

constitution': nos. 69, 73-6, 97; 'Religion': nos. 79, 80, 97*, 98*, 107*, 108*, 109, 110*, 111; 'Foreign affairs': nos. 89, 95, 96, 104, 105*, 106*.

Organised in this way, the material would reveal something of the way in which the minds of ancient legislators worked, disclosing the range of problems of communal life with which they were grappling. It would also provide us with a classificatory system that would leave out none of the laws that A. has so scrupulously collected.

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Barbara Levick, *Vespasian*, London and New York: Routledge, 1999. xxiii + 310 pp. ISBN 0-415-16618-7.

No longer can we complain about the lack of a biography of Vespasian in English. Levick's account fills the gap and slots neatly into the list of Routledge's imperial biographies. Her long-awaited book consists of thirteen chapters, four dealing with his career before his accession to the throne and nine on various aspects of his reign. There are also 34 plates and 9 maps; a stemma of the Flavii, of the Arrecini and the Julii; indices of persons, of peoples and places and of subjects and terms; a bibliography, notes (in compressed form) and a concordance of McCrum and Woodhead.

Chapter 1 is detailed and, in the main, uncontroversial. One item that deserved some discussion is whether or not Vespasian ever held a post in the Vigintivirate. In a footnote, Levick mentions, but does not discuss, Chastagnol's article (*Historia* 1976, pp. 253-4) where, on the basis of Suetonius *Augustus* 38.2 and Dio 59.9.5, he argues that Vespasian could never have held such a post (that he did is accepted without question by L) and, furthermore, that he must have served in Thrace as a tribuns angusticlauius: for a convenient list of those supporting and opposing Chastagnol's thesis, see A.A. Barrett, *Caligula: The Corruption of Power* (1989), p. 312 n. 86. Again, the possibility that Vespasian held the quaestorship as early as 33/34 is difficult to accept. More, too, should have been made of Vespasian's obsequious attitude to Gaius: as praetor, he never let slip an opportunity to curry favour with the emperor, as is shown by the two speeches noted by Suetonius (*Vesp.* 2.3) and, in particular, his proposal that Lepidus (and Gaetulicus) be denied public burial. If the latter coincided with Agrippina's return to Rome with Lepidus' ashes, then the hostility she showed towards him (Suetonius *Vesp.* 4.2) may well have had its origins at this time: her welcome was Vespasian's speech — no wonder she hated him. Chapter 2 deals with the Claudian invasion of Britain and Vespasian's role therein — a thorough and up-to-date account. A minor point — the reference to (A.R) Birley on p. 215 should read 1981 and not 1975.

Chapter 3 covers the period from Nero's accession to the fall of Jerusalem. Vespasian's proconsular year is given as 63 though no evidence for such precision is adduced. The hostility between Mucianus and Vespasian, connected by L to Corbulo, could be explained more plausibly in other ways. Presumably, Vespasian would have reached Ptolemais early in 67, some months before Mucianus, whose arrival (to take up his Syrian command) could be assigned to early August. The dispute between

them may then have had its origin in the fact that Vespasian had set up his base camp not in Judaea, but in Syria (at Ptolemais) and maintained it there. This would explain Titus' absence from the siege of Gamala: he acted as a mediator between the two. Perhaps as early as September 67, '(he had been) sent off to Syria to Mucianus' (BJ 4.32). One interesting point deserving comment is Suetonius' claim (*Vesp.* 4.6) that Vespasian had to improve the discipline of the legions — despite the standards that had been demanded by Corbulo over a considerable period of time. Any deterioration could hardly have occurred in the brief interval between Corbulo's death (mid-66) and Vespasian's arrival (early 67). The real problem facing Vespasian was not the legions' lack of discipline but their disappointment at the death of Corbulo and the consequent loss of the rewards they would have expected from their long service under him in the East. What Vespasian had to overcome was the soldiers' hostility, for he was, after all, Nero's representative. Moreover, apart from their annoyance at the loss of their prospects, they had to face a commander who had just severed his own friendship (*fuisse Vespasiano amicitiam cum Thrasea, Sorano, Sentio: Tacitus Hist.* 4.7) and his son's marital connection (*cum qua [i.e. Marcia Furnilla] diuortium fecit: Suetonius Titus* 4.2) with the group with which Corbulo himself had been aligned. One factor that deserves even more attention was (despite later propaganda) the regard in which Nero held Vespasian, especially at the time of his appointment to Judaea. First, there was the choice of Titus as commander of the XV Apollinaris — it was without precedent. Aged about 27 at this time, Titus was still of quaestorian rank; moreover, this was the only recorded occasion when the leader of an expeditionary force had his own son in control of one of his legions. But Nero seems to have given Vespasian a completely free hand in choosing the commanders of all three legions, i.e. M. Ulpius Traianus (X Fretensis: he and Titus may have married sisters or half-sisters) and Sex. Vettulenus Cerialis (V Macedonica: he almost certainly came from Vespasian's home town of Reate). So, to go from one extreme to the other, was Vespasian (during the Julio-Claudian period) more the obsequious toady than the 'blunt countryman'?

