrians, both for these reasons and also because he had

even the soldiers were subjected⁶⁴. To him, this was the only route to reform the finances of the state, as he rejected the possibility of running up the treasury debt, and thus risking dependence on private persons.⁶⁵ Much the same steps, although perhaps with even greater severity, were taken by Mucianus in the West.⁶⁶ The effects were not slow to follow.

The problem of the greatest magnitude, which is best epitomised in the fate of Domitian, were the relations with the senate.⁶⁷ Apparently the affairs could not have been better, the senators having recognised Vespasian as a new emperor after the death of Vitellius, and having given him full power (*lex de imperio Vespasiani*). Yet, to put it bluntly, no other option was available when peace was at stake. Vespasian was perfectly aware of the gulf dividing him from the noble senatorial families. Equally profound was his appreciation of the fact that cooperation with the senate is essential to successful rule. He made every effort to enhance his own prestige and that of his family. This might explain the assumption of consulship each year, usually in the company of his elder son, Titus,⁶⁸ as well as account for the many gestures performed towards the senators.

sold the greater part of the palace, were angry and hurled many taunts at him, this among others: «Six obols more you demand of us» (translated by E. Cary).

⁶⁴ Tac. *Hist.* II 82.2; Suet. *Vesp.* 8. Cf. P. Weynand, *RE* VI 2 (1909), col. 2687.

⁶⁵ H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier*, 98.

⁶⁶ Cass. Dio LXV 2. 5: „Now Mucianus was gathering countless sums into the public treasury with the greatest eagerness from every possible quarter, thereby relieving Vespasian of the censure which such a proceeding entailed. He was for ever declaring that money was the sinews of sovereignty; and in accordance with this belief he not only constantly urged Vespasian to raise funds from every source, but also continued from the very first to collect money himself, thus providing large amounts for the empire and at the same time acquiring large amounts for himself” (translated by E. Cary).

⁶⁷ W. Eck, *Vespasian und die senatorische Führungsschicht des Reiches*, [in:] *La Lex de Imperio Vespasiani e la Roma dei Flavi*, 231-257.

⁶⁸ A. Degrassi, *Fasti*, 20-23.

The civil war left the senatorial order, already sorely tried under Caligula and Nero, much thinned. If one believes Aurelius Victor, at the moment of the ascent of the new dynasty, the number of senators reached a mere two hundred.⁶⁹ What is more, both leading orders, the senatorial and the equestrian, were morally compromised in the wake of their servile and opportunistic conduct during the rule of Nero, which called into question their suitability, as they were then, as public servants. A reconstruction of both *ordines* was called for.⁷⁰

The Flavian dynasty ruled for no more than twenty six years. An exceptionally consistent program of reforms, implemented by Vespasian and Titus, and effectively sustained by Domitian was quick to bear fruit. Imperium Romanum overcame the crisis which had led to the civil war, but also underwent a profound transformation. In my opinion, the latter was rendered feasible only because those social groups that elevated Vespasian to power, came to the fore.

The trends of development

a. Building the new elite

*Amplissimos ordines et exhaustos caede uaria et contaminatos veteri negligentia purgavit supplevitque recenso senatu et equite, summotis indignissimis et honestissimo quoque Italicorum ac provincialium allecto.*⁷¹

This quotation best characterises the direction of Vespasian's policy with regard to the elite. Apart from removing the compromised and the

⁶⁹ Aurel. *Vict. caes.* 9, 9: „ac lectis undique optimis viris mille gentes compositae, cum ducentis aegerrime reperisset extinctis saevitia tyrannorum plerisque”. See H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier*, 90; C. Salles, *Les Flaviens*, 208.

⁷⁰ Cf. H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier*, 89-92; C. Salles, *Les Flaviens*, 207-211.

⁷¹ Suet. *Vesp.* 9.2 „He reformed the Senatorial and Equestrian orders, weakened by frequent murders and longstanding neglect; replacing undesirable members with the most eligible Italian and provincial candidates available” (transl. by R. Graves).

undesirable from *ordo senatorius*, who were by no means eligible for the senior functions of the state.⁷² Vespasian took energetic steps to increase the order's number and restore its prestige. Aurelius Victor states that he increased the number of senate's members to a thousand.⁷³ These data, probably not deviating too much from the actual figures,⁷⁴ represent the scale of the problem. Many senators were excluded from the *ordo* for purely economical reasons; those, if deserving in Vespasian's eyes, received his financial support. Suetonius puts it thus: *explevit censum senatorium, consulares inopes quingenis sestertiis annuis sustentavit*.⁷⁵ Above all, however, Vespasian introduced a group of dynamic *homines novi* into the senatorial order. Such actions had already been instituted in 69, during his stay in the East.⁷⁶ The moves concerned first and foremost the equestrian military commanders, persons from the immediate base of the new emperor. The vertical mobility, in other words the progression from the equestrian into the senatorial order, flourished, in Flavian times, on an unprecedented scale. The year 73/74 was a turning point, when the censorship of Vespasian and Titus allowed both rulers to take radical action. A large group of *homines novi* augmented the composition of the senate. A complete reorganisation of the political elite took place, particularly when the reshuffle within the very *amplissimus ordo* is considered, namely, the promotion of the merited (and loyal to the new order) senators to the circle of the *patricii*.⁷⁷

⁷² There were exceptions, however, as in the case of Eprius Marcellus.

⁷³ Aurel. Victor, *Liber de caes.* 9, 9.

⁷⁴ H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier*, 90.

⁷⁵ Suet. *Vesp.* 17: „granting subventions to senators who did not possess the property qualifications of their rank; securing impoverished ex-consuls an annual pension of 5,000 gold pieces” (transl. by R. Graves). Cf. C. Salles, *Les Flaviens*, 96.

⁷⁶ Tac. *Hist.* II: „multos praefecturis e procurationibus, plerosque senatorii ordinis honore percoluit, egregios viros et mox summa adeptos”. Cf. H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier*, 89.

⁷⁷ H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier*, 92.

The Flavians preferred to complement the ranks of both *ordines* with candidates from the provinces.⁷⁸ The research on *adlecti* in the times of Vespasian demonstrates that 60-63 % of those originated from Italy, from which it follows that their status was identical with the status the *gens Flavia* possessed formerly, while 30-33% of the *adlecti* came from the provinces, chiefly from the western ones: Narbonian Gaul, Spain and Africa. The eastern *homines novi* arrived from Asia Minor,⁷⁹ Syria and Egypt. Under Vespasian the newcomers accounted for around 15%, whereas during the reign of Domitian, for 26% of the entire composition of the senate.⁸⁰ Among the senators of provincial origin the proportion amounted to 22% (Vespasian) and 37% (Domitian).⁸¹ Without doubt, with respect to the influx of *homines novi* from outside the city, in social and political terms this was nothing short of extraordinary.⁸²

⁷⁸ H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier*, 89-92; M. Hammond, *The transmission of the powers of the Roman emperor from the death of Nero in A.D. 68 to that of Aleksander Severus in A.D. 235*, MAAR XXV 1956, 67-86; G.W. Houston, *Vespasian's adlection of men in senatum*, AJPh 98, 1977, 35-63; J. Devreker, *La composition du sénat romain sous les Flaviens*, [in:] *Studien zur antiken Sozialgeschichte. Festschrift Friedrich Vittinghoff*, hrsg. von W. Eck, H. Galsterer und H. Wolff, Köln 1980, 257-268; idem, *L'adlectio in senatum de Vepasien*, Latomus 39, 1980, 70-87; G.W. Houston, *Vespasian's adlection of men in senatum*, AJPh 98, 1977, 35-63; B. Levick, *Vespasian*, 170-183.

