

SENATORIAL HISTORY AND THE PRINCIPATE OF DOMITIAN

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ABSTRACT

The emperor Domitian has until quite recently suffered from a very unfavorable historical reputation. Doubt has now been cast upon the merit of specific aspects of this tradition, but there still has been no attempt to analyze it as a whole. This dissertation was undertaken for the purpose of examining the formative stages of the tradition and determining the precise reasons for Domitian's condemnation.

The origin of this unfavorable tradition may be traced back to the period immediately after Domitian's assassination, when his memory was formally condemned by the Senate, and specifically to two senatorial critics, Tacitus and Pliny the Younger. Accordingly, the first three chapters of this dissertation are devoted to a point by point analysis of their respective portraits of Domitian.

Tacitus' Agricola is the subject of chapter one. Criticism of Domitian is limited for the most part to the prologue (chapters 1-3), the narrative of Agricola's life in Rome after his return from Britain (chapters 39-42), and the epilogue (chapters 43-46). Tacitus' characterization of Domitian as a deceitful emperor who was jealous and afraid of his subordinates proves to be unwarranted, the product of malice, innuendo, half-truths, and lies. Writing in the immediate aftermath of Domitian's assassination, his purpose

seems to have been to defend his loyal service to the res publica during Domitian's reign while acquitting himself of any suspicion of collusion with the tyrant, from whom he benefited politically.

Chapter two analyzes four scenes in Tacitus' Historiae which involve Domitian--the bellum Capitolinum, the sacking of Rome by the Flavian army, Domitian's conduct in Rome during his urban praetorship, and his conduct while on campaign with Mucianus in Gaul--and compares them with the contrasting account of the pro-Flavian writer Iosephus. While neither historian's account of the bellum Capitolinum is found to be totally reliable, Iosephus' narrative of the last three scenes is the more accurate of the two accounts. Here Tacitus once again resorts to serious distortion of fact to produce a characterization of Domitian consistent with imperial propaganda and the senatorial damnatio memoriae.

The Epistulae and Panegyricus of Pliny the Younger are the subject of chapter three. Pliny's political career had also prospered under Domitian, and his shrill condemnation of the deceased emperor constitutes a transparent attempt to placate those who believed that he had served too enthusiastically and profited too much. Epistula iv.11, an account of the trial and condemnation of the vestal Cornelia, is his only attempt at a narrative treatment of Domitian's crimes in the Letters. There Pliny uses the same methods of distortion employed by Tacitus in the Agricola, but with less subtlety

and consistency. In the Panegyricus, Pliny emphasizes Trajan's virtues—the traditional virtues of the good prince—by contrasting them with five rhetorical vices ascribed to Domitian: cowardice, arrogance, cruelty, avarice, and hostility to virtue. In each instance Pliny is compelled seriously to distort the evidence in order to make his portrait of Domitian conform to the rhetorical model of the tyrant.

Given the inaccuracy of the accounts of Tacitus and Pliny, in chapter four an attempt is made to trace the evolution of Domitian's relationship with the Senate, and to determine the precise aspects of his policy and personal behavior which caused their relationship to break down. It is argued that during the early years of the reign their relationship was amicable, but that it was during this period that Domitian was persuaded by his lack of auctoritas to pursue policies meant to strengthen his position which in fact proved detrimental to it. His monopoly of the eponymous consulship, his arrogation of the censorial power for life, and his courtship of the army and neglect of the Senate, combined with his tactless fondness for display of the trappings of monarchy, aroused sufficient discontent and resentment in the Senate in 84-85 A.D. to spawn conspiracies. Two serious conspiracies originating within the Senate were suppressed in 87 and 89 A.D., with the elimination of both active conspirators and potential but unproven rivals. With the subsequent destruction of the Stoic party in 93, Domitian revealed an

inflexible determination to stifle even the most harmless forms of senatorial opposition. The atmosphere of repression which existed within the Senate during the last three years of the reign was sufficiently severe for most senators to believe that they were exposed to a reign of terror. The damnatio memoriae which followed Domitian's assassination, and the subsequent unfavorable literary tradition attached to his name, were a reaction to the severe repression of this three year period.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAWW	Anzeiger der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Philos.-Hist. Klasse
ACD	Acta classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debreceniensis
AE	L'Année Epigraphique
AJPh	American Journal of Philology
AJTh	American Journal of Theology
ANSMusN	The American Numismatic Society Museum Notes
ASAA	Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni Italiane in Oriente
AV	Arheološki Vestnik
BJ	Bonner Jahrbücher
BMC	Harold Mattingly. <u>Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum: Nerva to Hadrian.</u> London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1966.
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
CB	The Classical Bulletin
CJ	The Classical Journal
CPh	Classical Philology
CQ	Classical Quarterly
CR	Classical Review
CW	The Classical World
DE	E. de Ruggiero (ed.). <u>Dizionario epigrafico di antichità romana.</u> 1886-.
DUJ	Durham University Journal
Ep. Stud.	Epigraphische Studien
G&R	Greece and Rome

HSCPh	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
JCPH	Jahrbücher für classische Philologie
JOEAI	Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts in Wien
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies
JS	Journal des Savants
MAAR	Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome
M-W	M. McCrum and A.G. Woodhead. <u>Select Documents of the Principates of the Flavian Emperors.</u> Cambridge: the University Press, 1966.
PBA	Proceedings of the British Academy
Phil. Woch.	Philologische Wochenschrift
PIR ²	Prosopographia Imperii Romani Saeculi I, II, III. 2nd edition edited by E. Groag and A. Stein. 1933-.
PP	La Parola del Passato
RE	A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, and W. Kroll. <u>Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft.</u> 1893-.
REA	Revue des Études Anciennes
RhM	Rheinisches Museum für Philologie
RIC II	Harold Mattingly and Edward Sydenham. <u>The Roman Imperial Coinage: Vespasian to Hadrian.</u> London: Spink & Son Ltd., 1926.
RSCI	Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia
SBAW	Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philos.-Hist. Klasse
SZG	Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte
TAPA	Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association
TRHS	Transactions of the Royal Historical Society

WdZ	Westdeutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst
WS	Wiener Studien
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik

INTRODUCTION

That Domitian has the reputation of a tyrant is a commonplace. The reasons for his condemnation, however, are less clearly understood. Initially, the highly unfavorable assessment of his reign came from a source tainted by prejudice, the hostile and bitter Senate which survived him. In the best tradition of modern propaganda, senatorial writers portrayed him as a monster stained with almost every vice ever devised by classical rhetoric. At the same time, the Senate as a body formally decreed that his very name be banished from the face of the earth.¹ Throughout the Empire, monuments were wiped clean of the hated name.² In Rome the senators engaged in an orgy of destruction. Down came the tyrant's statues and arches;³ the weak and powerless among those who had served him shared his fate.⁴

The historians of the later Empire abetted this tradition. Ignoring or misusing discordant sources, such as the more balanced biography of the equestrian Suetonius,

¹Suet. Dom. 23.1.

²See, for example, ILS 246, 2092, 3532, 3673 (Rome); 254 (Gallaecia); 5833 (Asturica); 5973 (Baetica); 5753 (Lilybaeum); 1025 (Tibur); 268 (Ancyra); M-W 230 (Laodiceia); 314 (Tlos); 465 (Chios); IGR III.300 (Antioch near Pisidia); IV.684 (Sebaste); IV.1130 (Rhodes).

³Dio Cass. lxxviii.1.1; Pliny Pan. 52.4-5.

⁴Dio Cass. lxxviii.1.2. Pan. 34-35.3 and 42.2-4 confirm Dio's remarks, although Pliny naturally attributes

they perpetuated the rhetorical propaganda of Domitian's senatorial contemporaries. The tradition about Domitian froze, and persisted for centuries. Modern scholars have only recently come to realize that Domitian was not the object of universal hatred.⁵ It is now clear that the army⁶ revered him, and there are also indications that the common citizenry of the Empire thought well of him.⁷ However, while modern scholarship has thus made some effort to present a more balanced view of his principate, too often it is still so influenced by the senatorial tradition that it produces such bland and compromised judgements as that of Max Cary:

He exercised imperial power in an openly despotic manner. But if the state was to him a mere machine, he was an efficient driver.⁸

Domitian thereby becomes a dehumanized stereotype. He is "Brand X", the cold, efficient despot who insists that the wheels of state be well-oiled. Like the well-worn tale of

the acts of retribution to Trajan rather than Nerva.

⁵K. Christ, "Zur Herrscherauffassung Domitians", SZG, 12 (1962) 187-213, presents a good discussion of modern historiography on Domitian.

⁶Suet. Dom. 23.1. ILS 2034, the inscription of a soldier in the Praetorian Guard which is dated to 99/100, preserves Domitian's name despite the damnatio memoriae of three years before.

⁷This evidence has been gathered and ably discussed by H.W. Pleket, "Domitian, the Senate, and the Provinces", Mnemosyne, 4th s. 14 (1961) 296-315.

⁸M. Cary, A History of Rome (2nd ed., London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1962) 609.

the prostitute with a heart of gold, this rhetorical commonplace explains away everything, and explains nothing.

Worse, at this impasse critical examination has usually ceased. There has been even less effort to explain why the Senate so despised Domitian than there has been to find something, anything, good to say about him.⁹ Belated vengeance, the predictable reaction to despotism, is a glib explanation—it may even be a correct one. At best, however, it is only half an answer. That it has been substituted for insistent and critical questioning of the attitudes and motives of those who have arbitrated Domitian's place in history is insufficient.

Accordingly, in this dissertation the focus will be upon Domitian's two major senatorial critics, Tacitus and Pliny the Younger. The accuracy of their remarks concerning Domitian will be examined in the first three chapters, and particularly the degree to which they have been influenced by rhetoric, class bias, and political self-interest. It may be said at the outset that when their criticisms are examined point by point, for the most part they are found to be historically inaccurate. Hence in the concluding chapter an attempt will be made to pinpoint the precise aspects of Domitian's behavior and policy which made him an object of such intense senatorial hatred. The purpose of

⁹The exception is K.H. Waters, "The Character of Domitian", Phoenix, 18 (1964) 49-77.

this dissertation, then, is not to cleanse Domitian's reputation, but to admit a precise understanding of how it was acquired.

I

TACITUS AND DOMITIAN: THE AGRICOLA

The Influence of Tacitus on Modern Views of Domitian

On September 18, 96 A.D., the Emperor Caesar Domitianus Augustus perished, the victim of a plot formed¹ within his own household. As his awesome titles--filius divi Vespasiani, pontifex maximus, pater patriae, consul XVII, censor perpetuus--could not save his person from the fears and insecurity of his intimates, so the innumerable statues and monuments erected in his name could not save his reputation from the hatred of the Senate of Rome. Within hours of the assassination, the long-suffering senators had exultantly stripped the curia of all his images.² The damnatio memoriae which followed immediately thereafter was a mere formality; the Senate's verdict on his reign was cast³ in those first dramatic hours. Still, despite the bitterly

¹The date is provided by Suet. Dom. 17.3: "occisus est XIII Kal. Octob. anno aetatis quadragensimo quinto, imperii quinto decimo". For his full titulary see S. Gsell, Essai sur le règne de l'empereur Domitien (Paris: Bibliothèque des Ecoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 1894) 44; P. Weynand, "T. Flavius Domitianus", RE, 6 (1909) 2550.

²Suet. Dom. 23.1; Pliny Pan. 52.

³The chronology of events is clear in Suet. Dom. 23.1, but it is uncertain whether damnatio memoriae was decreed on the day of Domitian's assassination, or on the following day. He was slain during the fifth hour: Dom. 16.2.

hostile view of Domitian apparently shared by the majority of the senatorial order, propagated by contemporary authors, and cynically exploited by imperial propaganda,⁴ his character and achievements might have been treated more judiciously by modern authors if his personality had not been maliciously but brilliantly distorted by Tacitus. Although that portion of the Historiae which dealt with the reign of Domitian has completely perished, Tacitus still remains the single most damaging contributor to his current unfavorable historical reputation.

Few modern historians have possessed the acumen to separate what has been accurately characterized as "fact" from "impression" in the historical works of Tacitus.⁵ Indeed, Tacitus would have rejoiced could he have known how completely his view of the Iulio-Claudian and Flavian principates was to prevail. Edward Gibbon, the most renowned English historian, concluded his introductory remarks with a brilliant passage forever damning these emperors. Its sentiments are thoroughly Tacitean:

The golden age of Trajan and the Antonines had been preceded by an age of iron. It is almost superfluous

⁴The coinage of Nerva provides a glimpse of imperial propaganda at work. See B. Grenzheuser, Kaiser und Senat in der Zeit von Nero bis Nerva (Münster: Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, 1964) 149-152.

⁵B. Walker, The Annals of Tacitus (2nd ed., Manchester: the University Press, 1960) 8, coined the terms, and painstakingly analyzed the Annales with them as terms of reference.

to enumerate the unworthy successors of Augustus. Their unparalleled vices, and the splendid theatre on which they were acted, have saved them from oblivion. The dark unrelenting Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the feeble Claudius, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beastly Vitellius, and the timid inhuman Domitian, are condemned to everlasting infamy. During fourscore years . . . Rome groaned beneath an unrelenting tyranny, which exterminated the ancient families of the republic, and was fatal to almost every virtue, and every talent, that arose in that unhappy period.⁶

Gibbon's fifth paragraph is focused upon Domitian; Tacitus' estimate is reproduced without question. Gibbon's account of Agricola's role in the conquest of Britain is an undisguised paraphrase of the Agricola, though here he has even supplemented Tacitus' malice:

At the very time when Domitian, confined to his palace, felt the terrors which he inspired, his legions, under the command of the virtuous Agricola, defeated the collected forces of the Caledonians at the foot of the Grampian hills; and his fleets, venturing to explore an unknown and dangerous navigation, displayed the Roman arms round every part of the island.⁷

In the following sentence, Gibbon leans heavily upon chapter 24 of the Agricola:

It was the design of Agricola to complete and ensure his success by the easy reduction of Ireland, for which in his opinion, one legion and a few auxiliaries were sufficient. The western isle might be improved into a valuable possession, and the Britons would wear their chains with the less reluctance, if the prospect

⁶E. Gibbon, A History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ed. with introduction and notes by J.B. Bury, I (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1896-1900) 79.

⁷E. Gibbon, Decline and Fall, I, 4. Here, and throughout this work, unless stated otherwise the complete and partial underlining of passages within the text and footnotes is my own, as a substitute for italics. Such italicization is exclusively for purposes of emphasis.

and example of freedom were on every side removed from before their eyes.⁸

Gibbon's final remarks on Agricola in the following paragraph exemplify how easy it is to be misled by Tacitus, and to absorb and transmit impression instead of fact: "But the superior merit of Agricola soon occasioned his removal from the government of Britain."⁹ Certainly this is implied in chapters 39-41 of the Agricola; it is clearly what Tacitus wants his reader to believe. However, it is only implied; neither here nor at any other point in the Agricola is it explicitly stated that this was the reason for Agricola's recall.

Gibbon wrote late in the eighteenth century; Tacitus, however, has continued to deceive classical scholars of all persuasions down to the present day. One specialist on Tacitus has been ensnared by both his impressions and his psychology:

The accession of Domitian put him [Tacitus] to a harder ordeal. Clear-sighted spirits had always

⁸E. Gibbon, Decline and Fall, I, 4. Cf. Agr. 24.3: "saepe ex eo audiui legione una et modicis auxiliis debellari obtinerique Hiberniam posse; idque etiam adversus Britanniam profuturum, si Romana ubique arma et velut o conspectu libertas tolleretur." This was undoubtedly the argument Agricola advanced in his dispatches to Rome. Caesar offers a similar pretext for his invasion of Britain: BGall. iv.20. For a clear discussion of the similarities in the strategic thinking behind the proposed invasions of Caesar and Agricola, see R.G. Collingwood and J.N.L. Myres, Roman Britain and the English Settlements (2nd ed., Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1937) 32-33.