Chapter 4 is a detailed, sensible discussion of events leading up to the accession — the question 'why did Vespasian succeed' is posed and well answered. L dismisses the attempt of some to date Vespasian's imperial aspirations to 67. Chapter 5 ('Ideology in Action') ranges widely. L examines the role of miraculous cures, prophecies and visions (she sees Vespasian not as 'cynical manipulator of religion and superstition' but rather as a 'willing dupe of stage managers'). We find that he denigrated his predecessors (where appropriate), invoked Augustus, encouraged men of letters and extended the scope and significance of the provincial cult. His reforms were not just physical but intellectual and moral as well.

Chapter 6 examines his various titles and when they were conferred, the problems facing the new dynasty in dealing with the senate during the early years, his relationship with his *amici*, the restoration of the Capitol, the fate of Egnatius Celer (and of Helvidius Priscus who is sympathetically treated) and, finally, the differing actions and beliefs of the Stoics and Cynics. One wonders about ascribing to Vespasian's 'good humour' the famous reply made in answer to Mucianus' constant carping ('All the same, I'm a man'). Another interpretation is that Vespasian is accusing

Mucianus of being a passive homosexual. Chapter 7 is, in essence, a sober examination of what little evidence we have of Vespasian's management of the imperial finances. For instance, Suetonius' claim that Vespasian needed 400,000 million HS to 'set the state on its feet' is rightly rejected (L suggests removing one zero). On the other hand, one fairly recent monograph relevant to Vespasian's coinage is omitted from L's bibliography, i.e. I.A. Carradice's *Coinage and Finances in the Reign of Domitian, AD 81-96* (British Archaeological Reports No. 178, 1983), which provides a useful comparative study of the purity of the coinage during the Flavian period. Again, the statement that Salvius Liberalis did not 'survive Domitian's reign' (L, p. 103) should be rejected: he is attested as a 'powerful speaker in 100' (R. Syme, *Tacitus* [Oxford 1958], p. 668) on the basis of Pliny, *Ep.* 2.11.17.

Chapter 8 deals with what, in any age, is a disturbed period — the transition from war to peace. This was no different and L surveys the situation facing Vespasian in Britain and Germany, on the Danube, and in Judaea and Africa. Chapter 9 examines the physical — and moral — condition of Rome, Italy and the provinces and the concomitant demands made on Vespasian. They, like the solutions he imposed (L claims that the 'solutions' were not imposed by Vespasian but should be seen as the inevitable consequence of the stability discussed in Chapter 8), were varied and include some early examples of alimentary schemes, his legislative programme and use of *legati iuridici*, the colonies he established along the Danube and his extension of the citizenship in Spain (including a useful discussion of the term 'Romanization'). We then have details of progress in Britain, of trouble in Alexandria, of provincial changes in the east (including the much-discussed status of Lycia: L doubts Eck's interpretation) and of the status of Judaea post 70. But L assigns little (if any) credit to Vespasian. In brief, her position is that 'Vespasian's achievement in stabilizing the empire was virtually total, but enhancement by him has been overdrawn and much of the conventional picture has to be given up'. So the advances listed in 9 were, according to L, no more than the natural consequences of what was achieved in 69/70.

Chapter 10 looks at the 'extension of the Empire'. An account of Vespasian's recruitment practices in the various provinces, his policy in dealing with the Praetorian Guard and Urban Cohorts as well as his 'parsimonious' distribution of triumphal honours is followed by a detailed assessment of his attitude to expansion. L firmly rejects Luttwak's thesis: 'the idea that Vespasian renounced imperial ambitions or followed any deathbed injunction of Augustus is unfounded'. After an uncontroversial summary of the situation in Africa, Britain (Agricola was 'overpraised by his son-in-law') and Germany, L examines the East. Caesennius Paetus emerges as 'experienced and trustworthy' — even though his experience included the defeat at Rhandaia and his trustworthiness has to be explained by his marriage to Flavia Sabina. Cappadocia's change of status (equestrian to senatorial) is assigned to either 72 or 76/77. With some hesitation, L proposes that Traianus may have governed Cappadocia-Galatia before Syria, and that Pompeius Collega was appointed to Syria as early as 73/74: neither suggestion is devoid of controversy. Consideration also is given to the canal at Antioch, to the role of the Alani (L's phrase is the 'Alan threat') and to Rome's relationship with Parthia. One item missing from L's bibliography is