⁷⁹ See particularly E. Dąbrowa, *L'Asie mineure sous les Flaviens. Recherches sur la politique provinciale*, Kraków 1980, 54-70 [Les représentants de l'aristocratie d'Asie mineure au sein de l'élite romaine du pouvoir]; B. Levick, *Roman colonies in southern Asia Minor*, Oxford 1967, 103-120; eadem, *Vespasian's reorganization of the Greek East* (note 48, above), 610-611.

⁸⁰ M. Hammond, *Composition of the Senate A.D. 68-235*, JRS 47, 1957, 74-81, especially the list on p. 77; J. Devreker, *Les orientaux au sénat romain d'Auguste à Trajan*, Latomus 41, 1982, 492-516; B. Levick, *Vespasian*, 173; C. Salles, *Les Flaviens*, 209.

⁸¹ J. Devreker, *Les orientaux*, 498.

⁸² E. Dąbrowa, *L'Asie mineure*, 54: „L'un des phénomènes socio-politique les plus curieux du temps de l'Empire est sans aucune doute d'avoir provincialisé le sénat. On le voit dans la proportion toujours croissante de sénateurs originaires de pro-

Accordingly, the role of the equestrian order increased. Its circles were fed by a stream of provincial notables who embarked on a career of an official. The equites enjoyed particular support from Domitian:⁸³ it was at this time that the management of the great imperial offices, so far a domain of the freedmen, was given to the equestrian procurators.⁸⁴ Domitian created also several new equestrian posts.⁸⁵ In the 2nd century it became self-evident that those running the great imperial offices should originate from the circle of the *ordo equester*.⁸⁶ Pursuing their policy of raising the prestige of both *ordines*, the Flavians denied freedmen and their sons any entry to the senate and higher offices destined for the senatorial order, and in the case of *ordo equester*, severely limited their access.⁸⁷

The transformation of the political elite was an unquestionable success of the Flavians. This very elite and its descendants would rule the Roman Empire in the 2nd century, and the subsequent emperors would come from its bosom, beginning with Trajan.⁸⁸ This elite would decide on the future development of the state.

b. Integration of the empire

The growing number of senators and equites of provincial origin is the best proof that the integration of Imperium Romanum intensified

vince et, ce qui s'ensuit, dans la participation de plus en plus grande des représentants des provinces à la vie politique de Rome.”

⁸³ S. Demougin, *L'ordre équestre sous Domitien*, [in:] *Les Années Domitien*, eds. J.-M. Pailler, R. Sablayrolles, Toulouse 1994 (Pallas 40), 289-299; C. Salles, l.c.

⁸⁴ Caius Licinius Capito, whom Domitian appointed procurator *ab epistulis* and *a patrimonio*; continued in his post under Trajan; H. Bengtson, *Die Flavien*, 256; C. Salles, *Les Flavien*, 210.

⁸⁵ C. Salles, *Les Flavien*, 210.

⁸⁶ C. Salles, *Les Flavien*, 210.

⁸⁷ H. Bengtson, *Die Flavien*, 91-92.

⁸⁸ H. Bengtson, *Die Flavien*, 89-92; C. Salles, *Les Flavien*, 211.

progressively.⁸⁹ Naturally, it is a phenomenon that had begun much earlier, and its prominent example is the speech of emperor Claudius concerning the admission of a number of Gaul notables to the senate.⁹⁰ The tangible acceleration of the process during the Flavian times must be construed as an outcome of the ever more evident tendencies postulating unification of the Imperium Romanum combined with the increase in significance of the provinces.

This includes the reforms in territorial and administrative affairs undertaken by Vespasian and continued by Domitian. The baseline of the reforms was the abolishment of client states still extant within the Empire, which resulted in an ordered arrangement of the provincial structure. The ultimate aim of the reforms was to enhance the management efficacy, as well as to improve the defence system of the frontier territories. This applied primarily to the eastern parts of the state, in view of the situation which developed after the Jewish War. Vespasian remained also highly alert with regard to the Parthians.⁹¹

At the time Judaea was transformed into an autonomous praetor province with a one-legion garrison (legio X Fretensis).⁹² The client status was retained by Marcus Julius Agrippa II (M. Iulius Agrippa), the son of Herodes Julius Agrippa I, who, as a „king of Judaea”, ruled the lands to the east and north-east from Jordan at the time when the Jewish War broke out. During the conflict with the Jews he stood steadfast

⁸⁹ E. Dąbrowa, *L'Asie mineure*, 54-55.

⁹⁰ Tac. *Ann.* II 23-25; *CIL* XIII 1668 = *ILS* 212; F. Vittinghoff, *Zur Rede des Kaisers Claudius über die Aufnahme von „Galliern“ in den römischen Senat*, [in:] idem, *Civitas Romana. Stadt und politisch-soziale Integration im Imperium Romanum*, hrsg. von W. Eck, Stuttgart 1994, 299-321.

⁹¹ K.-H. Ziegler, *Die Beziehungen*, 78-81; E. Dąbrowa, *Les rapports entre Rome et les Parthes sous Vespasien*, *Syria* 58, 1981, 187-204.

⁹² See E. Dąbrowa, *Legio X Fretensis. A prosopographical study on its officers (I-III c. A.D.)*, Stuttgart 1993, 13-15; F. Millar, *The Roman Near East, 31 BC – AD 337*, Cambridge Mass.-London 1993, 76; M. Sartre, *Syria and Arabia*, *CAH*² (2000), 635-641.

at the side of the Romans, and provided active support to Vespasian during his fight for the throne, for which he was awarded with an extension of his dominion.⁹³ Domitian incorporated the country into the Imperium Romanum only after Agrippa's death in 93.⁹⁴ A similar fate awaited the kingdom of Emesa (78 at the latest)⁹⁵, Chalkis and the many neighbouring small tetrarchies.⁹⁶

In Asia Minor, in 72, Vespasian liquidated the kingdom Commagene of Antioch IV Epiphanes and incorporated it into Syria.⁹⁷ Cilicia Trachea was made into an autonomous province with a capital in Tarsus.⁹⁸ Cilicia Campestris (Pedias) was severed from Syria and combined with Lycaonia and Isauria into a separate province.⁹⁹ Cappadocia, a former procuratorial province, was expanded to include Armenia Minor, where the vassal kingdom of Aristobulos¹⁰⁰ was dissolved. The same applied to Galatia, whose territory was enlarged by inclusion of the lands of

⁹³ M. Smallwood, 339-340.

⁹⁴ *RE* X (1917), col. 146-150; *DNP* 5 (1998), 461-462 *s.v.* Herodes [8] (H.) Iulius Agrippa I; 6 (1999), 24 *s.v.* Iulius [II 5] M(arcus) I(ulius) Agrippa; B.W. Jones, *Titus*, 59-63; Ch.L. Murison, *Rebellion and reconstruction*, 171; K. Bringmann, *Geschichte der Juden*, 238.

⁹⁵ F. Millar, *Roman Near East*, 84; M. Sartre, *Syria and Arabia*, 639.

⁹⁶ M. Sartre, *Syria and Arabia*, 639; F. Millar, *Roman Near East*, 80-90.