⁹E. Gibbon, Decline and Fall, I, 4.

distrusted that shy and solitary young man with his ruddy countenance and big, lustreless eyes. Although at the beginning of his reign he may have uttered a few of those fine humane phrases which move the admiration of the simple, his evil instincts were notorious.¹⁰

This remark seems to have been suggested by Historiae iv.40¹¹ and iv.68. More importantly, the author has unwittingly accepted Tacitus' psychological dictum of the static personality, revealed most clearly in his treatment of Tiberius: if a Princeps was evil at the end of his reign, then he had¹² been evil throughout, but had previously concealed it.

Even so competent a scholar as Martin Charlesworth was capable of writing in 1936:

A suspicious emperor—and Domitian was suspicious—did not like his generals to win too great fame and popularity in distant lands; before now they had risen against their masters; seven years was perhaps as long a tenure as could be safely allowed to the successful Agricola.¹³

¹⁰G. Boissier, Tacitus and Other Roman Studies, trans. W.G. Hutchison (London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1906) 27.

¹¹iv.40: "decorus habitu; et ignotis adhuc moribus crebra oris confusio pro modestia accipiebatur." iv.68: "nec relinquenda urbs sine rectore; et Domitiani indomitae libidines timebantur. . ."

¹²Ann. vi.51. Cf. especially J.P.V.D. Balsdon's review of D.M. Pippidi, Autour de Tibère, JRS, 36 (1946) 168-173; R. Syme, Tacitus (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1958) 420-430; and B. Walker, The Annals of Tacitus, 204-218, 235-239.

¹³M.P. Charlesworth, Five Men (Martin Classical Lectures #6, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936) 115. This view was widely held at the beginning of the century; cf., for example, C. Merivale, History of the Romans under the Empire, VII (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1904) 331-333.

Once again, not one sentence is to be found, either in the Agricola or in the other works of Tacitus, in which it is categorically stated that Agricola was recalled by Domitian because the latter feared the outcome of his general's growing popularity and fame. This is solely an inference, but an inference that Tacitus deliberately attempted to implant in the mind of his reader. It is based upon two passages in Agricola 39-40.

inerat conscientia derisui fuisse nuper falsum e
Germania triumphum, emptis per commercia quorum
habitus et crines in captivorum speciem formarentur:
at nunc veram magnamque victoriam tot milibus hostium
caesis ingenti fama celebrari. id sibi maxime
formidolosum, privati hominis nomen supra principem
adtolli (39.1-2).

The power of this statement comes precisely from its two weakest elements, inerat conscientia and id sibi maxime formidolosum. However, unless Domitian was in the habit of broadcasting his innermost thoughts, which is rather unlikely, then it is proper to ask just how Tacitus knew what was on Domitian's mind. In reality, the passage is a fiction, its source Tacitus' own imagination. It is thus without substance, and any conclusion based upon it is
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 valueless.

¹⁴When taken seriously, such passages can lead a scholar to quite fanciful conclusions. See, for example, R.G. Tanner, "Tacitus and the Principate", G&R, s.s. 16 (1969) 95-99. Tanner suggests that Tacitus had cherished the hope that Agricola would revolt successfully, for this would leave Tacitus heir apparent to the throne!

The passage in question from chapter 40 illustrates another of Tacitus' favorite techniques. It is a classic instance of his use of a malicious rumor for which he
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disclaims all responsibility:

credidere plerique libertum ex secretioribus ministeriis missum ad Agricolam codicillos, quibus ei Syria dabatur, tulisse cum eo praecepto ut, si in Britannia foret, traderentur; eumque libertum in ipso freto Oceani obvium Agricola, ne appellato quidem eo ad Domitianum remeasse, sive verum istud, sive ex ingenio principis fictum ac compositum est (40.2).

Placed at the beginning of the sentence, credidere plerique gives a certain respectability to the sinister passage which follows. Tacitus waits until the very end, when the damage has been done, to divorce himself from the rumor. Since Agricola is clearly not his source—Tacitus would then have been more explicit—this passage is also valueless. Nonetheless, as Tacitus undoubtedly hoped, it is still very easy for the reader to interpret this rumor (and the example of personal opinion preceding it) as fact.

It may be instructive at this point briefly to trace the end result of Tacitus' method of treating personality. Any given impression which Tacitus wishes his reader to accept as factual is only one impression in a connected series designed to depict the individual in question as consistently motivated by what Tacitus considers the

¹⁵The technique has been fully elaborated by I.S. Ryberg, "Tacitus' Art of Innuendo", TAPA, 73 (1942) 383-404. Cf. J.P.V.D. Balsdon, JRS, 36 (1946) 170-171.

dominant feature in his character. If the reader accepts any particular impression in the series as factual, then he is less likely to question those following; for as they are all designed to illustrate the character of the individual under scrutiny, they are consistent with one another. As consistency breeds acceptance, it is dangerously easy for the reader to accept the entire series of impressions as a factually accurate portrayal. Thus the real impact of the method lies in the collective portrait to which each individual impression contributes. For example, if the reader draws an inference from Agricola 39-40 that Domitian feared Agricola because of his fame and virtue, and felt that he had to bribe him with the proconsulship of Syria in order to remove him from Britain, then he is much more likely to place a sinister interpretation on Agricola's nocturnal return to Rome in chapter 40, and lend greater credence to the rumor in chapter 43 that Agricola was poisoned by Domitian.

Stroke by stroke, then, Tacitus develops his portrait—in the case of Domitian, of an emperor unspeakably cruel and hostile to all virtue. The reader loses sight of the facts contained within the narrative itself. That, for example, Agricola was recalled by his commander-in-chief after winning a decisive victory,¹⁶ recalled after seven

¹⁶Agr. 32.4: "hic dux, hic exercitus: ibi tributa et metalla et ceterae servientium poenae, quas in aeternum perferre aut statim ulcisci in hoc campo est."

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years in the field, and received with full triumphal
¹⁸honors, passes unnoticed.

It should now be very clear that Tacitus must be used as an historical source with extreme caution. Each sentence must be analyzed, its factual content isolated. Impressions, whether in the form of rumor or Tacitus' personal point of view, must be uncovered and rigorously excised from the factual stratum of the narrative. Only if the reader conscientiously pursues this course will he be able to acquire from Tacitus a reasonably accurate account of the Iulio-Claudian and Flavian regimes.

The Prologue of the Agricola

Tacitus' view of the principate of Domitian is extant only in the Agricola. The nature of this work, and the reasons for Tacitus' virulent hatred of Domitian, will be discussed further below. First, however, the Agricola's highly subjective narrative will be examined in detail. It should become clear that here, as in the later Historiae and Annales, it is necessary to tread cautiously.

In length, the Agricola is a modest work, its 46 chapters consuming only 33 pages in the Teubner edition.

¹⁷Agr. 33.2: "'septimus annus est, commilitones, ex quo virtute et auspiciis imperii Romani, fide atque opera nostra Britanniam vicistis. . . .'"

¹⁸Agr. 40.1: "Igitur triumphalia ornamenta et inlustris statuae honorem et quidquid pro triumpho datur, multo verborum honore cumulata, decerni in senatu iubet. . . ."

However, while compact in form, it still contains a great deal of information on topics ancillary to the career of Agricola, as a brief summary of its contents will show:

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Subject</u>
1-3	Prologue
4-9	The Early Career of Agricola
10-12	A Description of Britain
13-17	Progress of the Roman Conquest Before Agricola's Governorship
18-38	The Campaigns of Agricola
39-42	The Recall and Last Years of Agricola
43-46	Epilogue ¹⁹

The career of Agricola is the subject of approximately one-half the work.²⁰ The remaining chapters are devoted to geographical²¹ and historical²² digressions, speeches,²³ and propaganda.²⁴ Apart from a few isolated remarks, Tacitus' comments on Domitian are restricted to chapters 1-3 and 39-45. Thus Domitian enters the actual narrative of Agricola's career only in its third stage, his life in Rome after his recall from Britain (chapters 39-42). Tacitus' comments are

¹⁹This is the arrangement of H. Furneaux, De Vita Agricolae, rev. J.G.C. Anderson (2nd ed., Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1922) lxxxviii-lxxxix, apart from the division of chapters 39-46, which is the format of R.M. Ogilvie and I.A. Richmond, De Vita Agricolae (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1967) 283-284, 298.

²⁰Chapters 4-9, 18-27, 29, 35-42.

²¹Chapters 10-12.

²²Chapters 13-17, 28.

²³Chapters 30-34.

²⁴Chapters 1-3, 43-46.

otherwise mostly confined to the prologue and the epilogue, which may be regarded as self-contained compositions separated from the main body of the narrative.

The prologue contains certain conventional rhetorical devices which Tacitus neatly turns against Domitian. He apologizes for writing about magna ac nobilis virtus, a subject so alien to contemporary society,²⁵ and apologizes for his deficiencies of style,²⁶ attributing both to the repressive atmosphere of Domitian's regime, tam saeva et infesta virtutibus tempora.²⁷

The latter phrase is, indeed, the main theme of the prologue. It has even mistakenly been assumed that the direct assault on Domitian begins with the sentence which it concludes:

at nunc narraturo mihi vitam defuncti hominis venia opus fuit, quam non petissem incusaturus: tam saeva et infesta virtutibus tempora (1.4).

Ogilvie and Richmond have argued that the use of fuit implies that Tacitus had sought imperial permission to write a biography of Agricola, and had been refused.²⁸ They

²⁵Agr. 1.4; cf. Cic. Orator x.35: "tempora timens inimica virtuti".

²⁶Agr. 3.3: "non tamen pigebit vel incondita ac rudi voce memoriam prioris servitutis ac testimonium praesentium bonorum composuisse." A clever use of a traditional apology; cf. the prologue of Statius' Silvae, "Statius Stellae Suo Salutem".

²⁷Ogilvie-Richmond, De Vita Agricolae, 125.

²⁸Ogilvie-Richmond, De Vita Agricolae, 130.

consider this sentence to be "with particular reference to the suppressive tyranny of the last years of Domitian's reign."²⁹ It is precisely this sentence, however, which is cited as Tacitus' conventional apology to his contemporaries for discoursing upon the subject of virtus.³⁰ One reading must be wrong, for the passage cannot refer simultaneously to a specific request for permission to publish the biography, and to a general plea for society's indulgence. In fact, it is the reading of Ogilvie and Richmond that seems³¹ most forced.

However, even conceding the linguistic argument of Ogilvie and Richmond, on historical grounds their hypothesis would still be suspect. Since the Agricola was not published until sometime in 98,³² it follows that if four years earlier

²⁹Ogilvie-Richmond, De Vita Agricolae, 130.

³⁰By, for example, Furneaux-Anderson, De Vita Agricolae, 40; I. Forni, De Vita Iulii Agricolae (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1962) 85; and by implication, Ogilvie-Richmond, De Vita Agricolae, 125.

³¹The arrangement of chapter 1 is in the form of a general antithesis between the past and present: nostris temporibus—sed apud priores—at nunc—tam saeva et infesta virtutibus tempora. On p. 130 Ogilvie and Richmond have themselves pointed out that nunc refers to the "present age generally", as is the case in Hist. iii.72.1, 83.3. That they then interpret opus fuit as a reference to a specific event during the reign of Domitian is a most perplexing transition. The final clause, tam saeva et infesta virtutibus tempora, makes it clear that throughout this sentence Tacitus is surveying his own age in general. He asks indulgence for writing on the subject of virtus in an age that is infesta virtutibus. Cf. K. Büchner, "Das Proömium zum Agricola des Tacitus", WS, 69 (1956) 322-323.

³²Ogilvie-Richmond, De Vita Agricolae, 11.

Tacitus had actually sought approval from Domitian to publish such a work, he was refused. This would justify Tacitus' obvious bitterness, but it does not substantiate the malicious implication that he would have been granted permission if invective had been his aim. It may be argued from Agricola 2.1 that by 94 A.D. Domitian had had quite enough of senatorial laudationes. It would be understandable if the Emperor put a permanent embargo on such works after the events of 93 A.D.—except that, despite Tacitus' efforts to link them, it is difficult to believe that his biography of Agricola had much in common with the seditious writings of Arulenus Rusticus and Herennius Senecio.

The structure of the Agricola has not received sufficient attention. Even a cursory examination will reveal that the apologetic defence of Agricola's career under Domitian is not an integral part of the biography. If the Agricola had been published during Domitian's lifetime, an apologia obviously would have been neither prudent nor necessary; still, the Agricola's content would not radically differ from its present format. The core, chapters 4-38, would be very much the same, and certainly could have been published; the literary output in Rome during the reign of Domitian is the equal of any save that of the much longer reign of Augustus, and this fact is sufficient in itself to prove that Domitian did not suppress inoffensive literature. Tacitus certainly might consider himself endangered by his

proposed eulogy of Agricola, but Domitian would not be the source of his anxiety. It must again be stressed that a biography of one of his most loyal marshals could not be construed as offensive to the Emperor. If Tacitus remained silent, it was not because he feared committing a capital offense, but because he could not write a defence of Agricola in 94 A.D. without tying himself too closely to the Imperial party. Tacitus was a sagacious and circumspect politician. The atmosphere in 94 was tense. Previous conspiracies against Domitian had failed, but a future conspiracy might overturn the Emperor and place a man of considerably different political temperament upon the throne, a man with a long memory. The Stoic party and its friends would think very ill indeed of anyone who had endorsed co-operation with Domitian in the aftermath of the executions of 93 A.D. Why needlessly antagonize them? For a praetorian senator it was always wisest to steer a middle course in the perilous channels of the Senate, to avoid hard and unequivocal pronouncements until after the event. Thus it may be argued that Tacitus remained silent out of fear not of Domitian, but of the Stoics, and particularly of the moderates who secretly sympathized with them. He prudently chose not to jeopardize his political career, which indeed continued to flourish.

For these various reasons, then, the suggestion that Domitian refused to allow Tacitus to write the Agricola

ought to be rejected. It is not likely that Tacitus ever sought his permission.

Even so, Agricola 1 is hardly flattering to Domitian; rather, it contains a very harsh judgement of contemporary society. The four sentences of this chapter are arranged as two pairs, with each pair offering a clear contrast between past and present ages. Nostris temporibus is the subject of Agricola 1.1. Here Tacitus asserts that while the present age still transmits to posterity a record of the deeds and character of great men, it does so only when conspicuous virtus rises above ignorantiam recti et invidiam.³³ Tacitus evidently believed that a simple juxtaposition of past and present behavior would form a sufficiently severe criticism of his own age, for Agricola 1.2 makes it clear that apud priores the custom was considerably different, virtus a more laudable commodity per se:

sed apud priores ut agere digna memoratu pronum
magisque in aperto erat, ita celeberrimus quisque
ingenio ad prodendam virtutis memoriam sine gratia aut
ambitione bonae tantum conscientiae pretio ducebatur.

Agricola 1.3-4 restates the same theme, with iisdem temporibus in 1.3 set off by at nunc in 1.4. In the "good old days", if a man performed an act of laudable virtue, he

³³Agr. 1.1: "Clarorum virorum facta moresque posteris tradere, antiquitus usitatum, ne nostris quidem temporibus quamquam incuriosa suorum aetas omisit, quotiens magna aliqua ac nobilis virtus vicit ac supergressa est vitium parvis magnisque civitatibus commune, ignorantiam recti et invidiam."

could advertise it himself without fear of being regarded as presumptuous, adeo virtutes iisdem temporibus optime aestimantur, quibus facillime gignuntur. Now, however, indulgence must be sought, and excuses offered, even to praise the virtus of a man safely deceased, tam saeva et infesta virtutibus tempora.