E. Dąbrowa's 'Les Rapports entre Rome et les Parthes sous Vespasien', *Syria* 58 (1981), pp. 187-204.

In Chapter 11, L examines Vespasian's reorganisation of the élite, the senatorial and equestrian orders. Topics covered include the adlections of both 69 and 73 (but Domitian became censor in 85 not in 84 [p. 171]: see T.V. Buttrey, *Documentary Evidence for the Chronology of the Flavian Titulature* [1980], p. 38 and Carradice, *op. cit.* p. 27), the admission of Italians such as the Neratii Prisci of Saepinum, of westerners like M. Cornelius Nigrinus Curiatius Maternus and the Aurelii Pactumeii and of numerous new senators from the Greek-speaking East. She shows that the senatorial order was no longer a Roman aristocracy but rather the 'nobility and bourgeoisie of Italy and the Empire'. From the turmoil of 68/69 came both a new élite whose descendants were to gain imperial office and also a new patriciate whose members were often military men from the provinces. With regard to the latter, L adds that 'Vespasian had not enjoyed the rank himself' (p. 176). But it is possible that, in 47, both Vespasian and his elder brother Flavius Sabinus were granted patrician status. This was argued long ago by McAlindon (*JRS* 47 [1957], p. 260) and, whilst an award of this nature to Vespasian or Sabinus (or both) is not mentioned by Suetonius or by any other ancient author, Suetonius does refer specifically to Claudius' grant of patrician status to Otho's father, i.e. *prosecutus est eum* (*L. Othonem*) *et Claudius adlectum inter patricios conlaudans amplissimis uerbis* (*Otho* 1.3). L examines Vespasian's consular awards, ordinary and iterated, and also his tendency to assign preeminent commands to those connected by marriage to the imperial family (e.g. Caesennius Paetus, the Petillii and the Vettuleni); she not unreasonably accepts Bosworth's (*ZPE* 39 [1980], pp. 267ff.) reconstruction of the career of Firmus of Arretium and Syme's (often discussed) category of *uiri militares*. The chapter concludes with a useful section dealing with the rise of the equestrian order in this decade and also the new role (and status) of the imperial freedmen.

Chapter 12 covers the the role and character of Titus ('more cosmopolitan than a future Princeps should be' but 'ruthlessly ambitious') and the status of Domitian ('his resentment was allowed to fester'). Titus' position and titles are examined in detail (from 71, he was 'co-regent as Agrippa and Tiberius had been') as are Domitian's activities and attitude. In reconstructing the latter, L suggests that Domitian's friend, the Praetorian Prefect Arrecinus Clemens, had 'lost favour with Vespasian' — yet he was soon to become consul. One thinks of a similar case a decade later, when Domitian's Prefect L. Julius Ursus was elevated *in amplissimum ordinem* (*P. Berlin* 8334), i.e., like Arrecinus Clemens, he was being 'promoted' or, more realistically, moved aside — 'appropriation, elevation and castration, all in one stroke'. One wonders about the influence ascribed to Berenice — 'her power behind the scenes was considerable' (p. 194). But was it? According to Dio's epitomator, she and her brother Agrippa were admitted to the capital after (but not necessarily immediately after) the dedication of the Temple of Peace in 75 and before (but how long before?) the Caecina/Marcellus conspiracy. So it would seem that Vespasian had little use for either of them. Was she, then, long enough in Rome to wield 'considerable power'?

The last chapter deals with Vespasian's death, his delayed deification and the later attitude to his cult. There follows an interesting section discussing his reputation

in subsequent centuries. As for his character, L's assessment is somewhat negative — 'he did not allow resentment to push him into corners, ... did not often have to revise decisions, ... was not easily frightened into sudden or violent action nor ... given to impulsive acts of generosity'. But, in more positive vein, 'steadiness was the Emperor's particular merit, ... (people) knew where they were and ... he provided a framework in which men could return to self-interested normality'. Her overall view is clear enough. The plaudits universally awarded to Vespasian cannot be justified. His reign was a 'return to normalcy', nothing more.

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Michel P.J. van den Hout, *A Commentary on the Letters of M. Cornelius Fronto*, Mnemosyne Supplementum 190, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999. xi + 725 pp.

M.P.J. van den Hout's excellent revised edition of the letters of Fronto (Teubner, 1988) is now accompanied by this impressive commentary. It includes a short introduction on the life of Fronto and a brief account of the history of the text, based on the detailed discussion printed in the *Prolegomena* to the edition, a survey of translations, seven Indices (grammatical and stylistic; *Latinitatis*; *Graecitatis*; Latin rhetorical, grammatical and literary terms; Greek rhetorical, grammatical and literary terms; matters (sic); passages of the *Vitae Pii, Marci* and *Veri* and of Marcus' *Meditations* compared with the Letters in the commentary),¹ a bibliography and a list of corrections to the prolegomena and the text of the 1988 edition. The main body of the book, in 629 pages, comprises a detailed commentary both on the letters and on the *testimonia et fragmenta*.

The commentary is extremely erudite and contains much valuable and illuminating material. It is concerned mainly with questions of textual criticism, the order of the letters (with welcome attention to the technique of the fourth-century collector of the letters), their chronology, prosopography, language (with a careful examination of the available translations of Fronto) and rhetorical terminology. In all these fields v.d. H. has many new and happy contributions that will be of use not only to those interested in Fronto and his age. Indeed, some of the discussions of rhetorical terms go much beyond what is found in the standard manuals,² which would make the detailed indices of this commentary an essential tool for anyone interested in Greek and Latin rhetoric.

The passages discussed in the commentary are marked only by page and line number as set in the author's 1988 edition, with no reference to the letters' numeration, which makes it barely manageable to anyone trying to look up a reference to

¹ A list of Fronto's lost works, an *index nominum*, a chronology of the letters and *conspicua editionum* accompany the 1988 edition.

² See, for instance, the discussion of *conditus* in 27.9.