⁹⁷ Suet. *Vesp.* 8.4; P. Weynand, *RE* VI 2 (1909), col. 2654-2655; D. Magie, *Roman rule in Asia Minor*, Princeton 1950, 573-574; T.B. Mitford, *Cappadocia and Armenia Minor: historical setting of the limes*, ANRW II 7.2 (1980), 1181-1182; E. Dąbrowa, *Rapports entre Rome et les Parthes* (note 91), 197-200; idem, *The Frontier in Syria in the first century AD*, [in:] *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East. Proceedings of a colloquium held at the University of Sheffield in April 1986*, eds. Ph. Freeman, D. Kennedy, Oxford 1986 (BAR International Series 297,1), 93-108 esp. 99-101; C. Salles, *Les Flaviens*, 198-199.

⁹⁸ Suet. *Vesp.* 8.4; *DNP* 2 (1997), 1202.

⁹⁹ M. Sartre, *Syria and Arabia*, 637.

¹⁰⁰ T.B. Mitford, *Cappadocia*, 1180-1181; D. Magie, *Roman rule in Asia Minor*, 574; E. Dąbrowa, *Rapports entre Rome et les Parthes* (as in note 91), 194-197; idem, *Roman Policy in Transcaucasia from Pompey to Domitian*, [in:] *The eastern frontier of*

the former Pontian kingdom of Polemon.¹⁰¹ Cappadocia was given the status of a consular province, with a two-legion strong garrison.¹⁰² Licia and Pamphilia became one province again.¹⁰³ All other minor client states gradually underwent liquidation.

In the West, in 74, the Empire acquired *agri decumates*,¹⁰⁴ a wedge of land between the Middle Neckar and the Upper Rhine and Danube. The campaign, confirmed only in epigraphic sources, was led by Cn. Pinarius Cornelius Clemens¹⁰⁵, *legatus pr. pr. exercitus Germaniae superioris*.¹⁰⁶ The annexation of *agri decumates* may be compared to the taking of Commagene: in either case the aim was to create strategically valid, reliable communication lines and simultaneously to improve the defence of the borders.¹⁰⁷ There can also be no doubt that the enterprise was systemic in nature, and was executed according to a well thought-out plan, which was consistent with the general concept of

the Roman Empire. Proceedings of a colloquium held at Ankara in September 1988, D. French, C.S. Lightfoot (eds.), Oxford 1989, 67-76, esp. 71-72.

¹⁰¹ Abolished by Nero already in 64. See also F. Cumont, *L'annexion du Pont Polémoniaque et de la Petite Arménie*, [in:] *Anatolian Studies presented to Sir William Mitchell Ramsay*, W.H. Buckler, W.M. Calder (eds.), Manchester 1923, 109-119, esp. 113-115.

¹⁰² Suet. *Vesp.* 8.4; D. Magie, *Roman rule in Asia Minor*, 574; E. Dąbrowa, *Le limes anatolien et la frontière caucasienne au temps des Flaviens*, *Klio* 62, 1980, 379-388; T.B. Mitford, *Cappadocia*, 1182-1188; R. Teja, *Die römische Provinz Kappadokien in der Prinzipatszeit*, *ANRW II* 7.2 (1980), 1087.

¹⁰³ P. Weynand, *RE VI* 2 (1909), col. 2683; T.B. Mitford, *Roman Rough Cilicia*, *ANRW II* 7.2 (1980), 1247.

¹⁰⁴ P. Weynand, *RE VI* 2 (1909), col. 2661-2663; B.W. Henderson, *Five Roman emperors: Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva, Trajan A.D. 69-117*, Cambridge 1927, 89-94; H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier*, 96-98; A. Becker, *Rom und die Chatten*, Darmstadt-Marburg 1992, 251-264; *DNP* 3 (1997), 354-356 *s.v.* *decumates agri*.

¹⁰⁵ *PIR*² C 1341; P. Weynand, *RE VI* 2 (1909), col. 2661-2663.

¹⁰⁶ *CIL XII* 113. Cf. also *CIL XI* 5271=*ILS* 997 (HisPELLUM): ... triumphalibus ornament[is ... ob res] in Germ[ania] prospere gestas].

¹⁰⁷ Cf. E. Dąbrowa, *Frontier in Syria*, 99 (on Commagene).

state reorganisation. In my view, the short time-span separating the two actions sufficiently confirms this assumption. The designs of Vespasian regarding the Rhine areas were completed by Domitian. The victorious war with the Chatti¹⁰⁸ in the years 83-85 consolidated Roman presence on the „external” side of the Rhine, with a certain extension of Roman dominions outside *agri decumates*. The state of affairs was validated by the creation of German provinces, the Upper and the Lower Germania.¹⁰⁹

Domitian was also the one to face the task of addressing the difficulties which emerged in Britain and on the Danube. Britain had been a conflict-ripe area for several years;¹¹⁰ the conquest of the island, initiated by Claudius, was not yet complete. Since the beginning of his reign, Vespasian devoted much attention to the affairs in Britain; his most trusted and experienced people were employed there.¹¹¹ In 77, Gneius Julius Agricola (Cn. Iulius Agricola),¹¹² a person well familiar with the British issues,¹¹³ was appointed governor of Britain. In the

¹⁰⁸ K. Strobel, *Der Chattenkrieg Domitians*, Germania 65, 1987, 423-452; A. Becker, *Rom und die Chatten*, 265-299 (including all earlier writings); D. Timpe, *Germanen, Germania, Germanische Altertumskunde*, RGA 11 (1998), 230.

¹⁰⁹ Possibly already in 84, so A. Becker, *Rom und die Chatten*, 299-303, esp. 300. See also D. Timpe, *ibidem*, 228-233; *DNP* 4 (1998), 959.

¹¹⁰ Since the insurrection of the Iceni under Boudicca in 61, until the victory of Agricola at Mons Graupius in 83, one can freely speak of state of permanent warfare in Britain; see G. P. Welch, *Britannia. The Roman conquest and occupation of Britain*, Middletown 1963, esp. 87-140; G. Webster, *Boudica: the British revolt against Rome AD 60*, London 1978; P.S. Fry, *Roman Britain. History and sites*, London 1984, 67-83; S. Frere, *Britannia. A history of Roman Britain*³, London-New York 1987, 48-80; *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*³, London 1996, 261-263 *s.v.* Britannia; *DNP* 2 (1997), 758 *s.v.* Boudicca; 783 *s.v.* Britannia.

¹¹¹ Q. Petilis Cerialis Caesius Rufus, governor in 71-73/74 and Sex. Iulius Frontinus, governor in 73/74-77. See A.R. Birley, *The Roman government of Britain*, Oxford 2005, 62-71.

¹¹² *PIR*² I 126.

¹¹³ J. Asbach, *Die Kriege der Flavischen Kaiser an der Nordgrenze des Reiches*, BJ 81, 1886, 26-27; G.P. Welch, *Britannia*, 104-140; W.S. Hanson, *Agricola and the*

fighters with tribes of southern Scotland he achieved first the line of the later Wall of Antoninus (Firth of Forth – Firth of Clyde), where he erected the first castles, and then drove even further North, no doubt attempting to conquer the entire island.¹¹⁴ In 83, in the battle at Mons Graupius¹¹⁵ Agricola decidedly settled Roman success, thereby establishing a sound premise for further expansion¹¹⁶. The expansion was indeed continued for a time after Agricola had been recalled.¹¹⁷ The strained situation on the Rhine, and in particular on the Danube compelled Domitian to halt in Britain, and subsequently to withdraw Roman forces to the Forth-Clyde line.¹¹⁸ Nonetheless, Agricola's victory assured stabilisation which lasted until the times of Hadrian.¹¹⁹

The circumstances on the Danube were far more complex since on the northern side of the river, there had evolved a robust state of the Dacians. The Romans became painfully aware of the fact already in 69-70, which has been discussed above. The Dacians destabilised (from the Roman point of view) the whole Danube region, and in consequence the Flavians were forced to focus much of their attention there.¹²⁰ In spite of the measures implemented by Vespasian and the

conquest of the North, London 1987; B. Levick, *Vespasian*, 158-160; *DNP* 6 (1999), 23 s.v. Iulius [II 3] Cn(eius) I(ulius) Agricola; A.R. Birley, *The Roman government of Britain*, 71-95.