Agricola 1, then, is a powerful indictment of the society presided over for the previous fifteen years by Domitian, an indictment of the society, and indirectly of the man who ruled it.³⁴

Agricola 2 is a transitional chapter. The first sentence continues the pointed contrast between past and present. It is only one more indication of tempora infesta virtutibus that Rusticus and Senecio are executed for extolling without permission the virtue of men long deceased:

Legimus, cum Aruleno Rustico Paetus Thrasea, Herennio Senecioni Priscus Helvidius laudati essent, capitale fuisse, neque in ipsos modo auctores, sed in libros quoque eorum saevitum, delegato triumviris ministerio ut monumenta clarissimorum ingeniorum in comitio ac foro urerentur.³⁵

It is consistent with this attitude that the philosophers

³⁴K. Büchner, WS, 69 (1956) 327-329.

³⁵In 93 A.D. The trials, and their historical significance, are discussed by R.S. Rogers, "A Group of Domitianic Treason Trials", CPh, 55 (1960) 19-23; and K.H. Waters, Phoenix, 18 (1964) 49-77. Rogers argues unconvincingly that the crimes alleged by the sources were mere pretexts, and that the Stoics were in fact guilty of more serious acts of treason. Cf. the more extended discussion on pp. 307-309 below.

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were banished from Rome,³⁶ that virtue in every form was
³⁷
 extirpated.

This theme reaches its climax in Agricola 2.3,
 where the antithesis is reduced to its most extreme form:

et sicut vetus aetas vidit quid ultimum in libertate
 esset, ita nos quid in servitute . . .

This sentence is provocative. It suggests first that to
 Tacitus it was equally characteristic of his society that it
 was hostile to virtue and servile. ~~The statement~~ vetus aetas
vidit quid ultimum in libertate esset further suggests that
 he believed that it was precisely in the most anarchic period
 of Roman history, the last century of the Republic (130-31
 B.C.), that virtus had had the opportunity most frequently
 to manifest itself, and was most frequently ³⁸applauded.
 Anarchy, however, despite the opportunities it provided for
 displays of virtus, was no more palatable to Tacitus than

³⁶Also in 93 A.D. Philosophy and subversion were
 natural allies. Cf. the remarks of S. Dill, Roman Society
from Nero to Marcus Aurelius (Cleveland: Meridian Books,
 1956) 40; and R. MacMullen, Enemies of the Roman Order:
Treason, Unrest, and Alienation in the Empire (Cambridge:
 Harvard University Press, 1966) 46-94. Domitian did not
 persecute all philosophers; see J.M.C. Toynbee, "Dictators
 and Philosophers in the First Century A.D.", G&R, 13 (1944)
 46.

³⁷Agr. 2.2: "scilicet illo igne vocem populi Romani
 et libertatem senatus et conscientiam generis humani aboleri
 arbitrabantur, expulsis insuper sapientiae professoribus
 atque omni bona arte in exilium acta, ne quid usquam honestum
 occurreret."

³⁸He cites as examples P. Rutilius Rufus (cos. 105
 B.C.) and M. Aemilius Scaurus (cos. 115 B.C.): Agr. 1.3.

tyranny;³⁹ hence his dilemma. The answer was to retain the principate, but under the authority of a bonus who would encourage the practice of virtus.⁴⁰ This is precisely the event celebrated in Agricola 3.1, where Nerva Caesar res olim dissociabiles miscuerit, principatum ac libertatem. Freedom of expression in the new golden age of Nerva and Trajan, who have successfully fused liberty and the principate, is a major theme of chapter 3.

The historical content of Agricola 2 also merits comment. The first sentence is an extraordinarily distorted attack on Domitian's suppression of the Stoic party. Domitian is depicted as a tyrant attempting to banish justice and virtue by the suppression of men's freedom of judgement and expression. Tacitus says nothing about the demonstrable fact that throughout his reign, and particularly after the rebellion of L. Antonius Saturninus in 89, Domitian tried to arrange a detente with the Stoic party. In 92, less than one year before he crushed the Stoics, Domitian elevated⁴¹ Arulenus Rusticus to the consulship. Earlier in the reign,

³⁹Cf. the attitude expressed in Dial. 41.4.

⁴⁰Tacitus makes his attitude toward the last century of the Republic eloquently clear in Dial. 40.2: "sed est magna illa et notabilis eloquentia alumna licentiae, quam stulti libertatem vocant . . ." Libertas has been intensively scrutinized by C. Wirszubski, Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome during the Late Republic and Early Principate (Cambridge: the University Press, 1950).

⁴¹With T. Pomponius Bassus for September-December of 92. See A. Degrassi, I Fasti Consolari dell'Impero Romano (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1952) 28.

to Domitian's overtures with clear acts of sedition, of maiestas. The respectable consular Helvidius Priscus wrote and published a witty sketch of Paris and Oenone which Domitian justifiably interpreted as a satire directed at his own marriage, for his wife had had an adulterous relationship with an actor named Paris.⁴⁵ Arulenus Rusticus thanked the Emperor for his consulship by publishing a panegyric upon Thrasea Paetus, that arch-irritant of Nero whose name was synonymous with opposition to the principate.⁴⁶ It was not in Domitian's character to tolerate such affronts to his dignity. The guilt of Priscus and Rusticus was beyond dispute; they received the martyr's death which they had so

complicity with Herennius Senecio: Pliny Ep. iii.11; vii.19.

(7) Helvidius Priscus I. PIR² H 59. Exiled by Nero from 66 to 69: Tac. Ann. xvi.33. Praetor in 70, he was again exiled in 74 by Vespasian, and executed, perhaps in 75: Suet. Vesp. 15.

(8) Helvidius Priscus II. PIR² H 60. Consul before 87, he was executed in 93 after publishing a risqué skit on Paris and Oenone: Suet. Dom. 10.

(9) Antei-us. PIR² A 728. First exiled and then executed for conspiracy by Gaius in 41: Joseph. AJ xix.125.

(10) Antei-us. PIR² A 729. A conspirator against Gaius, he was murdered in 41 by the latter's German body-guard: Joseph. AJ xix.125-126.

(11) P. Antei-us Rufus. PIR² A 732. Consul before 51, he was accused of conspiracy and committed suicide in 66: Tac. Ann. xvi.14.

Only (3) C. Caecina Paetus, consul in 70, escaped accusation for conspiracy or sedition. Gaius, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, and Domitian, five emperors in turn, had to condemn members of this familial clique to death. For the issues at stake, see the unpublished doctoral dissertation of E.B. Fine, The Stoic Opposition to the Principate as Seen in Tacitus (New Haven: Yale University, 1932).

⁴⁵Suet. Dom. 3. Cf. K.H. Waters, "Juvenal and the Reign of Trajan", Antichthon, 4 (1970) 71-72.

⁴⁶Agr. 2.1.

earnestly courted. Herennius Senecio was executed at the same time for his panegyric upon Helvidius Priscus the Elder;⁴⁷ the remainder of the Stoics were bundled off into exile.⁴⁸ Only their endless obstructionism would be missed; they had contributed nothing to the State.

Tacitus himself may well have regarded the Stoics as obstructionists; certainly he considered their opposition to the principate to be both petty and futile. Agricola 2.1 should not be construed as evidence of Stoic leanings on the part of Tacitus; the executions of Rusticus and Senecio were important not because they were Stoics, but as further evidence of the hostility of the times to custom and virtue. If Agricola 2.1 is also a politic concession to the Stoics' thirst for revenge against the adherents of Domitian in 98, Tacitus' true sympathies nonetheless stand clearly revealed in the sentence immediately preceding the epilogue, 42.4:

sciunt, quibus moris est inlicita mirari, posse etiam sub malis principibus magnos viros esse, obsequiumque ac modestiam, si industria ac vigor adsint, eo laudis excedere, quo plerique per abrupta sed in nullum rei publicae usum ambitiosa morte inclinarunt.

Tacitus admired the career not of a Thrasea Paetus, Arulenus Rusticus, or Herennius Senecio, but of an Agricola—or a

⁴⁷Agr. 2.1. The date has been disputed at length by W. Otto. See, for example, "Zur Prätur des jüngeren Plinius", SBAW, Abh. 4 (1923) 9-10.

⁴⁸They included Arria, the widow of Thrasea Paetus; Fannia, the wife of Senecio; Verulana Gratilla, perhaps the wife of Rusticus; and Iunius Mauricus, the brother of Rusticus: Pliny Ep. iii.11.

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Trajan.

In the second sentence, Tacitus regards it as further evidence of tempora infesta virtutibus that Domitian expelled the philosophers from Rome. Once again, this is a blanket judgement, grounded in half-truth. Domitian did not
 50
 expel all philosophers; he attacked that contingent which
 51
 was actively conspiring against him. He was not the first—

⁴⁹Tacitus subscribed to the ingrained Roman tradition that virtus was valueless unless practiced in the service of the State. See D.C. Earl, The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967) 23. There has been considerable discussion of Tacitus' leanings toward Stoicism. Recently, J.P. Armleder has attempted to prove that Tacitus admired the Stoics in two articles: "Tacitus and Professional Philosophers", CB (St. Louis) 37 (1961) 90-93, and "Tacitus' Attitude to Philosophy", CB (St. Louis) 38 (1962) 89-91. Armleder lists a number of Stoic beliefs held by Tacitus and Agricola. His argument that Tacitus believed in the Stoic concept of "reasonable departure from life", which is based upon the suicide of Otho in Hist. ii.50, is unconvincing. Similarly, courage and mercy were not qualities prized by the Stoics alone, and to say that both Tacitus and the Stoics praised them does not make Tacitus a Stoic, nor even a devotee of philosophy in general. For that matter, to say that Tacitus was merciful is dubious. See, for example, Ann. xiv.42-45.

⁵⁰Cr. J.M.C. Toynbee, G&R, 13 (1944) 46.

⁵¹Many philosophers were actively engaged in conspiracy. Apollonius boasts of his part in the conspiracies against Nero: Philostr. VA vii.3.4. He was overjoyed at the death of Domitian: VA vii.8.33; cf. Dio Cass. lxxii. 18. More frequently, philosophers are found in the coterie of the extreme republican element in the Senate. Thrasea Paetus' last conversation was with Demetrius the Cynic: Tac. Ann. xvi.34. Musonius Rufus was spiritual adviser to both Thrasea Paetus and Rubellius Plautus: Ann. xiv.59. His son-in-law, Artemidorus, was among the philosophers banished from Rome in the aftermath of the attack on the Stoics in 93: Pliny Ep. iii.11.

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nor the last—Princeps to do so. He justifiably regarded their activities, and particularly their encouragement of the extreme senatorial element personified by the Stoics, as seditious. None of this, however, in Tacitus.

The opening sentence of chapter 3, as was mentioned above, concludes the thematic contrast between liberty and the principate with their fusion by Nerva and Trajan. It is a curious chapter. The accession of Nerva inaugurates a new age of freedom, but Tacitus' enthusiasm is tempered, he claims, by the experience of fifteen years of tyranny. His praise of the new regime is stiff, subdued in tone because of his preoccupation with the lingering effects of the former regime. Tacitus devotes half of the first sentence to praise of Nerva and Trajan, the bare minimum:

Nunc demum redit animus; et quamquam primo statim beatissimi saeculi ortu Nerva Caesar res olim dissociabiles miscuerit, principatum ac libertatem, augeatque cotidie felicitatem temporum Nerva Traianus, nec spem modo ac votum securitas publica, sed ipsius voti fiduciam ac robur adsumpserit, natura tamen infirmitatis humanae tardiora sunt remedia quam mala . . .

The remaining two and one-half sentences continue the thought of Agricola 1-2. Agricola 2 reveals the manner in which freedom was suppressed; Agricola 3 shows the effect of

52Nero banished Musonius Rufus and Verginius Flavus: Tac. Ann. xv.71. Also L. Annaeus Cornutus: Dio Cass. lxi. 29. Demetrius the Cynic and all the other philosophers with the exception of Musonius were banished in 71 by Vespasian: Dio Cass. lxx.13.1. Among the prominent philosophers banished by Domitian were Musonius' son-in-law Artemidorus, and Dio of Prusa. One of Dio's pupils, Favorinus of Arles, may have been banished by Hadrian, perhaps to Chios, along with Dionysius of Miletus: Dio Cass. lxxix.3-4.

tyranny on the character of those who have lived through it:

et ut corpora nostra lente augeantur, cito extinguuntur,
sic ingenia studiaque opprimeris facilius quam
revocaveris: subit quippe etiam ipsius inertiae
dulcedo, et invisa primo desidia postremo amatur. (3.1).

The neutral expression, the guarded thought, silence, inertia; these were the requisites for survival; but insidiously, Tacitus says, what was necessary gradually became desirable. Thus after fifteen years of silence, it was difficult to speak again, difficult especially because one remembered so vividly the fate of those who did speak out:

quid, si per quindecim annos, grande mortalis aevi spatium, multi fortuitis casibus, promptissimus quisque saevitia principis interciderunt, pauci et, ut <sic> dixerim, non modo aliorum sed etiam nostri superstites sumus, exemptis e media vita tot annis, quibus iuvenes ad senectutem, senes prope ad ipsos exactae aetatis terminos per silentium venimus. (3.2)?⁵³

So Tacitus would have us believe. This sentence, however, can and should be interpreted as a clever piece of rhetoric. Indeed, it is couched in the form of a rhetorical question. Non tamen, which begins the following sentence, links it closely to Tacitus' conventionally modest apology for the poverty of his style. Domitian's regime crushed spirit and independence. Those who spoke out perished; self-enforced silence preserved life but dulled the wits. After so many years of silence, it was difficult to cultivate a pleasing style:

⁵³Agr. 3.2. Promptissimus refers to the Stoics. Saevitia is one of the standard epithets of Roman political invective used to describe tyrannical behavior. See J.R. Dunkle, "The Rhetorical Tyrant in Roman Historiography: Sallust, Livy and Tacitus", CW, 65 (1971) 14, 18.

non tamen pigebit vel incondita ac rudi voce memoriam prioris servitutis ac testimonium praesentium bonorum composuisse (3.3).

It is rhetoric; does it, however, contain an element of truth? In point of fact, Tacitus seems to have cultivated oratory with great success, and to have been given every opportunity by Domitian to exercise his talent, both in and out of the law courts.⁵⁴ Tacitus' ability is obvious; that he won the favor of Domitian is in itself proof that he had⁵⁵ had opportunities to display that ability. Pliny's correspondence is also revealing. Pliny, another protégé of Domitian, was before 96 on very familiar terms with the notorious but influential delator M. Aquillius Regulus, who⁵⁶ was in a position to further his career. Tacitus may have had the support of the powerful but equally odious Fabricius Veiento.⁵⁷ Pliny's legal practice prospered under Domitian and Trajan alike. Tyranny did not deter Pliny from

⁵⁴R. Syme, Tacitus, 65-70. Tacitus' career under Domitian will be examined in detail at a later point in this chapter.

⁵⁵In 88 he presided as a quindecimvir sacris faciundis over the Ludi Saeculares, an appointment made concurrently or perhaps even before his praetorship. An extraordinary honor. Pliny, even with the support of Iulius Frontinus and Verginius Rufus, had to wait until after his consulship for a like appointment. Cf. R. Syme, Tacitus, 66.

