

The Flavian Dynasty

When the Julio-Claudian Dynasty expired with the death of Nero, it was followed by the Flavian Dynasty, which became the new ruling family of Rome. The Flavians ruled from 69 AD to 96 AD, starting with Emperor Vespasian and ending with the death of his second son Domitian. The Flavians initiated economic and cultural reforms, including a massive building program under which the Coliseum and the palace on the Palatine Hill were constructed. The Flavian Dynasty was short lived, with only three emperors, and it ended with the hated emperor Domitian. Nonetheless, thanks to the achievements of Vespasian and Titus, the Flavian Dynasty became one of the most popular and beloved of all imperial dynasties.

The era of the Flavian Dynasty was a time of peace and prosperity for the empire, as well as a continued move away from the republic of the past. While the Flavian emperors, especially Vespasian, portrayed themselves as simple and old-fashioned, this image of stern traditionalism is belied by some of the characteristics of the age, such as massive monumental works like the Coliseum, the extravagant hairstyles of the period characterized by intricate curls, or the decadent Silver Latin literature written in the era, all of which indicate a more opulent culture. Nonetheless, for the average Roman on the street, the era was also characterized by uncertainty and instability. This was a time of both continuity and change that affected men and women at every level of Roman society. However, since history traditionally narrates the events and changes of this period through the biographies of the emperors who ruled over it, this is the approach we will take.