¹¹⁴ L. Dodi, *L'urbanistica Romana in Britannia*, Milano 1974, 39-42; W.S. Hanson, *Agricola*, 115-173; S. Frere, *Britannia*, 81-104.

¹¹⁵ On dating see A.S. Birley, *The Roman government of Britain*, 77-78.

¹¹⁶ W.S. Hanson, *Agricola*, 136-139; S. Frere, *Britannia*, 94-97; *DNP* 8 (2000), 381-382 s.v. Mons Graupius.

¹¹⁷ K. Strobel, *Nochmals zur Datierung der Schlacht am Mons Graupius*, *Historia* 36, 1987, 198-212, esp. 205-208, 210-211; A.R. Birley, *The Roman government of Britain*, 99.

¹¹⁸ S. Frere, *Britannia*, 101-102; B. Levick, *Vespasian*, 160.

¹¹⁹ G.P. Welch, *Britannia*, 141-157; W.S. Hanson, *Agricola*, 143-173; S. Frere, *Britannia*, 105-125.

¹²⁰ C. Patsch, *Der Kampf um den Donaauraum unter Domitian und Trajan*,

indisputable strengthening of Rome's importance during his reign,¹²¹ in the middle of the 80s there escalated a conflict which persisted until 89. Its first stage was disastrous for the Romans, who paid their toll in grave defeat and the loss of the governor of Moesia, C. Oppius Sabinus (in the summer of 85),¹²² to be followed next year by the disaster of the expedition army commanded by Cornelius Fuscus, who also lost his life on the battlefield.¹²³ Romans overcame the losing streak in 88: in the battle at Tapae the Roman army commander Tettius Iulianus won an unquestionable victory over the Dacians.¹²⁴ Domitian's presumable aim was the annihilation of the Dacian state, but the outbreak of a war on the Middle Danube, on the border with Pannonia, intervened. The war was waged against Germanic tribes (Quades and Marcomanns),¹²⁵ who were joined by the Sarmatian Iazyges.¹²⁶ This decided on the conclusion of

Wien-Leipzig 1937; T. Sarnowski, *Wojsko rzymskie w Mezji Dolnej i na północnym wybrzeżu Morza Czarnego* [The Roman army in Lower Moesia and on the northern coast of the Black Sea], Warszawa 1988, 39-52; K. Strobel, *Die Donaukriege Domitians*, Bonn 1989; C. Salles, *Les Flaviens*, 197-198.

¹²¹ J. Asbach, *Die Kriege der Flavischen Kaiser*, 30-31; K. Strobel, *Die Donaukriege Domitians*, 35, 38; T. Sarnowski, *ibidem*.

¹²² Chronology according to K. Strobel, *Domitian*, 40-43; T. Sarnowski, *Wojsko rzymskie w Mezji Dolnej*, 48 („most probably, already at the beginning of 85”).

¹²³ Suet. *Dom.* 6; Eutropius VII 23.4: „a Dacis Oppius Sabinus consularis et Cornelius Fuscus praefectus praetorio cum magnis exercitibus occisi sunt.”; Jord. *Get.* 76-78.

¹²⁴ The analysis of events, with references to sources: K. Strobel, *Domitian*, 35-81.

¹²⁵ A. Mócsy, *Pannonia*, *RE* Suppl. IX (1962), col. 5551-5552; K. Strobel, *Domitian*, 83-104.

¹²⁶ Tac. *Hist.* I 2.1; Cass. Dio LXVII 5.2; K. Strobel, *Domitian*, 87. The Iazyges belonged to a group of Sarmatian tribes of Iranian origin. Between 350 and 250 BC they gained control of the steppes north of the Black Sea, driving out the Scythians. Around 60 BC the Sarmatian tribes split, with the Iazyges migrating West, and, after a time, reaching the line of the Danube. In the 1st century AD they occupied

a peace with the Dacian king Decebalus,¹²⁷ which became the object of so much derision in the ancient sources. Given the benefit of hindsight, one can have little doubt that in those particular circumstances the peace was a major success, and was in keeping with the Roman *raison d'état*.¹²⁸

The settlement of relations with the Dacians, regardless of the conditions which enforced it, conformed smoothly to the Flavian policy of arranging border relations, as was the case in the East, in Britain and on the Rhine. Decebalus had to acknowledge his status of a client of the Roman emperor. The war against the Quades, Marcomanns and Iazyges had the purpose of punishing the disloyal allies and the restoration of the former order, namely the cliental relations with those tribes.¹²⁹ Domitian also drew apposite conclusions as to the ability to react efficiently to external threat, and, in 86, acted accordingly dividing Moesia into two provinces: the Upper and the Lower.¹³⁰ Conceivably, the solution was modelled on the arrangement in the Rhine areas, where such division, i.e. into two military districts, had been in operation long before the German provinces were created.

The liquidation of the internal client states, the harmonisation of affairs with the border peoples and states, not only the client ones (Parthia), the demarcation of frontiers and the creation of new provinces, energetic development of road engineering encompassing the entire state, inclusive of Italy¹³¹ – all those efforts combine into one

the area between the Tisza and the Danube. M. Eggers, *Sarmaten*, RGA 26, 2004, 503-506.

¹²⁷ Cass. Dio LXVII 7.2-4.

¹²⁸ K. Strobel, *Domitian*, 94, with references.

¹²⁹ Cass. Dio LXVII 1.1.

¹³⁰ L. Mrozewicz, *Strategiczne przesłanki utworzenia rzymskiej prowincji Mezji Dolnej* [*Strategic premises in the creation of the Roman province Lower Moesia*], *Meander* 30, 1975, 281-291.

¹³¹ The building of a road infrastructure in *agri decumates* began with a military road (*via militaris*), which connected Argentorate (Strassburg) with Rhaetia (Vindonissa), see *CIL* XIII 9082 = *ILS* 5832: „*iter de[rectum ab Arge]ntorate in R[aeliam*

coherent design, which was being consistently put into practice across the Empire.

The discussed examples of actions taken in the East and in the northern reaches of the Empire have to be supplemented with other instances of administrative endeavours of Vespasian and his sons. A comprehensive land survey was conducted, which involved a precise estimation of boundary lines between tribal territories, municipalities and other communes, as well as calculation of the extent of their land property. The best preserved evidence of the activity is the complex of