⁵⁶Pliny Ep. 1.5.4; 20.14. Pliny had a sudden change of heart after Domitian's assassination. Subsequently, he loathed Regulus. Cf. pp. 222-223 below.

⁵⁷Also a quindecimvir sacris faciundis in 88; cf. R. Syme, Tacitus, 66.

practicing in the centumviral court;⁵⁸ his legal experience was sufficiently extensive for him to be instructed in 93 to prosecute Baebius Massa on behalf of the Senate.⁵⁹ Tacitus' career would be parallel. The hatred and fear of Domitian which he expresses may be sincere. Certainly, like his friend Pliny, he would like his readers to believe that he sat by in dumbstruck and terrorized silence for fifteen years. But it is simply not true. Agricola 3.2-3 is a false but conventional apology for an author's deficiency of style. It is the exaggerated rhetoric of a politician coming to terms with a new regime—and perhaps something more.

Another matter seems to have been on Tacitus' mind when he penned chapter 3. The very last sentence provides the clue:

hic interim liber honori Agricolae soceri mei
destinatus, professione pietatis aut laudatus erit
aut excusatus. (3.3).

Aut excusatus: the mind leaps back to 1.4, where Tacitus pleads for indulgence, tam saeva et infesta virtutibus tempora. Tacitus has thus concluded the preface as he began it, but with this vital difference. He clearly wrote Agricola 1.4 with the repressive regime of Domitian in mind; why, then, in Agricola 3.4 must indulgence still be asked of a society now ruled by Trajan, the object of praise only a

⁵⁸Ep. 1.5.4-7.

⁵⁹Ep. vii.33.4.

few lines before? The plea is, to be sure, rhetorical, but given the hollowness of his praise of Nerva and Trajan in this chapter, it seems to have a deeper meaning. Tacitus sought indulgence because he was defending virtue, and the age as a whole, not simply the reign of Domitian, was infesta⁶⁰ virtutibus. This sentence thus may provide an insight into the psychology which produced so harshly pessimistic a view of history under a regime universally regarded as benevolent. Tacitus witnessed the harsh, but strong and capable, regime of Domitian giving way to the benevolent, but weak, rule of Nerva. The result was an Empire tottering on the verge of another civil war. Nothing praiseworthy there, but a lesson to be learned. Syme was never more correct than when he stated that "one year of Nerva was better schooling for an⁶¹ historian than fifteen years of Domitian." A soldier was needed to rule the Empire and its armies with a firm hand; Trajan, who had engineered his adoption in an ill-concealed coup d'état, was a career military officer. He possessed the strength of will needed to rule the Empire; did he possess the patience and tact necessary to make a poorly disguised military monarchy palatable to the senatorial class? Of all Rome's rulers from Julius Caesar to Nerva, only Augustus had brought the requisite blend to the throne. Trajan was largely an unknown quantity; fulsome praise might

⁶⁰K. Büchner, WS, 69 (1956) 325.

⁶¹R. Syme, Tacitus, 131.

be premature. Gaius and Nero, and, for that matter, Domitian as well, had initially given every indication that their reigns would be auspicious.⁶² There were disturbing elements in Trajan's personality. He was a drunkard, and a pederast.⁶³ His background was also a source of unease. He was a Spaniard, the first Princeps of provincial origin. Would his rule, like Claudius', be a rule of favorites, the Spaniards with their peculiar accents playing the roles of Narcissus and Pallas?⁶⁴ There was little reason for Tacitus⁶⁵ to feel at ease or be optimistic in the spring of 98 A.D.

The prologue of the Agricola thus mirrors the period in which it was written—the stormy autumn of 97 and spring of 98 A.D. A purge was in progress against the supporters of Domitian.⁶⁶ Tacitus stood in no personal danger, but his career might be impeded by past associations. With the natural elasticity of a politician, he conveniently forgot favors received in the past and cast in his lot with the party actively attacking Domitian's memory. While Pliny

⁶²K. Buchner, WS, 69 (1956) 331. Cf., for example, Dio Cass. lxviii.5 (Trajan) and lxi.3 (Nero).

⁶³Dio Cass. lxviii.7.4.

⁶⁴Hadrian's accent was a matter of some embarrassment to him: SHA Hadr. 3.1.

⁶⁵Cf. W. Weber, Rom: Herrschertum und Reich im zweiten Jahrhundert (Stuttgart & Berlin: Kohlhammer, 1937) 35.

⁶⁶Dio Cass. lxviii.1.2. The witch-hunt continued for some time. See, for example, the treatment of Norbanus Licinianus in Pliny Ep. iii.9.31-34.

found or pretended to find a delator's indictment lodged in
Domitian's papers to prove that he was out of favor,⁶⁷
Tacitus stressed that his father-in-law had been forced to
retire, and may well have been a victim of the Emperor's
jealousy.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, Tacitus quietly assumed his consul-
ship—which may embarrassingly have been Domitian's last
such appointment⁶⁹ —and continued to advance in his political
career.

At the same time, however, while all around him
vented their relief in genuine adulation of Trajan, Tacitus
remained aloof, his praise the minimum required by the
circumstances. He was too much the political realist, and
possessed too refined a sense of history, to be able to
regard the untested and unknown Trajan as the hope and
salvation of Senate and Empire.⁷⁰ The pessimism of the
prologue to the Agricola, indeed of his basic philosophy of
history, reflects his sense of unease, the very real question
in his mind of whether it was possible for any Princeps to
treat the Senate as an equal, to be primus inter pares. A

⁶⁷Pliny Ep. vii.27.14.

⁶⁸Agr. 43.2.

⁶⁹Domitian died in September, 96. Tacitus was
consul in November-December 97. How far in advance Domitian
appointed suffect consuls is unknown; some of the consuls of
69 were appointed by Nero, who committed suicide in June,
68. Cf. R. Syme, Tacitus, 70.

⁷⁰Trajan seems to have spent most of his adulthood
outside the capital. For his career prior to his accession,
see R. Syme, Tacitus, 30-35.

brief taste of anarchy during Nerva's reign had confronted Tacitus with the manifest inability of the Senate to control events, a condition which forced upon him the realization that benevolent authoritarianism was the only philosophy of government consistent with the salvation and prosperity of the Empire. Given the relations between Senate and Princes in the past, this was a gloomy prognosis for the future.

References to Domitian in Chapters 4-38

References to Domitian in the narrative of Agricola's career are minimal before his recall to Rome in chapter 39. Those that do appear are allusive. Tacitus indirectly attacks Domitian either by stressing certain cruel or vicious acts of previous emperors which recall notorious misdeeds of Domitian, or by outlining conduct avoided by the virtuous Agricola, but commonly attributed to Domitian. The first example occurs in the last sentence of chapter 5:

intravitque animum militaris gloriae cupido; ingrata temporibus quibus sinistra erga eminentes interpretatio nec minus periculum ex magna fama quam ex mala (5.3).

The context is the rebellion of Boudicca. The historical reference, therefore, is to the reign of Nero, and the sentence undoubtedly refers to the forced suicide of Corbulo. Since there were rumors, however, that Agricola had been poisoned (Agr. 43.2), in this passage Tacitus almost certainly slyly intended his readers to infer that Agricola had met a similar end at Domitian's hands for the same reason.

Precisely the same technique is exploited in chapter 6, where Tacitus strongly implies that the age of Nero was also one of the tempora infesta virtutibus:

mox inter quaesturam ac tribunatum plebis atque ipsum etiam tribunatus annum quiete et otio transiit, gnarus sub Nerone temporum, quibus inertia pro sapientia fuit. idem praeturae tenor et silentium . . . (6.3-4)

Under Nero quietude and obscurity were signal virtues, the guarantees of survival, and scrupulously practiced by Agricola. In chapter 40.4, the reader is reminded that he pursued precisely the same course under Domitian:

ceterum uti militare nomen, grave inter otiosos, aliis virtutibus temperaret, tranquillitatem atque otium penitus hausit, cultu modicus, sermone facilis, uno aut altero amicorum comitatus, adeo ut plerique, quibus magnos viros per ambitionem aestimare mos est, viso aspectoque Agricola quaererent famam, pauci interpretarentur.

Thus chapter 6.3-4 is double-edged, a reference to both Nero and Domitian. The passage is anything but truthful, however, and Tacitus knew it. He states unequivocally that Agricola spent the years after his quaestorship under the "evil" Nero quiete et otio. Yet in the very next sentence he immediately adds that during his praetorship Agricola gave games mediorationis atque abundantiae (6.4)! If Agricola was quiescent during his plebeian tribunate, it was because there was little for such a tribune to do. His praetorship, in contrast, was active, and does not seem to have differed from the norm. The parallel with Domitian is similarly flawed. If Agricola led a tranquil existence after his return to Rome from Britain, it was tranquil because he had no official

duties to perform, not because he had fallen into disfavor with Domitian.

Chapter 7 contains a pointed slur on Domitian's conduct during his urban praetorship in 70 A.D.:

initia principatus ac statum urbis Mucianus regebat, iuvene admodum Domitiano et ex paterna fortuna tantum licentiam usurpante (7.2).

71

This slur was to be repeated later in the Historiae:

Nomen sedemque Caesaris Domitianus acceperat, nondum ad curas intentus, sed stupris et adulteriis filium principis agebat (iv.2.1).

Vespasianus in Italiam resque urbis intentus adversam de Domitiano famam accipit, tamquam terminos aetatis et concessa filio egrederetur . . . (iv.51.2)

Vagueness is an integral part of Tacitus' method of distorting personality. For once, however, other sources specify the crimes that Tacitus has intentionally left vague. Suetonius accused Domitian of three crimes: the abduction and marriage of Domitia Longina, the wife of L. Aelius Plautius Lamia Aelianus;⁷² the distribution of more than⁷³ twenty urban and peregrine offices in one day; and the⁷⁴ initiation of an unnecessary expedition against Germany. Dio Cassius also charges Domitian with the abduction of⁷⁵ Domitia Longina, but he does not mention the abortive

⁷¹Cf. pp. 167-168 below.

⁷²Dom. 1.3.

⁷³Dom. 1.3.

⁷⁴Dom. 2.1.

⁷⁵Dio Cass. lxxv.3.4.

German expedition, and he makes the important addition that it was Mucianus and Domitian together who were distributing⁷⁶ extensive official appointments.

The existence of three such complementary sources affords an excellent opportunity to trace the development and validity of the unfavorable tradition about Domitian's behavior. First, the appointments. Suetonius bluntly states that Domitian distributed offices wholesale: atque uno die super XX officia urbana aut peregrina distribuit (1.3). Dio adds, however, that Mucianus was equally responsible: πολλοῖς γοῦν ἀρχάς τε καὶ ἐπιτροπείας αὐτὸς καὶ ὁ Δομιτιανὸς ἔδωκαν, καὶ ἐπάρχους ἄλλους ἐπ' ἄλλαις καὶ ὑπάτους ἀπέδειξαν (lxv.2.2). Tacitus, in turn, insists throughout the fourth book of the Historiae⁷⁷ that Mucianus was responsible for the direction of affairs. Ironically, in Agricola 7.3 he records one of the appointments in question, Mucianus' nomination of one Gnaeus Iulius Agricola to the command of the twentieth legion! It has, it is true, been argued,⁷⁸ notably by Ettore Paratore, that Domitian must also have been responsible for Agricola's appointment, a fact that Tacitus prudently decided to conceal. This is a tribute to

⁷⁶Dio Cass. lxv.2.2.

⁷⁷See especially iv.39: "et mox eiurante Frontino Caesar Domitianus praeturam cepit. eius nomen epistulis edictisque praeponabatur, vis penes Mucianum erat." Also iv.44, 46, 80, 85-86.

⁷⁸E. Paratore, Tacito (2nd ed. rev., Roma: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1962) 38.

the persuasiveness of a tradition based on the most superficial agreement between Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio; in point of fact, such an interpretation violates both the language of Agricola 7 and the facts of Historiae iv.39.⁷⁹ Mucianus was in complete charge of affairs; Dio Cassius expressly confirms Tacitus on this point:

καὶ ὅτε ἐξουσίαν εἶχε πάνθ' ὅσα ἐβούλετο καὶ ἄνευ τῆς αὐτοῦ προτάξεως διακεῖν καὶ γράφειν, τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ μόνον ἐπιγράφοντες. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο γε καὶ δακτύλιον πεμφθέντα οἱ ἐφέρει, ἵνα τὸ αὐτοκρατορικὸν σφράγισμα τὰ σημαινόμενα λαμβάνῃ (lxv.2.1-2).

Dio's testimony is doubly important because he relates the episode in much greater detail than Tacitus, a sure proof that he is relying not upon Tacitus but upon a more detailed⁸⁰ account of the event—perhaps that of the Elder Pliny. At any rate, it is now partially clear why Tacitus libels Domitian in an intentionally vague manner; he could hardly charge Domitian with improper conduct in the appointment of officials when one of the appointees in question was his own father-in-law. However, given the agreement of Tacitus and Dio Cassius on the primacy of Mucianus, in this instance Suetonius' blunt statement that Domitian was culpable must

⁷⁹B. Zanco, "Su alcune interpretazioni dell' Agricola nel 'Tacito' del Paratore", Aevum, 33 (1959) 255; M. Fortina, Un generale romano del 1° secolo dell'impero: C. Licinio Muciano (Novara: Rag. S. Mora, 1955) 23.

⁸⁰Pliny's A Fine Aufidi Bassi may have extended down to the triumph of Vespasian and Titus over the Jews in the summer of 71; cf. R. Syme, Tacitus, 180.

be rejected as inaccurate.

The same basic criticism may be levelled against
Suetonius' charge that

expeditionem quoque in Galliam Germaniasque neque
necessariam et dissuadentibus paternis amicis incohavit,
tantum ut fratri se et opibus et dignatione adaequaret
(2.1).

This statement finds no support in Dio Cassius, and conflicts with the factual content of Historiae iv.68. In this latter passage Tacitus has indeed done his best to burden Domitian with the responsibility for the campaign which brought Mucianus and Domitian to Gaul, but he cannot conceal Mucianus' direction of the affair. The sequence of events is as follows: Mucianus believed that the army on the Rhine was inadequate to deal with the war, and decided personally to reinforce it (68.1). To safeguard the government of Rome in his absence, he transferred Varus Arrius from the praetorian prefecture to the prefecture of the annona, and appointed Vespasian's kinsman Arrecinus Clemens praetorian prefect (68.2). He chose the most eminent (clarissimus quisque) men of the State to accompany him in an advisory capacity, and departed, accompanied by Domitian (68.3). Further, there is no indication in Tacitus' version that the expedition was unnecessary. Quite the contrary. Cerialis' victories still lay in the future; current dispatches from
81
the Rhine were grim. The decision to undertake the

⁸¹In iv.63-66, Civilis and Classicus debate the destruction of Colonia Agrippinensis.

expedition was thus sound, and clearly made by Mucianus, not Domitian. The latter played the part of a subordinate throughout. Once again, Suetonius stands convicted of inaccuracy, and must be rejected.

The only charge upon which Suetonius and Dio Cassius agree is the abduction of Domitia Longina. Since Dio does not seem to have used Suetonius here,⁸² the accusation may be taken as independently substantiated, but not as the capricious act of a tyrant. Domitian was only eighteen years old, and Mucianus was in no mood to humor a rival. There is no evidence that Domitian took Domitia against her will. Corbulo's daughter did not inherit her father's severity of character. If she was unfaithful to Lamia Aelianus, she was later to be unfaithful to Domitian,⁸³ and allegedly was even privy to the successful plot against his life.⁸⁴ He, however,⁸⁵ was clearly in love with her.

