Imperial Succession: Flavians

Galba

Suetonius Life of Galba 16-17

Hated by all especially army, Upper Germany particularly – refused oath (except one for Senate), Galba thought being criticised for childishness rather than senility so picked heir (from crowd) – called ‘my son’, publically adopted in Guards’ camp; 5 days later, Otho coup.

Tacitus Histories 1.15 (AD69)

Gal states his status is the will of ‘gods and men’; offered heir peaceful transfer after civil wars and his violent takeover, like Aug – describes Aug’s succession history; says will find heir from state not family.

Vespasian

Suetonius Life of Vespasian 6-7, 24

6-7 Vespasian made no move, supporters impatient, army support of Otho supporters – Egypt first legions; Otho defeated and suicide; first declarations later Accession Day; then Judea; “new civil war”, sent troops ahead to Italy, took Alexandria; Vitellius defeated and suicide.

24 Ninth consulship Ves in Campania, fever, made worse in summer retreat, died.

Lex Iulia de Imperio Vespasiani

War & peace, senatorial powers, candidate nomination, Roman boundary, any good act, except from laws as previous emperors were, retrospective authority and immunity.

Titus

Suetonius Life of Titus 6, 9

6 Father’s colleague – triumph, censor, tribunician power, 7 consulships; most of governmental burden in father’s name, quaestor’s task, Guards command (previously only knight) – “high-handedly”, tyrannical – anyone suspicious executed.

9 Brother Domitian conspired, almost openly armed forces dissent, thought of fleeing to them; Ti not heart to execute, dismiss or be less honourable towards him – chosen successor; repeated to him daily, emotional.

Domitian

Suetonius Life of Domitian 1, 15

1 Dom fled to Capitol, emerged at Vitellius victory hailed ‘Caesar’, appointed City Praetor with consular powers (name only – colleague took decisions).

15 Trivially executed cousin Flavius Clemens, whose sons were Dom’s heirs.

Fasti Ostensis: Senate appointed Nerva emperor on same day as Dom’s assassination