per m.p. ...] in r[ipam Danuvii]"; P. Weynand, *RE* VI 2 (1909), col. 2662; also in the East, the purpose of road construction was to connect Roman military garrisons and strategic sites, see P. Weynand, *RE* VI 2 (1909), col. 2554; E. Dąbrowa, *Les voies romaines d'Asie Mineure depuis Manius Aquilius jusqu'à Marc Aurèle*, Etudes et Travaux IX 1976, 129-141, cf. p. 131: „En principe, pendant la première moitié du I^{er} s. ap. J.-C., les soins que les empereurs prenaient de l'état de routes provinciales se réduisent aux travaux de reconstruction et d'entretien. Des changements décisifs dans cette sphère d'activité n'interviennent que sous les Flaviens [...]. L'effort principal se dirige vers la construction de nouvelles routes [...]. Les travaux esquissés par Vespasien sont continués par Titus et Domitien, ensuite par Nerva, Trajan et Hadrien"; D.H. French, *The Roman road-system of Asia Minor*, ANRW II 7.2 (1980), 711-713, 715-717 no. 6-10; idem, *Roman roads and milestones of Asia Minor*, fasc. 1: *The pilgrim's road*, Oxford 1981 (BAR Intern. Series 105), 83; fasc. 2: *An interim catalogue of milestones*, Oxford 1988 (BAR Intern. Series 392, II), 430-431; Berchem D. van, *Une inscription flavienne du Musée d'Antioche*, *Museum Helveticum* 40, 1983, 185-196; F. Millar, *Roman Near East*, 82-84, 88-89; in other parts of the Empire: P. Sillières, *Les voies de communication de l'Hispanie meridionale*, Paris 1990, 588-589; C. Salles, 184; A.U. Stylow, R. A. Paez, J.C. Vera, *Via Domitiana Augusta*, [in:] *Siedlung und Verkehr im Römischen Reich. Römerstrassen zwischen Herrschaftssicherung und Landschaftsprägung*, Bern 2003, 361-378; J. Andreu Pentado, *Un capítulo de los construcción publica en epoca de Domiciano en las provinciae. La inciativa imperial*, *Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne* 34, 2, 2008, 115-143; Weynand, *RE* VI 2 (1909), col. 2663, 2670, 2680, J.E. Blamberg, *The public image projected by the Roman emperors (A.D. 69-117) as reflected in contemporary imperial coinage*, Indiana University Ph.D. 1976, 170-171 (on the road from Sineussa to Puteoli, paved by Domitian: Cass. Dio LXVII 14.1).

land survey inscriptions from Arausio (Orange) in Narbonian Gaul, of the year 77¹³². The emperor, utilising the land registry files, also those dating back to August, strove to enable *fiscus* to recover the so-called *subseciva*, i.e. lands which unlawfully passed into private hands, or else sought to validate the extent of property possessed by individual communes.¹³³ The activities of land registry officials (*mensores*) are confirmed in various parts of the Empire: in Italy and Corsica,¹³⁴ Spain,¹³⁵ Africa,¹³⁶ Egypt,¹³⁷ in Gaul and Greece.¹³⁸

Without doubt, the work of the *mensores* remained closely associated with the Flavian policy of extending the municipal system and encouraging municipal development. This involved both granting Roman rights to the existing autochthonous cities, as well as the foundation of new ones.¹³⁹ This is best exemplified in Spain, which, by virtue of an edict of Vespasian's, probably dating to 73/74, obtained municipal rights *ex iure Latini*.¹⁴⁰ This „minor Latin Right” was a direct stage on the way to obtaining full Roman citizenship by performing official municipal duties. Even under the assumption that Plinius'

¹³² A. Piganiol, *Les documents cadastraux de la colonie romaine d'Orange*, Paris 1962 (XVI^e supplément à «Gallia»), see esp. 79-89 («L'inscription de Vespasien»).

¹³³ P. Weynand, *RE* VI 2(1909), col. 2686; G. Corradi, *Domitianus*, *Dizionario Epigrafico di Antichità romane* II.3 (1922), 2007; A. Piganiol, *Les documents cadastraux*, 87; C. Salles, *Les Flaviens*, 173.

¹³⁴ A. Piganiol, *Les documents cadastraux*, 85-88; C. Salles, *Les Flaviens*, 174-175.

¹³⁵ A. Piganiol, *Les documents cadastraux*, 86; C. Salles, *Les Flaviens*, 176.

¹³⁶ A. Piganiol, *Les documents cadastraux*, 87; M. Leglay, *Les Flaviens et l'Afrique*, *MEFRA* 80, 1968, 225-230; H. Bengtson, *Die Flavien*, 126-127.

¹³⁷ A. Piganiol, *Les documents cadastraux*, 87; C. Salles, *Les Flaviens*, 175.

¹³⁸ B. Levick, *Vespasian*, 135.

¹³⁹ See B. Levick, *Vespasian*, 134-142.

¹⁴⁰ Plinius *NH* III 30: „universae Hispaniae Vespasianus imperator Augustus iactatum procellis rei publicae Latium tribuit,„. See H. Galsterer, *Untersuchungen zum römischen Städtewesen auf der Iberischen Halbinsel*, Berlin 1971, 37-50; H. Bengtson, *Die Flavien*, 100-101.

universae Hispaniae ... Latium tribuit is more than fairly exaggerated¹⁴¹, the scale of the enterprise was unprecedented. When the extent itself is considered, the undertaking outstripped by far the granting of *ius Latii* to the inhabitants of Transpadane Gaul in the year 89 BC¹⁴², to Sicily by Caesar¹⁴³ or to Alpes Maritimae by Nero,¹⁴⁴ and even more so in the case of selected cities of Noricum which received grants from Claudius. Most certainly, the attribution of municipal rights to particular Spanish communes, with a precise determination of their lands was a process lasting up to more than ten years. The preservation of *leges Irnitana*, *Salpensana* and *Malacitana*, dated to the beginning of Domitian's rule testify to that effect.¹⁴⁵ Why is it that only Spanish provinces *in toto* were entailed by the grant of *ius Latii* is an unanswered quandary, and one might only speculate as to that particular choice.¹⁴⁶

The Flavians brought their consistent policy of municipalisation and urbanisation to other parts of the Empire, which can visibly be evidenced by the appellation „Flavia” found in the names of numerous municipalities. The description was given to newly founded cities

¹⁴¹ H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier*, 100; generally on the activities of Flavians in Spain see: R.K. McElderry, *Vespasian reconstruction of Spain*, JRS 8, 1919, 53-102; idem, *Vespasian reconstruction of Spain – Addenda*, JRS 9, 1919, 86-94; J. Andreu Pintado, *Edictum, municipium y lex: Hispania en época Flavia (69-96 d.C.)*, Oxford 2004. See also A. Stylow, *Apuntes sobre epigrafía de época flavia en Hispania*, Gerion 4, 1986, 285-311, esp. 307-311.

¹⁴² B. Levick, *Vespasian*, 139.

¹⁴³ Cic. *ad Att.* XIV 12.1.

¹⁴⁴ Tac. *Ann.* XV 32: „eodem anno [= 63 AD.] Caesar [= Nero] nationes Alpium Maritimarum in ius Latii transtulit”. See H. Galsterer, *Untersuchungen*, 37; B. Levick, *Vespasian*, 139; J. Andreu Pintado, *Edictum, municipium y lex*, 7.

¹⁴⁵ H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier*, 100-101.

¹⁴⁶ H. Galsterer, *Untersuchungen*, 37; H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier*, 101; M. Zimmermann, *Galba und die Verleihung des ius Latii an 'ganz Spanien' durch Vespasian*, [in:] *Fremde Zeiten. Festschrift für Jürgen Borchardt zum sechszigsten Geburtstag am 25. Februar 1996 dargebracht von Kollegen, Schülern und Freunden*, hrsg. von F. Blakolmer *et alii*, Bd. II, Wien 1996, 243-252.