There is, then, little of value either in the vague accusations levelled against Domitian in Agricola 7 and Historiae iv, or in the specific accusations to be found in Dio and Suetonius. The most that Domitian can be accused of is youthful infatuation, which is not unprecedented behavior.⁸⁶

⁸²And perhaps never used him; see E. Schwartz, "Cassius Dio Cocceianus", RE, 3 (1899) 1714.

⁸³Suet. Dom. 3.1.

⁸⁴Dio Cass. lxvii.15.2.

⁸⁵Suet. Dom. 3.1.

⁸⁶Cf. the behavior of the youthful Octavian: Suet. Aug. 62.

A clear example of contrast in the behavior of Agricola and Domitian occurs in the last sentence of chapter 22. Speaking of Agricola's conduct in the field, Tacitus says:

apud quosdam acerbior in conviciis narrabatur; ut erat comis bonis, ita adversus malos iniucundus. ceterum ex iracundia nihil supererat secretum, ut silentium eius non timeres: honestius putabat offendere quam odisse (22.4).

The twenty-second chapter is a heavily rhetorical composition. Agricola possesses all the stereotyped virtues of a model general. He chooses impregnable campsites (22.2);⁸⁷ he secures his garrisons with a year's supply of provisions so that they need not fear a winter attack (22.2-3);⁸⁸ he does not take the achievements of his centurions and prefects as his own, but gives them credit for their initiative (22.4).⁸⁹ Similarly, in his relations with his soldiers, he is severe with those who shirk their duty, and generous with those who perform it. His anger could be extreme, but it was the fleeting anger of a general who knows that sudden death awaits the negligent, not the anger of a tyrant, who silently nourishes his hatred, awaiting the proper moment to take his vengeance. Agricola is thus in the noble company of

⁸⁷An attribute of, for example, Vespasian. See Hist. 11.5.1.

⁸⁸In a forward campaign, logistics is of major concern to every general. See, for example, Caes. BGall. v.28; 47; and throughout.

⁸⁹Cf. the actions of Germanicus: Ann. 1.71.2-3.

90 91

Germanicus or Corbulo, his dominus another Tiberius. 92

The content of this chapter, then, is so rhetorical that Agricola and Domitian cannot be distinguished as individuals from the types they represent. This chapter should not, therefore, be cited as reliable historical evidence.

Chapter 39

At this point, Tacitus dispenses with allusive criticism of Domitian's character and conduct. This chapter, and the six that follow, compose the most direct and vicious attack on Domitian to be found anywhere in Tacitus. Here his historical technique is as sophisticated as in the narrative on Tiberius. Innuendo, half-truth, and malicious rumor are the tools of his method. The circumstances are Agricola's return to Rome, his relationship with Domitian after his return, and his death. These events encompass the decade 84-93 A.D.

The first sentence illustrates Tacitus' technique:

Hunc rerum cursum, quamquam nulla verborum iactantia epistulis Agricolae auctum, ut erat Domitiano moris, fronte laetus, pectore anxius excepit (39.1).

⁹⁰Ann. xiii.35.

⁹¹Ann. i.12 is the earliest example of Tiberius' resentment.

⁹²Cf. G. Wälsch, Rom, das Reich und die fremden Völker in der Geschichtsschreibung der früheren Kaiserzeit, Studien zur Glaubwürdigkeit des Tacitus (Basel/ Baden-Baden: Helbing & Lichtenhohn, 1951) 35-37; R. Urban, Historische Untersuchungen zum Domitianbild des Tacitus (Munich: Inaugural Dissertation, 1971) 19.

This sentence combines a factual stratum with sheer malicious speculation. After his decisive victory at Mons Graupius, Agricola posted dispatches to Rome informing the Emperor of the outcome, and detailing his future plans.⁹³ Domitian would probably read Agricola's dispatches personally; if they pleased him, his joy would be evident to all. If, however, outward happiness concealed inner anxiety, how was Tacitus to know? He was not the Emperor's confidant; for that matter, Domitian is not likely to have betrayed such anxiety to anyone. The slur is conjecture and nothing else.

Conceivably, news of the victory at Mons Graupius did cause Domitian concern, but if so, the reason has been warped beyond recognition by Tacitus. Modern scholarship provides a plausible reconstruction of the Emperor's probable train of thought. Domitian had set out for the Rhine in the spring of 83, and was acclaimed imperator for the third time by June 9.⁹⁴ Acclaimed twice more before the end of the year,⁹⁵ and for the sixth and seventh times by September 3, 84,⁹⁶ at some point in 83 he took the surname

⁹³Cf. Agr. 18.6.

⁹⁴Imp. II on September 19, 82: ILS 1995; Imp. III on June 9, 83: ILS 1996. For the spring departure, see H. Braunert, "Zum Chattenkriege Domitians", BJ, 153 (1953) 98.

⁹⁵J. Janssen, C. Suetonii Tranquilli Vita Domitiani (Groningen, the Hague: J.B. Wolters, 1919) 31.

⁹⁶Imp. VII on September 3, 84: ILS 1997.

97

"Germanicus" and returned to Rome to celebrate a triumph
 98
 over the Chatti. The campaign had been a major effort

97 "Germanicus" appears on a papyrus and an inscription dated to the second year of Domitian's reign, that is, September 18, 82-September 18, 83: P.Flor. III.361, Z.12; IGR I.1138. Cf. the discussion of H. Braunert, BJ, 153 (1953) 98.

98 The exact date of Domitian's triumph is very much in dispute. S. Gsell, Domitien, 184, argues for a date late in 83 or very early in January, 84 on the basis of Dio Cass. lxvii.4.3, which he considers as proof that Domitian was elected consul for ten years in succession only after the triumph over the Chatti. He believes that the appointment perhaps took place in the first comitia of 84: Domitien, 42 n. 4. This is the weak link in his argument; we do not know when in 84 Domitian was elected consul for the next ten years in succession; cf. P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2559. Weynand prudently will say only that the appointment, and hence the triumph, took place before September, 84. Of the several acclamations, Weynand attributes one in 84, and perhaps one in 83, to victories won by Agricola in Britain: RE, 6 (1909) 2560. B.W. Henderson, however, argues from the four acclamations of June, 83-September, 84 that the triumph took place late in the fall of 84: Five Roman Emperors: Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva, Trajan, A.D. 69-117 (Cambridge: the University Press, 1927) 103-104. Reverting to Weynand's suggestion, R. Syme assigns up to three of the acclamations to events in Britain and Mauretania, and places the triumph at the end of 83: "Flavian Wars and Frontiers", CAH, 11 (1936) 164. The eighth acclamation in 85, however, should be assigned to the events in Mauretania; cf. Dio Cass. lxvii.4.6; P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2564. H. Braunert, BJ, 153 (1953) 97-101, argues that Domitian left the Rhine after his initial successes, and took the surname "Germanicus" when he celebrated his triumph—hence the latter must have occurred between June 9 and August, 83. He further argues from numismatic evidence that Domitian's legates continued the campaign until sometime in 85. The legend GERMANIA CAPTA, which signals the end of the war, first appears on issues of that year. His views on the length of the war are accepted by this author, and seem to be accepted by H. Schönberger, "The Roman Frontier in Germany: An Archaeological Survey", JRS, 59 (1969) 158. Contra the recent arguments of B.W. Jones, "The Dating of Domitian's War Against the Chatti", Historia, 22 (1973) 79-90, see my article forthcoming in Historia, "The Dating of Domitian's War Against the Chatti Again" (Appendix I below).

Domitian, then, probably triumphed in 83, and

99

involving one legion created especially for it, one legion
 100
 from Germania Inferior, the four legions of Germania
 101
 Superior or at least vexillationes drawn from them,

certainly not later than early in 84. Braunert's view that the war continued into 85 is further supported by the presence in Germany of detachments drawn from the British armies until 86, and by the fact that I Adiutrix could not be transferred to the Dacian front until 86. Cf. p. 48 n. 108 below.

99I Flavia Minervia. Cf. E. Ritterling, "Legio", RE, 12 (1925) 1276.

100XXI Rapax, summoned from Bonn to Mainz; cf. E. Ritterling, RE, 12 (1925) 1786-1787.

101I Adiutrix, XIV Martia Gemina Victrix, VIII Augusta, and XI Claudia were stationed in Germania Superior, and available. Whether they or detachments drawn from them were used in the campaign depends on the interpretation of ILS 9200. According to this inscription, C. Velius Rufus was in command of vexillationes drawn from nine German and British legions. Eight are specified—the four British legions, XXI Rapax, and all of the legions from Germania Superior except XI Claudia, which E. Ritterling conjectures (probably correctly) to be the ninth and missing German legion: "Zu den Germanenkriegen Domitians am Rhein und an der Donau", JOEAI, 7 (1904) 24. If Rufus' command dates to the Chattic war, as argued by E. Ritterling, JOEAI, 7 (1904) 27, 35; RE, 12 (1925) 1277; and E. Stein, Die kaiserlichen Beamten und Truppenkörper im römischen Deutschland unter dem Prinzipat (Vienna: L.W. Seidel & Sohn, 1932) 103, then Domitian used two intact legions (XXI Rapax and I Flavia Minervia) and detachments from the legions stationed in Germania Superior and Britain. If, on the other hand, Rufus' command should be dated to the campaign against the Bructeri in 78, as argued by A. von Domaszewski, "Beiträge zur Kaisergeschichte", Philologus, 66 (1907) 164-170; Furneaux-Anderson, De Vita Agricola, 172; and B.W. Henderson, Five Roman Emperors, 94 n.3, then Domitian will probably have committed six intact legions and a detachment from Britain's IX Hispana to the Chattic campaign. As Ogilvie-Richmond, De Vita Agricola, 320, have pointed out, the evidence is inconclusive. It should also be added that ILS 1025 records that the detachment drawn from IX Hispana for the Chattic war was under the command of L. Roscius Aelianus Maecius Celer. Since, however, Rufus is mentioned in ILS 9200 as the commander of the IX Hispana detachment, it looks prima facie

one and perhaps several praetorian cohorts,¹⁰² and
¹⁰³vexillationes from Britain's IX Hispana and possibly from
¹⁰⁴the other three British legions as well. Nor would this
 campaign have ended Domitian's designs on the area. Further
 demonstrations of Roman might would be necessary to secure
¹⁰⁵the newly-won territory against the formidable Chatti.
 Every available soldier would be needed for the enterprise.

In the midst of these activities, Agricola's
 dispatches arrived. A decisive victory had been won; to
 occupy and hold Caledonia was now within the realm of
 possibility. It would, however, require additional manpower.
 The consilium was summoned, and the issue debated. There
 was insufficient manpower for simultaneous advances in
 Germany and Britain—a choice had to be made. Agricola had
 already seriously underestimated the force required to
¹⁰⁶conquer and occupy Ireland; it would probably also take a
 much larger army than he calculated to garrison effectively

as if two different campaigns are in question and may mean
 that Rufus' command fell in 78 rather than 83. E.T. Salmon
 has plausibly suggested to me, however, that Rufus might have
 been in overall command, and Celer a subordinate in charge
 of the one particular unit drawn from IX Hispana. The dating
 of ILS 9200 thus remains unresolved.

¹⁰²CIL V.3356.

¹⁰³ILS 1025; cf. n. 101 above.

¹⁰⁴Cf. n. 101 above.

¹⁰⁵R. Syme, "Rhine and Danube Legions under Domitian",
JRS, 18 (1928) 43. The Germans allied with Saturninus in 89
 were apparently the Chatti: Suet. Dom. 6. Cf. also R. Syme,
CAH, 11 (1936) 149, 163, 174-175.

¹⁰⁶Agr. 24.3.

the mountain fastnesses of Caledonia.¹⁰⁷ Objectively considered, the material compensations simply did not justify the effort.

The Rhine was a different matter altogether. An advance meant greater security for the Gallic provinces, a shorter and less vulnerable frontier, and ultimately, a decreased military commitment.¹⁰⁸ The decision was made. A victory had been won which should secure the Roman area of Britain from attack for at least a generation. For the moment, it was time to call a halt to further expansion. One legionary encampment would be fortified and held in the forward area until a permanent decision could be made concerning Britain's future.¹⁰⁹ Agricola's work, however, was done. It was time, after seven years of campaigning, to call him home to a harvest of honors and a well-deserved rest.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷H. Nesselhauf, "Tacitus und Domitian", Hermes, 80 (1952) 233.

¹⁰⁸Legio I Adiutrix left Germany in 86; cf. E. Stein, Beamten und Truppenkörper, 103; E. Ritterling, RE, 12 (1925) 1277, 1387-1389. Probably for Dalmatia: B.W. Henderson, Five Roman Emperors, 99. In 90 at the latest, XXI Rapax was sent to Pannonia: E. Stein, Beamten und Truppenkörper, 105.

¹⁰⁹At Inchtuthil. See R. Syme, Tacitus, 124.

¹¹⁰For an excellent discussion of the motives behind Domitian's decision, see F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, Ein Beitrag zur römischen Kaisergeschichte (Amberg: H. Boes, 1889) 20-24. Withdrawal may have begun in 86 with the transfer of legio II Adiutrix from Britain to the Danube. See T.D. Pryce and E. Birley, "The Fate of Agricola's Northern Conquests", JRS, 28 (1938) 144.

There are few hints of any such considerations in Tacitus. He attributes Agricola's recall to Domitian's jealousy and fear of a rival of superior merit, and to his knowledge that the entire city was comparing Agricola's genuine victory in Britain with his own sham triumph in Germany:

inerat conscientia derisui fuisse nuper falsum e Germania triumphum, emptis per commercia quorum habitus et crines in captivorum speciem formarentur: at nunc veram magnamque victoriam tot milibus hostium caesis ingenti fama celebrari. id sibi maxime formidolosum, privati hominis nomen supra principem adtolli (39.1-2).

In the previous discussion of this passage on page 11, it was stressed that inerat conscientia and id sibi maxime formidolosum take us inside the Emperor's mind. Upon these two elements rest the motives Tacitus assigns to Domitian for Agricola's recall. The Emperor's "motivation" is thus a figment of Tacitus' own imagination, and should be dismissed as such.

Agricola's recall was dictated not by fear and jealousy, but by established precedents. Petillius Cerialis was recalled in 74 after winning a series of important victories against the Brigantes, but before the tribe was completely subdued.¹¹¹ Tacitus neither suggests that Vespasian was motivated by jealousy of Cerialis, nor that the latter harbored a grudge because his recall was premature.¹¹² Again, Iulius Frontinus was recalled after

¹¹¹Agr. 17.1.

¹¹²Collingwood and Myres, Roman Britain, 116.

defeating the Silures, the decisive moment for the conquest
of Wales,¹¹³ but it was left to Agricola to finish the
conquest by subduing the Ordovices.¹¹⁴ Agricola's recall
was analogous, with the exception that it followed a seven-
year tenure in Britain instead of the normal three years.¹¹⁵

While in their salons the fashionable aristocrats
sneered at Domitian's campaign, in the streets the plebeians
rumored the captive Chatti to be disguised slaves bought
straight off the auction block. The witticism, which had
once been applied to Gaius and was apparently popular,¹¹⁶ is
unconvincing. Frontinus, and Tacitus himself, have dispelled
the rumors; modern archaeology has confirmed the importance
of the expedition.

First, Tacitus. In chapter 30 of the Germania,
Tacitus depicts the character of the Chatti, stressing their
military ability. They were able opponents for the Rhine
legions:

duriora genti corpora, stricti artus, minax vultus et
maior animi vigor. multum, ut inter Germanos,
rationis ac sollertiae: praeponere electos, audire
praepositos, nosse ordines, intellegere occasiones,
differre impetus, disponere diem, vallare noctem,
fortunam inter dubia, virtutem inter certa numerare,
quodque rarissimum nec nisi Romanae disciplinae

¹¹³Agr. 17.2.