(colonies) as well as to settlements which were being granted municipal rights. A great number of instances may be found in Africa,¹⁴⁷ Gaul, the countries of the Danube and on the Balkan Peninsula, and in the East.¹⁴⁸ Among the better known Flavian colonies one could name Aventicum in Upper Germania, Sirmium and Siscia in Pannonia, Scupi in Moesia, or Caesarea Maritima in Palestine,¹⁴⁹ whereas in Africa there were Ammaedara – Colonia Flavia Augusta Emerita, and Madaura – Colonia Flavia Augusta Veteranorum.¹⁵⁰

The actions referred to above were perfectly congruous with the Flavian stance on provinces, in which the latter were perceived as an equally legitimate component of the Roman state. This explains the violent reactions, particularly Domitian's, to any malpractices of the provincial administration. As has been rightly observed, during his rule none of the notorious *de repetundiis* trials were recorded for the simple reason that they were not necessary. The fear of emperor's reaction compelled the province governors and their subordinates to guard their conduct. It is therefore no surprise that the inhabitants of the provinces honoured the Flavians as benefactors.¹⁵¹

c. Restitution of the state finances

The solutions aimed at ameliorating the state's financial situation, implemented by Vespasian and his successors were quick to bear fruit. The chief contributions were derived from the new poll taxes: *fiscus Iudaicus*, *fiscus Alexandrinus* and *fiscus Asiaticus*. The first had been imposed on the Jews by way of a restriction after the Jewish War,¹⁵² the

¹⁴⁷ M. Leglay, *Les Flaviens*, 221-222.

¹⁴⁸ B. Levick, *Vespasian*, 140-142; eadem, *Vespasian's reorganization of the Greek East* (note 48, above), 608-609.

¹⁴⁹ H. Bengtson, *Die Flavii*, 101.

¹⁵⁰ M. Leglay, *Les Flaviens*, 221-222.

¹⁵¹ H. Bengtson, *Die Flavii*, 252-256.

¹⁵² Cass. Dio LXV 7.2; Suet. *Dom.* 12.2; it was a tax exacted from the Jews, in

Alexandrian applied to all inhabitants of the Egyptian Alexandria¹⁵³, while the Asian to the Greek cities of the Asia Minor.¹⁵⁴ The Jewish tax itself, assuming it entailed approx 5-6 million people, accounted for 5-6 % of the global revenue to the state treasury,¹⁵⁵ which, as we remember amounted to ca. one billion, two hundred million sesterces. As previously mentioned, the so-called *subseciva* recovered thanks to the land survey became lands for sale, which in turn contributed to the state finances. The tax exemption granted by Nero to the cities of Greece (Achaea), Rhodes, Samos, Byzantium and Licia was revoked.¹⁵⁶ Once the stringent collection of the existing taxes¹⁵⁷ is added to the equation, one can hardly be surprised that the Flavians restored financial balance in a relatively short time. Despite the expenses involved in the grand building projects in the city of Rome itself (Capitol rebuilt twice, erection of the Colosseum, also numerous temples and buildings of public utility, such as the Trajan's baths), the support provided to cities in need (Pompeii and Herculaneum), the funding of great imperial

the amount of 2 denars a year, and imposed after the destruction of the Temple, for which they had paid the same fee previously; according to Joseph Flavius (*BJ* VII 218) the duty applied to practising Jews from the entire Roman state; therefore, it did not entail apostates as well as those who were not Jews by origin and converted to Judaism; emperor Domitian, however, included both of the latter groups into the obligation to pay; during his reign the collection of the „Jewish tax” was executed with extreme strictness (Suet. *Dom.* 12.2); *fiscus Iudaicus* was significantly mitigated under Nerva; still, that the tax was in operation is confirmed until half of the 3rd century. See: L. Schumacher, *Social undertakings of the Roman emperors*, Poznań 1995 (Xenia Posnaniensia IX), 15-16; L.A. Thompson, *Domitian and the Jewish tax*, *Historia* 31, 1982, 329-342; M.H. Williams, *Domitian, the Jews and the 'Judaizers' – a simple matter of cupiditas and maiestas?*, *Historia* 38, 1990, 196-211; *DNP* 4 (1998), 532 s.v. *Fiscus Iudaicus*; Ch.L. Murison, *Rebellion and reconstruction*, 141.

¹⁵³ Cass. Dio LXV 8.4. See Ch.L. Murison, *Rebellion and reconstruction*, 145.

¹⁵⁴ H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier*, 99.

¹⁵⁵ C. Salles, *Les Flaviens*, 178.

¹⁵⁶ Suet. *Vesp.* 8.4; Eutr. VII 19.4; Oros. VII 9.10; H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier*, 99.

¹⁵⁷ W. Eck, *Provincial administration and finance*, *CAH²* XI (2000), 282-292.

liberalitates, the countless wars and the increase of soldiers' pay, the finances of the state, when left by Domitian in 96, were in good condition.¹⁵⁸ To a fair extent, this explains the later successes of Nerva, and, in particular, Trajan.¹⁵⁹

d. The foreign policy

On balance, the achievements of the foreign policy in the period from 69 to 96 must unanimously be pronounced positive. First and foremost, the situation in the East, never a trifling issue, remained in full check of the Romans. Although the relations with the Parthian state were cool, there was no major military conflict, minor incidents notwithstanding¹⁶⁰. In Britain, although the expansion due North halted at the Forth-Clyde line, the Romans were still masters of the situation. On the Rhine, the relations with the Germans were arranged in accordance with Roman intentions, while *agri decumates*, extended North to the line of Taunus became an integral part of Imperium Romanum.

¹⁵⁸ R. Syme, *The imperial finances under Domitian, Nerva and Trajan*, [in:] idem, *Roman papers I*, Oxford 1979, 1-17 (= JRS 20, 1930, 55-70); C.H.V. Sutherland, *The state of the imperial treasury at the death of Domitian*, JRS 25, 1935, 150-162; P.M. Rogers, *Domitian and the finances of state*, *Historia* 33, 1984, 60-78; I. Caradice, *Coinage and finances in the reign of Domitian, A.D. 81-96*, Oxford 1983, esp. 153-166; H. Bengtson, *Die Flavien*, 98-100; C. Salles, *Les Flaviens*, 189.

¹⁵⁹ See R. Syme, *ibidem*.

¹⁶⁰ K.-H. Ziegler, *Die Beziehungen*, 78-81; E. Dąbrowa, *Le limes anatolien et la frontière caucasienne au temps des Flaviens*, *Klio* 62, 1980, 379-388; idem, *Les rapports entre Rome et les Parthes sous Vespasien*, *Syria* 58, 1981, 187-204; idem, *The Frontier in Syria in the first century AD*, [in:] *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East. Proceedings of a colloquium held at the University of Sheffield in April 1986*, Ph. Freeman, D. Kennedy (eds.), Oxford 1986 (BAR International Series 297,1), 98-108; idem, *Roman Policy in Transcaucasia from Pompey to Domitian*, [in:] *The Eastern Frontier of the Roman Empire. Proceedings of a colloquium held at Ankara in September 1988*, eds. D. French, C.S. Lightfoot, Oxford 1989, 67-76.

The greatest challenge of all awaited Romans on the Danube, where, for a time, the Dacians had the initiative. Ultimately, however, it was Domitian who dictated the conditions to Decebalus, and made him into a client of Rome. The conflicts with the Quades, Marcomanns and the Iazyges concluded in a similar manner (after Domitian's death, however).¹⁶¹ The remaining frontiers witnessed minor incidents occasionally, such as the African trouble with the Nasamones,¹⁶² who responded with rebellion to the exceedingly drastic exaction of taxes, or the Moors, against whom a special military detachment was deployed.¹⁶³

Threats

a. Senatorial opposition

Paradoxically, the stable development of the state in the direction set forth by the Flavians, was most threatened by the Empire's governing elite, namely the senatorial aristocracy. It constituted merely 0,02 to 0,05% of the Roman society, yet it played a key role in the Roman system of power. The Senate was the sole institution which possessed the competence to legitimise that power. The senatorial order devised

¹⁶¹ K. Strobel, *Die Donaukriege Domitians*, 83-109.

¹⁶² Nasamones, a Berber tribe which inhabited the coast of the Syrtis Maior (today's Libya) was subdued to the Roman power probably in the times of August; G. Corradi, *Domitianus*, 1991-1992; *RE* XVI (1935), col. 1776-1778 *s.v.* Nasamones (Windberg); Dio LXVII 4.6; M. Leglay, *Les Flaviens*, 216; *DNP* 8 (2000), 721; B.W. Jones, *Domitian*, 139-140.

¹⁶³ *ILS* 9200 (Baalbek); Th. Mommsen, *Inscription aus Baalbek*, Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 1903, 817-824; K. Strobel, *Zur Rekonstruktion der Laufbahn des C. Velius Rufus*, *ZPE* 64, 1986, 265-286; D. Kennedy, *C. Velius Rufus*, *Britannia* XIV 1983, 183-196; M. Leglay, *Les Flaviens*, 219.

its ideology based on the republican perspective, which naturally had to lead to tension if the ruler ever desired to ignore that fact. The actual practice, and especially the nervous reactions in the corridors of power, demonstrated that the opposition did not have merely a „cabinet” character.

One may assume that as of the moment of Vespasian’s seizing the power, in the senatorial circles actions were taken, albeit illusory, to deprive him of the throne.¹⁶⁴ The very origin of the Flavians bred resentment. However, what certainly incited discord between Vespasian and the „republican” senators was the former’s explicit desire to ensure succession to his sons.¹⁶⁵ If the argument with the circle of stoic philosophy was rather associated with prestige, although it might have inspired opponents of the dynasty to take actions beyond the domain of philosophical discourse, then the information concerning conspiracies found in the sources indicate actual threat. It might be that the death sentence of the philosopher Helvidius Priscus¹⁶⁶ was a consequence of a conspiracy,¹⁶⁷ which the philosopher either inspired ideologically, or in which he took active part. In all probability the overthrow of the Flavians was the aim of the plot hatched in 79, while Vespasian still lived, and headed by T. Clodius Eprius Marcellus and A. Caecina Aelianus.¹⁶⁸ Uncovered opportunely by Titus, it ended with the death of the would-be assassins. Unfortunately nothing is known either about the plot’s extent, or reprisals following its exposition.

¹⁶⁴ F.G. D’Ambrosio, *End of Flavians. The case of senatorial treason*, Rendiconti dell’Istituto Lombardo. Classe di Lettere e Scienze Morali e Storiche 114, 1981, 232-241.

¹⁶⁵ Suet. *Vesp.* 25: „aut filios sibi successuros aut neminem”; Cass. Dio LXV 12.1.

¹⁶⁶ Cass. Dio LXV 12.3.

¹⁶⁷ Cass. Dio LXV 12.2: Helvidius „banded various men together, as if it were the function of philosophy to insult those in power, to stir up the multitudes, to overthrow the established order of things, and to bring about a revolution” (translated by E. Cary).

¹⁶⁸ Cass. Dio LXV 16.3-4; C. Salles, *Les Flaviens*, 151.

The violent tide of persecutions, exiles and death sentences in 83, was, as it is presumed,¹⁶⁹ the aftermath of the discovery of preparations for an attempt on Domitian's life. The situation repeated in 87: the files of the Arval Brethren of 22nd September speak of making an offering *ob detecta scelera nefariorum*.¹⁷⁰ There were probably more such attempts, which contributed to the growing nervousness and suspicion of the emperor.¹⁷¹ The usurpation of L. Antonius Saturninus, the governor of Upper Germania, in the beginning of 89 drove the state almost to the brink of civil war.¹⁷² The circumstances were all the more grave that Saturninus planned to accept the assistance of the Chatti from beyond the Rhine, while at the same time, bitter combat with the Dacians and the Germans continued on the Danube¹⁷³. In the East, on the other

¹⁶⁹ B. Grenzheuser, *Kaiser und Senat in der Zeit von Nero bis Nerva*, Diss. Münster 1966, 110-112; H. Castritius, *Zu den Frauen der Flavier*, *Historia* 18, 1969, 497.

¹⁷⁰ *Acta Fratrum Arvalium quae supersunt, restituit et illustravit Guil. Henzen*, p. CXX, Sept. 22; G. Corradi, *Domitianus*, 1993; B.W. Jones, *Domitian*, 182; K. Strobel, *Domitian*, 28.

¹⁷¹ G. Corradi, *Domitianus*, 1992-1993; C. Salles, *Les Flaviens*, 150-153.

¹⁷² E. Ritterling, *Zur römischen Legionsgeschichte am Rhein, II. Der Aufstand des Antonius Saturninus*, *WZ* 12, 1893, 203-242; G. Corradi, *Domitianus*, 1992-1996; G. Walser, *Der Putsch des Saturninus gegen Domitian*, [in:] *Provincialia. Festschrift R. Laur-Belart*, Basel-Stuttgart 1968, 497-507; B.W. Jones, *Senatorial influence in the revolt of Saturninus*, *Latomus* 33, 1974, 529-535 = idem, *The revolt of Saturninus*, [in:] idem, *Domitian and the Senatorial order. A prosopographical study of Domitian's relationship with the senate, AD. 81-96*, Philadelphia 1979, 30-45; K. Strobel, *Der Aufstand des L. Antonius Saturninus und der so genannte zweite Chattenkrieg Domitians*, *Tyche* 1, 1986, 203-220; E. Flaig, *Die Usurpation des Antonius Saturninus*, [in:] idem, *Den Kaiser herausfordern. Die Usurpation im Römischen Reich*, Frankfurt-New York 1992, 417-450; Jones B.W., *The Emperor Domitian*, London-New York 1992, 144-149 („Saturninus's revolt,“); Ch.L. Murison, *Rebellion and reconstruction*, 244-247; C. Salles, *Les Flaviens*, 153-155.

¹⁷³ B.W. Jones, *Senatorial influence*, 529-530; K. Strobel, *Die Donaukriege Domitians*.

hand, a false Nero appeared.¹⁷⁴ Should the usurpation have escalated, the state would have become destabilised.

Finally, there came the last successful attempt, which involved a number of senators and persons from Domitian's closest circle, including empress Domitia Longina.¹⁷⁵ Although the candidate of the conspirators, M. Cocceius Nerva was put on the throne immediately, the ensuing situation resulted in a dangerous political crisis, which, to all intents and purposes, could have ended with a military coup. Fortunately, fate decreed otherwise.¹⁷⁶

b. The emperor's autocracy

The other side to the coin of government was the autocracy of the ruler, which needs to be construed as an ostentatious disregard of the senate and its role in the Roman political system. In principle, those emperors who thus shaped their relations with the *amplissimus ordo*, provoked a conflict with their surroundings, which had disastrous ramifications not only for themselves, but also for the state as a whole.

¹⁷⁴ Owing to the exceptional popularity of Nero's in the East, immediately after his death a legend was coined, according to which he had not died at all, and would soon return to wreak vengeance on his persecutors; history records three cases of „false Neros“; the first, of unknown name, appeared already in late autumn 68, or in January 69 at the latest, remained active until the beginning of summer 69; the second of the „Pseudo-Neros“ (Cass. Dio LXVI 19.3) should be dated for 79/80 (Tac. *Hist.* II 8-9); the third „false Nero“, likewise of unknown name, appeared in the East in 88 at the latest (end of 87 is more likely); E. Pappano, *The false Neros*, *The Classical Journal* 32, 1937, 385-392; P.A. Gallivan, *The false Nero: a re-examination*, *Historia* 22, 1973, 364-365; B.W. Jones, *C. Vettulenus Civica Cerialis and the „false Nero“ of AD 88*, *Athenaeum* 61, 1983, 516-521; C.J. Tulpin, *The False Neros of the First Century A.D.*, [in:] *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 5, Bruxelles 1989, 364-404; M.G. Morgan, *The Three Minor Pretenders in Tacitus, Histories II*, *Latomus* 52, 1993, 781-791.