¹¹⁴Agr. 18.1-2.

¹¹⁵For example, Cerialis, 71-74 A.D.; Frontinus,
74-77 A.D.

¹¹⁶Suet. Calig. 47.

concessum, plus reponere in duce quam in exercitu.
 omne robur in pedite, quem super arma ferramentis
 quoque et copiis onerant: alios ad proelium ire
 videas, Chattos ad bellum.

As persons, the Chatti were noted for their strength, bravery, and intelligence; as a tribe under arms, they were noted for their sound organization and discipline. They seem to have employed scouts and perhaps even an intelligence service (intellegere occasiones), which would account for the great care Domitian took to conceal his attack.¹¹⁷ More importantly, the Chatti fought not in the loose style of a band of raiders, but as an army. The general, elected perhaps by the men under arms, mapped out strategy and tactics, which the troops implemented. On campaign, like the Roman legions themselves, the Chatti carried tools and provisions, and thus did not have to rely upon the enemy for shelter, food, and the weapons of war. Domitian's opponent did indeed possess "the discipline of the Romans": alios ad proelium ire videas, Chattos ad bellum.

The Germania contains only one indirect and very minor criticism of Domitian. Speaking of the Cimbri, and then generalizing to the Germans as a whole, Tacitus says in chapter 37: inde proximis temporibus triumphati magis quam victi sunt. This same theme has been incorporated into chapter 39 of the Agricola; directed at Domitian, it is disproved by the very valuable evidence of Frontinus.

¹¹⁷Frontin. Str. i.1.8.

The first of his four stratagems drawn from this war reveals the care which Domitian took to mask his attack. He advanced into Gaul under the pretence of conducting a census, and then suddenly crossed the Rhine and fell upon the Chatti:

Imperator Caesar Domitianus Augustus Germanicus, cum Germanos, qui in armis erant, vellet opprimere nec ignoraret maiore bellum molitione inituros, si adventum tanti ducis praesensissent, protectioni suae census obtexuit Galliarum; sub quibus inopinato bello adfusus contusa immanium ferocia nationum provinciis consuluit (Str. 1.1.8).

It is usually believed that Frontinus was on Domitian's staff and an eyewitness to the events which he describes. 118

This would make his testimony particularly valuable; unfortunately, this particular stratagem does not support that assumption. Knowledge of Domitian's strategy post eventum would be widespread. Still, the stratagem does make the Emperor's thinking evident. He considered the Chatti a dangerous enemy, and resorted to subterfuge in order to catch them unprepared to resist a full-scale attack.

In this passage there is an apparent inconsistency between the expressions Germanos, qui in armis erant, and inopinato bello. If the Germans were under arms, how could they have been taken wholly by surprise? There are cogent explanations. The phrase in armis does not necessarily mean

¹¹⁸H. Düntzer, "Domitian in Frontins Strategemata", BJ, 96-97 (1896) 183. With A. Didius Gallus Fabricius Veiento, Vibius Crispus, and M. Acilius Glabrio: P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2556.

that the Chatti were preparing for war; or, if they were,
 that the Romans were the foe.¹¹⁹ And, if the Romans were
 the foe, inopinato bello may indicate simply that the Chatti
 did not expect the Romans vigorously to resist. However,
 that the Chatti were already in armis when Domitian reached
 the Rhine may provide an important clue to his motives for
 the war. Tacitus and Suetonius assert that Domitian had a
 consuming desire to develop a military reputation, a desire
 repeatedly frustrated during his father's reign.¹²⁰ This is
 undoubtedly true, but more pressing reasons for the Chatti
 campaign are adduced by modern scholars. Domitian's regime
 had been dangerously lacking in military prestige; a quick
 campaign in Germany would serve to make the Emperor familiar
 to his soldiers.¹²¹ Frontinus i.1.8, however, does not give
 the impression that Domitian rashly attacked the Chatti simply
 to increase the military prestige of his regime. In
 particular, he had sufficient patience to conceal his attack
 to give it maximum effect, rather than embarking on a flam-
 boyant but less effective display of Roman might.

¹¹⁹The Germans were as fond of fighting each other
 as they were the Romans: Germ. 33. Note Tacitus' famous
 dictum at the end of this chapter: maneant, quaeso, duretque
gentibus, si non amor nostri, at certe odium sui. The Chatti
 and Cherusci seem to have been deadly enemies; cf. Dio Cass.
 lxxvii.10.5; B.W. Henderson, Five Roman Emperors, 99.

¹²⁰By Mucianus against the Germans: Hist. iv.85; by
 Vespasian against the Alani: Suet. Dom. 2.

¹²¹H. Nesselhauf, Hermes, 80 (1952) 136. Cf. the
 lengthy discussion below on pp. 291-293.

In consonance with the hint provided by the phrase in armis, this may suggest that some act of the Chatti, rather than personal thirst for glory, brought Domitian to the Rhine.¹²² The nature of that act, however, is open to debate. As Henderson has suggested, there may be a connection between the drafting of the Usipi for service in Britain and the call to arms of the Chatti. The two tribes were neighbors, and the dispatch of the Usipi may have¹²³ stirred unrest among the Chatti.

Domitian's frontal assault was successful, but affected only that portion of the tribe encountered initially. The Chatti were still able to muster and field their army, and, avoiding the folly of a set battle against as many as six legions, resorted to guerilla warfare. Strategemata 1.3.10 and 11.3.23 inform us of the measures adopted by Domitian and his staff to counter this strategy:

Imperator Caesar Augustus Germanicus, cum subinde Chatti equestre proelium in silvas refugiendo deducerent, iussit suos equites, siumlatque ad impedita ventum esset, equis desilire pedestrique pugna confligere; quo genere consecutus est, ne quis iam locus victoriam eius moraretur (11.3.23).

Tacitus tells us that the Chatti lived in the densest part¹²⁴ of the Hercynian forest; it proved their greatest ally.

¹²²See again R. Syme, CAH, 11 (1936) 162.

¹²³B.W. Henderson, Five Roman Emperors, 107. The summer of 83, however, is preferable to 82 for the drafting of the Usipi, as Henderson himself points out, pp. 106-107.

¹²⁴Germ. 30. The Hercynian forest was from the Roman point of view a formidable obstacle; cf. Livy ix.36.1.

The Romans were unaccustomed to fighting in dense underbrush. The Chatti evidently decided to attack the cavalry units as the most vulnerable element in the army. They would strike and melt away into the woods, where the horses could not follow. Domitian countered this tactic by ordering the cavalry to dismount and pursue the retreating Chatti on foot.

This counterstroke nullified the Chatti's ability to take advantage of the terrain, and gradually the Romans must have pushed them back. The course of the war was altered radically, however, when Domitian gave his troops the order to halt and dig in:

Imperator Caesar Domitianus Augustus, cum Germani more suo e saltibus et obscuris latebris subinde impugnarent nostros tutumque regressum in profunda silvarum haberent, limitibus per centum viginti milia passuum actis non mutavit tantum statum belli, sed et subiecit dicioni suae hostes, quorum refugia nudaverat (1.3.10).

The Romans erected limites along a front of 120 miles, an act which for all intents and purposes ended the war. The Chatti still refused to be drawn into a set battle; they were therefore forced to cede the territory behind the Roman limes. This much may be gathered from Frontinus. Archaeology has confirmed the tactics which Domitian employed to secure this region, part of the modern-day Taunus and Wetterau.¹²⁵ In the Neuwied basin, east of the Rhine and

¹²⁵The standard work on the subject of the limes is the monumental Der Obergermanisch-rätische Limes des Römerreiches, 44 Lieferungen edited by E. Fabricius (Heidelberg: Otto Petters, 1894-1916). Fabricius has also produced a

north of the Lahn, Domitian erected three forts at Heddesdorf,¹²⁶ Bendorf, and Niederberg to secure the western flank of the Taunus region and extend Roman occupation along the right bank of the Rhine. Here, as in the Taunus and Wetterau, these forts supported the actual frontier line, which consisted of a connected series of wooden watchtowers some 400 to 700 yards apart, interspersed with a series of small earthen forts some 70 yards square.¹²⁷ From the Lahn to the Main, the frontier described by Frontinus ran along the crest of the Taunus range, through Zugmantel, Saalburg, Kapersburg, Langenhain, Butzbach, Arnsburg, Echzell, Ober-Florstadt, and Heldenbergen to Kesselstadt.¹²⁸ This ridge-line was ideally situated to observe a build-up of forces in the plain below, and it was strongly reinforced by a series of forts erected behind the frontier in the valleys of the Main and Nidda, at Wiesbaden, Hofheim, Heddernheim, Okarben, Friedburg, Bad

brilliant synthesis of this material in his article "Limes", RE, 13 (1927) 572-671. Domitian's work in Upper Germany is treated in columns 585-591. To my knowledge, the most recent article in English is that of H. Schönberger, JRS, 59 (1969) 144-197. The periodical Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz should also be consulted annually.

¹²⁶H. Schönberger, JRS, 59 (1969) 158.

¹²⁷R. Syme, CAH, 11 (1936) 164. Cf. also the still serviceable article of H.F. Pelham, "A Chapter in Roman Frontier History", TRHS, n.s. 20 (1906) 28-29.

¹²⁸Cf. B.W. Henderson, Five Roman Emperors, 123; R. Syme, CAH, 11 (1936) 164; H. Schönberger, JRS, 59 (1969) 158.

Nauheim, and Kesselstadt (on the frontier itself).¹²⁹ These forts, originally temporary structures of earth and timber, or enclosed by a turf rampart, were replaced in the latter stages of the campaign by permanent forts. The alae were housed at Heddernheim and Okarben, the cohorts in the remaining forts.¹³⁰ They were linked with each other and with the frontier posts by a series of roads carefully designed to facilitate communication and the movement of troops into any sector threatened by an incursion of the Chatti.¹³¹

Domitian's efforts thus advanced the Roman frontier to encircle the Taunus and Wetterau from the Lahn to the Main. The Chatti were pushed away from the proximity of the Rhine, and the fertile and densely populated Main valley incorporated into the Empire. At a later date—perhaps as early as 90 A.D.—Domitian extended the limes down the Main and through the Odenwald to connect with his father's chain of forts in the Neckar region.¹³² This frontier, running along a line from Kesselstadt to Wimpfen via Gross Krotzenburg, Stockstadt, Niedernberg, Obernberg, Seckmauern, Lützelbach, Vielbrunn, Eulbach, Würzburg, Hesselbach, Schlossau, Oberscheidenthal, Trienz, and Neckarbuchten,

¹²⁹B.W. Henderson, Five Roman Emperors, 123.

¹³⁰R. Syme, CAH, 11 (1936) 164.

¹³¹H. Schönberger, JRS, 59 (1969) 159.

¹³²H. Schönberger, JRS, 59 (1969) 161.

enclosed and secured both the Odenwald and Neckar regions.

This alteration produced enduring results, for strategically it improved the frontier by cutting across the deep re-entrant angle between the Rhine and Danube, thereby significantly shortening the frontier and improving communication between Upper Germany and the Danube provinces.

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Frontinus attests not only the soundness of Domitian's military strategy, but also his skill at diplomacy, which effectively neutralized the tribes other than the Chatti who lived in the Taunus region:

Imperator Caesar Augustus Germanicus eo bello, quo victis hostibus cognomen Germanici meruit, cum in finibus Cubiorum castella poneret, pro fructibus locorum, quae vallo comprehendebat, pretium solvi iussit; atque ita iustitiae fama omnium fidem adstrinxit (ii.11.7).

To pay the Cubii a fair price for the land they were forced to yield to the Romans was elementary, but sound diplomacy; Frontinus testifies to the success of the policy. Domitian thereby succeeded in stabilizing the territory won through force of arms against the Chatti by neutralizing the other tribes, particularly the Mattiaci, with politic acts designed to stifle discontent and win their favor. The care which he took to lessen hostilities throughout the entire region reaped immediate results. It was clearly one of the

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¹³³H. Schönberger, JRS, 59 (1969) 161.

¹³⁴K. Christ, SZG, 12 (1962) 208-209.

¹³⁵R. Syme, CAH, 11 (1936) 165.

factors which enabled him to reduce the Rhine garrison from eight legions to six in the aftermath of the war.

The tactical and strategic skills outlined in Strategemata ii.3.23 and ii.11.7 provide the firmest evidence for Frontinus' participation in this campaign. A trained observer would be expected to note such details; it is unfortunate that Frontinus has not cited another possible example of Domitian's diplomatic ability, for which the evidence is indirect. Dio Cassius mentions that Chariomerus, the king of the Cherusci, was expelled by the Chatti *ἐκὰς τῆς πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους φιλίας*. Domitian attempted unsuccessfully to restore him by means of a financial subsidy.¹³⁶

Chariomerus' friendship with the Romans could have been damaging to the Chatti only immediately before or during the war. Were the Chatti in armis because Domitian had bribed the Cherusci to attack and preoccupy them? An intriguing and very real possibility; it would account for the Chatti's attack not on the tribe as a whole but only on its king.¹³⁷ Frontinus' testimony is sadly missed.

Tacitus, Frontinus, and archaeology, when combined, present a picture of the campaign against the Chatti which completely contradicts the hostile literary tradition, and particularly Agricola 39. Strategically, Domitian was able

¹³⁶Dio Cass. lxxvii.10.5.

¹³⁷J. Klose, Roms Klientel-Randstaaten am Rhein und an der Donau (Breslau: M. & H. Marcus, 1934) 53.

to accomplish the very rare feat of defeating an enemy waging guerilla warfare on his own terrain. Without the benefit of a Mons Graupius against an opponent too wily and experienced to risk the outcome of a pitched battle, he displayed the patience necessary to clear the Chatti from the Taunus and Wetterau regions. A carefully designed series of frontier and rear-echelon fortifications then secured this area against further incursions.

Domitian further demonstrated a flair for diplomacy in his relations with the Cubii and Cherusci. He obtained the support of the Cubii, and doubtless of other tribes, by making restitution for land seized for military purposes, and perhaps exploited the enmity of the Cherusci and Chatti to keep the latter preoccupied while he marshalled his forces.

If his policy was not characterized by a flair for the dramatic, it nonetheless produced lasting results. The incorporation of the Taunus, Wetterau, and Odenwald shortened and strengthened the Roman frontier by eliminating the deep re-entrant angle between the sources of the Rhine and Danube. This permitted an immediate reduction of the Roman forces on the Rhine, which were freed for service on the Danube. Domitian's frontier policy was continued by his immediate successors; it inspired further advances of the German limes by Hadrian and Antoninus Pius in particular. More importantly, Domitian's policy initiated a new era in Roman relations with the free German tribes. His campaign

in 83-85 A.D. was to be the last Roman military invasion of Rhineland Germany until the reign of Alexander Severus. His frontier policy secured the Rhine so effectively that this hitherto troubled frontier was to be free of German incursions, and of Roman counter-invasions, for the next 150 years.¹³⁸

In Agricola 39.2 Tacitus links Domitian's alleged fear of Agricola to another malicious slur:

Frustra studia fori et civilium artium decus in silentium acta, si militarem gloriam alius occuparet . . .

This is reminiscent of omni bona arte in exilium acta in chapter 2.2; however, while that slur is defined by historical references to the expulsion of the philosophers and the persecution of the Stoics, in chapter 39 the passage is completely vague. All that can be said is that the alleged attack on studia fori predates the recall of Agricola. Fortunately, this limits the slur to the first five years of the reign—precisely the period applauded by Suetonius for its justice and integrity.

In Domitian 8, Suetonius addresses himself to Domitian's legal reforms, without a hint that he tried to suppress forensic activities: ius diligenter et industrie dixit, plerumque et in Foro pro tribunali extra ordinem. Suetonius asserts that Domitian's reforms were all in the

¹³⁸During the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the future emperor M. Didius Severus Iulianus may have fought with the Chatti in his capacity as legatus legionis XXII Primigenia. See R. Sherk, "Specialization in the Provinces of Germany", Historia, 20 (1971) 114.

interest of justice:

ambitiosas centumvirorum sententias rescidit;
recipitatores, ne se perfusoriis assertionibus
accommodarent, identidem admonuit; nummarios iudices
cum suo quemque consilio notavit (Dom. 8.1).

Suetonius further infers that at this time Domitian was quite careful to observe protocol by allowing the Senate to prosecute its own membership. He cites the extortion trial of an aedile, where Domitian urged the tribunes to prosecute, and the Senate to appoint jurors (Dom. 8.2). From the Senate's point of view, however, it was of greater importance that at the beginning of his reign Domitian took steps to suppress delation designed to enrich the fiscus:

Fiscales calumnias magna calumniantium poena repressit, ferebaturque vox eius: 'Princeps qui delatores non castigat, irritat' (Dom. 9.3).

This is the only instance of suppression attested by Suetonius for this period— it is not what Tacitus had in mind.

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As has already been stated in another context, the details of Tacitus' political career also contradict this slur. Tacitus acquired his reputation as an orator during the first half of Domitian's reign. Pliny's career provides further confirmation. Pliny narrates one case pleaded before the centumviral court under Domitian;¹⁴⁰ there must have been many others for him to acquire so formidable a reputation

¹³⁹The analysis of Agri 3; cf. pp. 30-31 above.

¹⁴⁰Ep. 1.5.4-7.

that he was instructed by the Senate to prosecute Baebius Massa in 93 A.D.

Equally telling evidence is provided by the flourishing state of the two major schools of law at this time. Both the Proculians and the Sabinians were very active.¹⁴¹ Distinguished jurists presided over both schools. Gnaeus Arulenus Caelius Sabinus, who presided over the Sabinians under Vespasian, apparently continued at the head of the school for most of Domitian's reign. Unless a name has fallen out, his successor was L. Octavius Tadius Tossianus Iavolenus Priscus, who perhaps succeeded near the end of Domitian's reign.¹⁴² Under Domitian, the Proculian school was headed by P. Iuventius Celsus the Elder; his son, of the same name, and L. Neratius Priscus succeeded as joint heads.¹⁴³ The pupils of the two schools would form a respectable proportion of the young and enthusiastic audience that jammed the centumviral court to hear the premier lawyers of the day plead their cases.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹Cf. B. Kübler, "Rechtsschulen", RE, 1A (1920) 380-394.

¹⁴²The date is uncertain. See A. Berger, "Octavius Iavolenus", RE, 17 (1937) 1830-1848 for this and other details of his career.

¹⁴³A. Diehle, "P. Iuventius Celsus", RE, 10 (1919) 1363; A. Berger, "L. Neratius Priscus", RE, 16 (1935) 2549. However, R. Syme, "The Jurist Neratius Priscus", Hermes, 85 (1957) 84, urges caution in interpreting Dig. I.2.2.47 as evidence that Celsus and Priscus were joint heads of the school. Priscus was considerably older than Celsus.

¹⁴⁴Pliny Ep. iv.16.

Once again, then, the weight of the evidence is
 against Tacitus. Frustra studia fori is pure malice.¹⁴⁵

Chapter 39 of the Agricola concludes with an outrageous passage:

talibus curis exercitus, quodque saevae cogitationis
 indicium erat, secreto suo satiatus, optimum in
 praesens statuit reponere odium, donec impetus famae
 et favor exercitus languesceret: nam etiam tum
 Agricola Britanniam obtinebat.

This sentence has been carefully constructed to fuse the individual strands of malice and rumor that have preceded it. The theme is simple: the tyrant's hatred of virtue, and of the man who personifies it. Each succeeding act of the virtuous Agricola breeds an ever darker reaction in the heart of the despotic Domitian. Agricola's victories only render Domitian pectore anxius. Lacking in personal charisma, Domitian is filled with alarm at the thought that privati hominis nomen supra principem adtolli. Agricola possesses the imperatoria virtus; his generalship has brought him fama, and more importantly, favor exercitus. Domitian retires to the seclusion of his Alban palace, where his anxiety and alarm grow and give way to odium. If he does not strike, it is because he cannot. He must content himself with nourishing his hatred, storing it up. Agricola is still Governor of Britain, the popular commander of a powerful and devoted army. He cannot be touched until safely removed from his army.

¹⁴⁵Cf. R. Urban, Domitianbild, 45-46.

Domitian is thus distressed with the same anxieties
 that Corbulo aroused in Claudius,¹⁴⁶ and Germanicus in
 Tiberius.¹⁴⁷ His reaction, like that of his two predecessors,
 is the reaction of any tyrant confronted with surpassing
 virtue. Every tyrant must hate virtue. Domitian is a
 tyrant: therefore he must hate Agricola. When a tyrant goes
 into seclusion, it is to consummate a cruel and evil purpose.
 Domitian retires to his Alban palace: it must be to plot the
 downfall of Agricola. Why, then, does he not strike out?
 Tacitus knows the answer. The cruelty and hatred of a tyrant
 are matched only by his fear. Domitian not only hates
 Agricola, he fears him. He must wait until Agricola's fame
 and popularity have ebbed. Then, and only then, will it be
 safe to remove him.

Thus throughout chapter 39 Tacitus attributes to
 Domitian thoughts, fears, motives, and actions of his own
 creation. Tacitus forces Domitian's behavior to conform to
 his own image of what a tyrant should be. The entire
 chapter is therefore a clever piece of fiction, containing
 only one kernel of fact: Domitian's reception of Agricola's
 dispatches announcing the victory won at Mons Graupius.

Chapter 40

In order better to perceive the effect on the reader

¹⁴⁶Ann. xi.19.3.

¹⁴⁷Ann. ii.26.4.

of Tacitus' malice, it is instructive to link this one factual statement in chapter 39 with Domitian's actions in chapter 40.1:

Igitur triumphalia ornamenta et inlustris statuæ honorem et quidquid pro triumpho datur, multo verborum honore cumulata, decerni in senatu iubet addique insuper opinionem, Syriam provinciam Agricolaē destinari, vacuam tum morte Atili Rufi consularis et maioribus reservatam.

Domitian received word of Agricola's decisive victory, and immediately decreed full triumphal honors for his general. This one sentence thus gives the lie to the malicious distortion pervading chapter 39. Domitian simply does not behave in the manner of a ruler afraid of or filled with hatred for his subordinate. He honors Agricola in the customary manner, with the ornamenta triumphalia. Indeed, he exceeds traditional behavior and grants Agricola a statue¹⁴⁸ (in the forum Augustum). It has even been argued that Domitian was overgenerous. Apart from Mons Graupius, there is nothing particularly impressive about Agricola's record. Domitian might justifiably have expected a greater return¹⁴⁹ for seven years of effort. Agricola's greatest achieve-

¹⁴⁸T.A. Dorey, "Agricola and Domitian", G&R, s.s. 7 (1960) 66. Trajan granted this honor only to his most important associates: L. Licinius Sura (Dio Cass. lxxviii.15.3), Q. Sosius Senecio, A. Cornelius Palma Frontonianus, and L. Publilius Celsus (Dio Cass. lxxviii.16.2). Cf. R. Urban, Domitianbild, 52.

¹⁴⁹E. Birley, "Britain under the Flavians: Agricola and His Predecessors", DUJ, n.s. 7 (1945/46) 83. The contrary view is best expressed by I.A. Richmond, "Gnaeus Iulius Agricola", JRS, 34 (1944) 34-45.

ment was civic, the diffusion of Roman customs throughout the settled portions of the island. He increased the commercial potential of Britain by building a network of roads, and by a series of administrative reforms which made the burden of tribute less onerous.¹⁵⁰ He furthered "Romanization" by encouraging the spread of Roman social customs and the use of Latin, and particularly by providing for the education of the native youth.¹⁵¹ This is not the stuff of which triumphs are made.¹⁵² Even Tacitus sneers.

That the Senate's decree contained some formal allusion to future honors is to be expected; it is very unlikely, however, that Syria would be mentioned by name. The governorship was vacant; rumor supplied Agricola's name,¹⁵³ and Tacitus accedes. Despite his lengthy military career, however, Agricola was unqualified. Syria was a senior military command requiring a governor with extensive military and diplomatic experience in eastern affairs. Agricola's

¹⁵⁰Agr. 20.1. For the commercial potential of Britain, cf. L.C. West, Roman Britain: the Objects of Trade (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1931); and O. Davies, Roman Mines in Europe (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1935).

¹⁵¹Agr. 21. Cf. F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 18.

¹⁵²Agr. 21.2.

¹⁵³The recipient of the appointment is unknown. T. Atilius Rufus is attested in Syria in 83: AE 1925, 95. Eck believes that he was governor from 82/83 to 84/85: W. Eck, Senatoren von Vespasian bis Hadrian (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1970) 131-135. P. Valerius Patruinus is attested by a military diploma dated November 7, 88: CIL XVI.35. Eck dates his tenure 87/88-89/90: Senatoren, 138-140.

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career had been spent almost entirely in Britain.

In a broader sense, this sentence illustrates perfectly the dilemma confronting Tacitus. The dual nature of the Agricola, the fusion of encomium and history, ensnared him in a hopeless contradiction. Tacitus' genuine pride in his father-in-law's accomplishments urged him to accentuate the very active career that Agricola pursued under Domitian. The fulsome honors that Agricola received from Domitian could not be passed over in silence. History, on the other hand, or more accurately Tacitus' historical perception of Domitian, dictated that Agricola's accomplishments should be minimized, and that the quietude and obscurity of the virtuous man under the rule of a tyrant should be stressed. The fusion of these two contradictory elements is at best uneasy, and in chapters 39-40 unworkable. It is particularly ironic that the factual element of these two chapters reflects the encomiast, while the subjective element, that characteristic mixture of rumor and malice, reflects the historian's point of view.

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Agricola 40.2, discussed earlier in this chapter, illustrates two facets of Tacitus' method of distortion. It is the clearest example in the Agricola of a technique

¹⁵⁴E. Birley, DUJ, n.s. 7 (1945/46) 83; R. Urban, Domitianbild, 55. For the background of Domitian's appointees to the governorship of Syria, see my article forthcoming in Hermes, "P. Valerius Patruinus, A Governor of Syria".

¹⁵⁵Cf. p. 12 for text and discussion.

perfected in the Annales, the use of a rumor for which the
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 author ultimately disclaims all responsibility. The
 rumor is, however, based on a factual stratum, and the two
 elements are so carefully interwoven that the factual element
 lends credibility to the rumor.

Tacitus introduces the rumor with credidere plerique,
 which should invariably place the reader on guard against
 what follows. He then unfolds the rumor, and finally
 disclaims it with the statement sive verum istud, sive ex
ingenio principis fictum ac compositum est. He is careful
 not to give it personal support because Agricola is not his
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 source. It is a fabrication.

The tale seems to rest on two separate incidents,
 joined by Tacitus and given a sinister connotation. The
 senatorial decree granting the triumphal insignia to Agricola
 probably alluded to future honors. Syria was vacant at the
 time, and assigned to Agricola by rumor. On Agricola's
 recall, Domitian dispatched an imperial freedman to survey
 political and economic conditions in Britain, and to make
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 administrative recommendations. His mission was perverted
 by a source hostile to Domitian (probably Tacitus himself)

¹⁵⁶Cf., for example, Ann. 1.5. The technique is
 discussed at length by I.S. Ryberg, TAPA, 73 (1942) 383-404.

¹⁵⁷Cf. T.A. Dorey, G&R, s.s. 7 (1960) 66.

¹⁵⁸The dispatch of Polyclitus to Britain by Nero in
 the aftermath of Suetonius Paulinus' suppression of the Iceni
 is comparable: Ann. xiv.39.1.

into an attempt to bribe Agricola to leave his province and army. Tacitus was wise to disclaim the rumor; it is tendentious. It would be plausible, however, to a reader who had accepted as accurate the claim in the preceding chapter that Domitian feared Agricola—which was, of course, precisely what Tacitus intended.

Agricola 40.3 is also cleverly constructed. The placing of one subordinate clause, and the selection of two adjectives, gives a sinister connotation to a simple act of protocol, and further contributes to the image of Domitian as a tyrant filled with odium for his virtuous and successful general:

ac ne notabilis celebritate et frequentia occurrentium introitus esset, vitato amicorum officio noctu in urbem, noctu in Palatium, ita ut praeceptum erat, venit; exceptusque brevi osculo et nullo sermone turbae servientium inmixtus est.

Given the uniformly sinister context of chapters 39-40, noctu in urbem, noctu in Palatium, ita ut praeceptum erat leads the reader to transform the customary reception of a governor returned to Rome into the capricious act of a tyrant motivated by fear of his subordinate, an act designed to deprive him of a public greeting commensurate with his popularity.¹⁵⁹ The following clause leaves the reader in no doubt as to Tacitus' meaning. Domitian's kiss of greeting is breve; nullo sermone, the commander returned from seven years of service abroad is dismissed to mingle with the other

¹⁵⁹Cf. Ann. xiii.18.

courtiers. Agricola has felt the Emperor's wrath so strongly that he retires into deep obscurity (40.4).

That Domitian gave Agricola a nocturnal appointment will not support the weight of Tacitus' malevolence.¹⁶⁰ The presence of turbæ servientium suggests that the working day either had just begun or was still in progress. Agricola was hardly received alone and in the dead of night. More importantly, the vagueness of the accusation itself should deter the reader. If Agricola had been so rudely slighted on his arrival at the palace, he would have made his feelings known to his son-in-law, as he did on the matter of the invasion of Ireland. Tacitus certainly would not have dispensed with so inviting an opportunity to broadcast in the clearest possible language that Agricola was out of favor with the tyrant. Rather, as protocol dictated, Agricola was received and then allowed to depart quickly to family and friends. Tacitus' sinister explanation is without credence, but the reader who accepts the malicious distortions of chapters 39-40 as factual will be seduced.¹⁶¹

Agricola 40.4 is a lesson in the art of survival, the corollary to 40.3, where Agricola has been made aware of the tyrant's hatred:

ceterum uti militare nomen, grave inter otiosos, aliis

¹⁶⁰It is not necessary to explain away the passage by having Agricola come to the palace at night of his own volition, as Ogilvie-Richmond, De Vita Agricolae, 289.

¹⁶¹Cf. R. Urban, Domitianbild, 57.

virtutibus temperaret, tranquillitatem atque otium penitus hausit, cultu modicus, sermone facilis, uno aut altero amicorum comitatus, adeo ut plerique, quibus magnos viros per ambitionem aestimare mos est, viso aspectoque Agricola quaererent famam, pauci interpretarentur.

For Agricola, Tacitus would have us believe, the tactics employed were familiar. Once before, during the tyranny of Nero, tranquillitatem atque otium penitus hausit. Prudence dictated that his public excursions not resemble an army on the march; hence one or two friends only should accompany him. The ruse succeeded; the public wondered at the distinction between present humility and past greatness.