¹⁷⁵ J.D. Grainger, *Nerva and the Roman succession crisis of AD 96-99*, London-New York 2003, 4-27 („Conspiracy“).

¹⁷⁶ *Ibidem*.

Here, the most vivid example is Nero, whose unwise political doings unleashed civil war.

There is no doubt that Vespasian's comportment with respect to the senate was decisive, if not overbearing. He would also employ radical solutions, as in the case of Helvidius Priscus. That he held consulship every year,¹⁷⁷ which explicitly defied republican norms, could hardly create a positive impression. On top of that, there was the arrogantly conspicuous aspiration to establish his own dynasty,¹⁷⁸ which had to engender discussion in the senate, if not an opposition.¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, moderation, common sense and pragmatic approach, including the ability of reconsidering his own decisions,¹⁸⁰ which were characteristic of Vespasian, enabled him to appease tensions and ultimately contributed to his favourable image: *princeps obscure quidem natus, sed optimis comparandus, privata vita illustris*.¹⁸¹

Also, one can hardly argue that Titus, who, at his father's side, had been acquiring the experience in government for ten years, fully appreciated the significance of the emperor – senate relations. Consequently, he attempted to build them as well as possible, modelling his persona into an epitome of gentleness and kindness¹⁸². And thus is he recorded in the sources: *vir omnium virtutum genere mirabilis adeo, ut amor et deliciae humani generis*.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁷ With a gap in 73. See A. Degrassi, *Fasti*, 21; D. Kienast, *Kaisertabelle*, 109.

¹⁷⁸ Suet. *Vesp.* 25; Cass. Dio LXV 12.1; Eutropius VII 20.3.

¹⁷⁹ Cass. Dio LXV 12.1.

¹⁸⁰ Here, one could name the attempt to retract the death sentence of Helvidius Priscus, Suet. *Vesp.* 15.

¹⁸¹ Eutr. VII 19.1. Cf. Oros. VII 9.1: „tranquilla sub Vespasiano duce serenitas rediit.”

¹⁸² Cass. Dio LXVI 19.1: „Be that as it may, Titus during his reign put no senator to death, nor, indeed, was anyone else slain by him during his rule. Cases based on the charge of maiestas he would never entertain himself nor allow others to entertain” (translated by E. Cary). Cf. Eutr. VII 21.

¹⁸³ Eutr. VII 21.1; Suet. *Tit.* 1. Cf. Oros. VII 9.13: „cuius tanta tranquillitas in

Domitian became the incarnation of autocracy, a true tyrant on the throne. Possibly, the exceedingly favourable portrayal of his predecessors, father and brother, were deliberately depicted in that manner in the sources, so as to create a striking contrast to Domitian. The latter, brimming with distrust towards the senate, openly demonstrated the independence of his rule and brutally stifled all manifestations of opposition.¹⁸⁴ We are unable to fathom the nature of the phenomenon, i.e. to what an extent Domitian's actions, as described in the sources, were motivated by his character,¹⁸⁵ and to what degree they were caused by the complex political situation to which Domitian found no other response than terror. Eventually, the emperor found himself in a dead end, which resulted in a successful attempt on his life on 18th September 96. The assassination of Domitian caused a profound political crisis, and only an advantageous concatenation of circumstances and the rational policy of Nerva's prevented Imperium Romanum from plunging into a civil war.

c. Conflicts with neighbouring peoples

The issue concerned chiefly the northern borders of Imperium Romanum. In other parts of the state, apart from minor incidents, as discussed previously, the situation was stable. During the reign of the Flavian dynasty peace was established on the Rhine line, as opposed to the Danube. As we know, this led to the strategic redeployment of force components from Britain and German provinces to Pannonia and Moesia.¹⁸⁶

imperio fuit, ut nullius omnino sanguinem in republica administranda fuisse referatur.”

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Cass. Dio LXVII 11-13.

¹⁸⁵ H. Bengtson, *Die Flavier*, 179-193. Cf. K.H. Waters, *The character of Domitian*, Phoenix 18, 1964, 49-52.

¹⁸⁶ J. Szilágyi, *Les variations des centrem de prépondérance militaire dans les provinces frontières de l'Empire romain*, AAntHung II 1954, 165-167, 171-176, 212-214;

The threat on the Danube resulted from two factors:¹⁸⁷ 1st. the consolidation of Dacian (Geto-Dacian) tribes, which consequently lead to the creation of a strong, expansive state of Dacians; 2nd. the arrival of new peoples of Iranian-Sarmatian origin, i.e. the Iazyges¹⁸⁸ and the Rhoxolanes¹⁸⁹ to the areas on the Lower Danube. During the first half of the 1st century AD, the tribes relocated from the territory east of the river Don (Tanais) to occupy areas between the Danube and the Tisza (Iazyges) and Wallachia. The movements manifested themselves in a pressure on the Danube frontier, to which the Romans responded, among others, with large-scale displacement actions: in the year 4 AD Aelius Catus, operating on the Lower Danube, resettled ca. 50 000 Getes¹⁹⁰ to the Roman side. Several dozen years later, in the 60s of the 1st century, the Moesian governor, Ti. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus, approved the settlement of approximately 100 000 inhabitants „from the other side of the Danube” (Transdanuviani).¹⁹¹ At the time, the Iazyges had already been on the border with Pannonia.¹⁹² This was a portent of the Great Migrations, which peaked in the 4th – 5th century AD.

A. Mócsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia*, London-Boston 1974, 86; K. Strobel, *Domitian*, 113-114; F. Bérard, *Bretagne, Germanie, Danube: mouvements de troupes et priorités stratégiques sous le règne de Domitien*, *Pallas* 40, 1994, 221-240.

¹⁸⁷ J.J. Wilkes, *Romans, Dacians and Sarmatians in the first and early second centuries*, [in:] *Rome and her northern provinces. Papers presented to Sheppard Frere*, Gloucester 1983, 255-289.

¹⁸⁸ *DNP* 5 (1998), 877 *s.v.* Iazyges.

¹⁸⁹ *DNP* 10 (2001), 1006-1007 *s.v.* Rhoxolanoi; 11 (2001), 83-85 *s.v.* Sarmatai.

¹⁹⁰ Strabo VII 3.10.

¹⁹¹ *CIL* XIV 3608 (Tibur).

¹⁹² Tac. *Ann.* XII 29.

Summary

The twenty six years of the Flavian reign, begun in the circumstances of a profound crisis of the state represent the overcoming of adverse phenomena and the Empire's perceptible return to strength. There ensued a stimulation of those processes which fostered internal integration of Imperium Romanum. On balance, the new dynasty performed with credit to itself, despite the defeats suffered in the wars with Dacians, Germans and Sarmatians. Through the reorganisation of the state's internal structures, the formation of the new elite, the support of municipalisation and urbanisation in the provinces, and therefore their Romanisation, as well as through the creation of a border defence system (*limes*), the Flavians moulded a basis for the future propitious development of the state. Their successors, unequivocal as they were in their disassociation from the last of the Flavii, actually continued the policy initiated by Vespasian, and carried out by Domitian.

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