Chapter 41

By further emphasizing Agricola's need for caution, chapter 41 develops the theme of chapter 40.3-4. The Emperor's enmity was no longer concealed. His hatred spurred the delators, who studied the former general's every act, ready to denounce him for the slightest misdeed.¹⁶² His life was thus in grave danger: crebro per eos dies apud Domitianum absens accusatus, absens absolutus est.¹⁶³ So Tacitus would have his reader believe; the last three words belie his allegation. If a delator's indictment had been lodged against Agricola, Domitian dismissed it. In reality, however, Agricola's mortal danger is a figment of Tacitus'

¹⁶²Cf. the accusations lodged against Falanius and Priscus under Tiberius: Ann. 1.73; iii.49.

¹⁶³Agr. 41.1.

historical technique. Chronologically, the passage is all wrong; it was the delators who were out of favor at this early stage of Domitian's reign.¹⁶⁴ Still the story is convenient. The immediacy of Agricola's alleged peril allowed Tacitus to formulate the strands of thought half-concealed in chapters 39-40 in the form of a simple antithesis:

causa periculi non crimen ullum aut querela laesi
cuiusquam, sed infensus virtutibus princeps et gloria
virī ac pessimum inimicorum genus, laudantes (41.1).

It was not crime, but notoriety, that brought down upon Agricola the hatred of Domitian. The latter was infensus virtutibus; Agricola personified the most dangerous kind of virtue, imperatoria virtus. His gloria was genuine, and a threat. He had earned favor exercitus; Domitian twice had¹⁶⁵ had to purchase it. The latter would brook no rival; Agricola sought survival in obscurity, but his admirers foolishly pushed him to heights of ever more perilous prominence. Every reference to the hated name stirred the tyrant's jealousy and hatred, and brought Agricola one step closer to execution—or murder.

Even the course of events conspired to keep Agricola's name before the public. This is one of the themes

¹⁶⁴Suet. Dom. 9.3.

¹⁶⁵With a donative to the Praetorian Guard at his accession in 81, and an increase in the legionary's salary from 300 to 400 sesterces per annum in 84 (Suet. Dom. 7.3; Dio Cass. lxxvii.3.5).

linking the next two sentences of chapter 41 with what has preceded:

et ea insecuta sunt rei publicae tempora, quae sileri Agricolam non sinerent: tot exercitus in Moesia Daciae et Germania et Pannonia temeritate aut per ignaviam ducum amissi, tot militares viri cum tot cohortibus expugnati et capti; nec iam de limite imperii et ripa, sed de hibernis legionum et possessione dubitatum. ita cum damna damnis continuarentur atque omnis annus funeribus et cladibus insigniretur, poscebatur ore vulgi dux Agricola, comparantibus cunctis vigorem, constantiam et expertum bellis animum cum inertia et formidine eorum.

The first clause is a clever transition. Tacitus employs it to proceed smoothly from the subject of Agricola's personal peril to the greater peril of the Empire. Events of the years 85-92 are telescoped: the death of Oppius Sabinus in Moesia; the destruction of Cornelius Fuscus in Dacia; the revolt of Antonius Saturninus in Germania Superior; the annihilation of legio XXI Rapax in Pannonia. The lurid description of Roman defeats which follows culminates with the intensely powerful ita cum damna damnis continuarentur atque omnis annus funeribus et cladibus insigniretur. This serves to re-introduce Agricola, and unite all of Tacitus' themes. The vox populi Romani cries out for Agricola's proven leadership to counter the disasters overwhelming the Empire. This heightens Agricola's personal peril, because all contrast Agricola's energy and capacity with the incompetence of Domitian's nominees, not realizing that the Emperor has deliberately appointed unqualified commanders, even at the risk of continued disaster for the Empire,

because such officers do not represent a threat to his
¹⁶⁶
 throne.

To remove any doubts the reader might still have, in the fourth and last sentence of chapter 41 Tacitus bluntly states the cause of Agricola's peril. He assures us that all this talk of Agricola reached Domitian's ears: quibus sermonibus satis constat Domitiani quoque aures verberatas. A critical reader, however, might wish more concrete assurance than that offered by the expression satis constat. Tacitus next asserts that it aroused the tyrant's anger: dum optimus quisque libertorum amore et fide, pessimi malignitate et livore pronum deterioribus principem extimulabant. Once again, no proof is offered, but a falsehood is injected. In this sentence Tacitus implies that Domitian was under the influence of his freedmen. As Suetonius and Dio Cassius make clear, however, Domitian's household ultimately conspired against him precisely because ¹⁶⁷ he attempted to terrorize his freedmen and relatives. Thus cause and effect, both asserted but unproven, support a malicious conclusion, Tacitus' subjective summary of the situation: sic Agricola simul suis virtutibus, simul vitiis aliorum in ipsam gloriam praeceps agebatur.

In this chapter, the desire to heighten Agricola's

¹⁶⁶The implication is uncritically drawn by S. Gsell, Domitien, 40.

¹⁶⁷Suet. Dom. 14.4; Dio Cass. lxvii.14.4.

popularity and consequent peril is so compelling that Tacitus has wilfully exceeded the limits both of historical accuracy and of his own historical judgement. Throughout his works, Tacitus shows nothing but scorn for the opinion of the Roman plebs. In Historiae iv.38.2, for example, their only interest is the annona: cui una ex re publica annonae cura. Yet in the Agricola he cannot refrain from employing or fabricating barber-shop gossip: poscebatur ore vulgi dux Agricola!

More grievous still is the factual inaccuracy contained in chapter 41.2-3, and especially the slur on the officers nominated to conduct the Danubian campaigns. This results from a union of two elements, the continuing theme of Agricola's prominence rushing him to a disastrous end, and the compressed narrative of disasters on the frontiers, disasters connived at by the Emperor to ensure his own safety. To stress the incompetence of Domitian's nominees is to render more plausible the public outcry for Agricola's appointment. Epigraphy, however, comes to the defence of Domitian and his candidates.

When Domitian acceded to the throne in 81, the three Danubian provinces of Dalmatia, Moesia, and Pannonia were lightly defended. Dalmatia housed one legion, IV Flavia Felix.¹⁶⁸ Pannonia was defended by two legions, XV

¹⁶⁸J.J. Wilkes, Dalmatia (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969) 84.

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Apollinaris and XIII Gemina. Moesia alone had a formidable concentration, three legions certainly attested (I Italica, V Macedonica, VII Claudia), a fourth very probable (V Alaudae).¹⁷⁰

There seems to have been a shortage of candidates with the requisite military and administrative training for these three governorships at the beginning of Domitian's reign. Vespasian or Titus had assigned Dalmatia, least important of the three, to L. Funisulanus Vettonianus, who had not seen active military service since his command of IV Scythica in 62 A.D.¹⁷¹ Pannonia was under the command of T. Atilius Rufus.¹⁷² Consul suffectus in 75, nothing is known of his earlier career—perhaps in itself an indication that it was not out of the ordinary. The critical Moesian command was entrusted to C. Vettulenus Civica Cerialis—

¹⁶⁹M. Pavan, La Provincia Romana della Pannonia Superior (Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1955) 386.

¹⁷⁰R. Syme, JRS, 18 (1928) 45-46. Considering its size, this was a very modest force. No legionary encampment is attested east of Oescus in the Flavian period.

¹⁷¹Tac. Ann. xv.7; ILS 1005; AE 1946, 205. W. Eck, Senatores, 127-130, dates his governorship 79/80-81/82. J. Wilkes, Dalmatia, 445, assigns it to approximately 80-83. In agreement are A. Jagenteufel, Die Statthalter der römischen Provinz Dalmatia von Augustus bis Diocletian (Wien: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1955) 45; and A. Dobó, Die Verwaltung der römischen Provinz Pannonien von Augustus bis Diocletianus (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1968) 36.

¹⁷²CIL XVI.26 (June 13, 80). W. Eck, Senatores, 127-130, dates his governorship 79/80-81/82. A. Dobó, Pannonien, 35, to 80-82/83.

possibly Domitian's first major provincial appointment.¹⁷³
 He was not especially qualified, unless he had played a role¹⁷⁴
 in his brother's lengthy tenure of the province.

The shortage of qualified viri militares on the Danube at the beginning of Domitian's reign may be attributed directly to three administrative decisions on the part of Vespasian and Domitian. First, as a means of enhancing their family's inglorious reputation, Vespasian and Titus occupied the eponymous consulships on an almost annual basis. Between 71 and 79, they held fifteen of the twenty available¹⁷⁵ ordinary consulships. Other members of the family and senior political supporters of the regime occupied a further¹⁷⁶ twelve ordinary and suffect consulships. The pool of potential legati Augusti was thus reduced by twenty-seven¹⁷⁷ members, a very substantial reduction.

¹⁷³CIL XVI.28 (September 20, 82).

¹⁷⁴Sextus Vettulenus Cerialis, governor of Moesia 74/75-78/79. His governorship is attested by a military diploma dated to April 28, 75; cf. M. Mirkovic, "Die Auxiliareinheiten in Moesien unter den Flavieren", Ep. Stud., 5 (1968) 177. Conceivably, Civica Cerialis had commanded a legion in Moesia during his brother's governorship. R. Syme has demonstrated that it was not unusual for governors to have relatives under their command. Cf. "Hadrian in Moesia", AV, 19 (1968) 101-109.

¹⁷⁵Cf. A. Deggrassi, Fasti Consolari, 20-23.

¹⁷⁶70 A.D.: C. Licinius Mucianus II; 71 A.D.: M. Cocceius Nerva, Domitian; 72 A.D.: C. Licinius Mucianus III, T. Flavius Sabinus II; 73 A.D.: Domitian II, L. Valerius Catullus Messallinus, M. Arrecinus Clemens; 74 A.D.: Domitian III; 76 A.D.: Domitian IV; 77 A.D.: Domitian V; 79 A.D.: Domitian VI.

¹⁷⁷Fifty-eight other consuls are known from

Second, the available evidence indicates that in the appointment of viri militares to active war zones, Domitian was careful to pursue his father's conservative and successful policy. Simply stated, that policy was one of specialization. Both Flavian dynasts regarded previous exposure to the tactical and strategic problems presented by the military theatre in question as the decisive consideration in filling appointments. Hence active commands were consistently filled by legati who had seen previous military experience in the region.¹⁷⁸ During the course of Vespasian's reign, the two regions of the Empire which witnessed considerable military activity were Britain and the eastern frontier.¹⁷⁹ The military problems which they presented, however, were considerably different from those to be encountered on the Danube. Hence the Eastern and British specialists of Vespasian's reign, who formed the nucleus of

Vespasian's reign; cf. A. Degraffi, Fasti Consolari, 20-23. Hence the Flavian family and its senior supporters held 32% of all the known consulships during Vespasian's reign.

¹⁷⁸See Appendix 2 for a detailed treatment of the evidence.

¹⁷⁹Reliable accounts of the campaigns waged during Vespasian's reign are numerous. Britain: R. Syme, CAH, 11 (1936) 150-158; I.A. Richmond, JRS, 34 (1944) 34-45; contra, E. Birley, DUJ, n.s. 7 (1945/46) 79-84; Collingwood and Myres, Roman Britain, 105-119; Ogilvie-Richmond, De Vita Agricola, 46-76; S. Frere, Britannia, A History of Roman Britain (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967) 61-119. The East: B.W. Henderson, Five Roman Emperors, 59-71; R. Syme, CAH, 11 (1936) 137-145; L. Homo, Vespasien, L'Empereur du Bon Sens (Paris: Albin Michel, 1949) 335-343; E.T. Salmon, A History of the Roman World from 30 B.C. to A.D. 138 (6th ed., London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1968) 250-252.

the Empire's trained commanders, were unqualified for service on the Danube, the most important military theatre during this period. Domitian had to make do with elderly officers such as Funisulanus Vettonianus, and inexperienced officers such as Tettius Iulianus.

Third, Vespasian left his legati in office for long periods of time, a policy which minimized the rapid turnover necessary to produce a large pool of trained administrative personnel. This was particularly critical in Iudaea and Numidia, the two praetorian commands combining the civil and military function. Although Iudaea was still an active war zone at the beginning of Vespasian's reign, and thus differs from the other praetorian provinces, nevertheless it was terribly mismanaged. Sextus Vettulenus Civica Cerialis served for one year under Vespasian¹⁸⁰ before giving way to Sextus Lucilius Bassus, recently promoted from the equestrian order. Praefectus classicus at the time of his adlection into the senatorial order, even had he not died in Iudaea he would have been too old for extended service.¹⁸¹ He was succeeded by L. Flavius Silva Nonius Bassus, who was left in command of the province from 73/74 to 78/79.¹⁸² He returned to Rome to be consul ordinarius in 81, and then retired to

¹⁸⁰70/71: Joseph. BJ vii.163.

¹⁸¹Joseph. BJ vii.252; W. Eck, Senatoren, 92.

¹⁸²See the lengthy discussion of W. Eck, Senatoren, 93-111.

his hometown of Salvia.¹⁸³ Thus Iudaea catapulted only one man, Sextus Vettulenus Civica Cerialis, to a consular command (Moesia) during the entire reign of Vespasian. Similarly, only one governor of Numidia, C. Calpetanus Rantius Quirinalis Valerius Festus, was promoted to a consular command. Governor of Numidia at the time of Vespasian's proclamation,¹⁸⁴ he was rewarded for his support¹⁸⁵ with successive governorships in Pannonia (73-76/77),¹⁸⁶ Hispania Citerior (78/79-80/81),¹⁸⁷ and Asia (81/82).

Domitian acted forcefully to remedy this situation in 82. L. Tettius Iulianus, who had previous experience on the Danube as legate of legio VII Claudia in 69,¹⁸⁸ was praetorian governor of Numidia at the time of Domitian's¹⁸⁹ accession. Domitian recalled him in 82 for a suffect consulship in June, 83, and this made him eligible for a senior command. A swift succession of appointments in

¹⁸³W. Eck, Senatoren, 110.

¹⁸⁴Tac. Hist. ii.98.1; iv.49.1.

¹⁸⁵CIL III.11194-11196 (April-December, 73). Cf. A. Dobó, Pannonien, 33-35.

¹⁸⁶ILS 254.

¹⁸⁷W. Eck, Senatoren, 84. For a further discussion of specialization, see R. Sherk, Historia, 20 (1971) 110-121.

¹⁸⁸Tac. Hist. i.79.5; iv.40.2.

¹⁸⁹AE 1954, 137. See B.E. Thomasson, Die Statthalter der römischen Provinzen Nordafrikas von Augustus bis Diocletianus, 2 (Lund: C.W.K. Glerup, 1960) 157-158 for detailed discussion.

Numidia followed the departure of Tettius Iulianus: C.
 Octavius Tadius Tossianus L. Iavolenus Priscus in 82/83;¹⁹⁰
 [?Ro] gatus in 84/85;¹⁹¹ Gnaeus Suellius Flaccus in 86/87.¹⁹²
 Of these, Priscus, promoted to a suffect consulship in 86,
 went on to the important commands of Germania Superior in
 89/90,¹⁹³ and of Syria.¹⁹⁴

The evidence for Iudaea under Domitian is sketchy,
 but a similar policy may be detected. Gnaeus Pinarius
 Aemilius Cicatricula Pompeius Longinus is attested from
 85/86 to 88/89.¹⁹⁵ Recalled to a suffect consulship in 90,
 he was dispatched to Moesia Superior in 92/93,¹⁹⁶ and trans-

¹⁹⁰CIL VIII.23165.

¹⁹¹IL Alg. I.3029.

¹⁹²IRT 854.

¹⁹³CIL XVI.36 (October 27, 90).

¹⁹⁴ILS 1015. The date was until quite recently unknown. Syme considered him to be the unknown governor of Pliny Ep. ix.13.11: R. Syme, "A Governor of Syria under Nerva", Philologus, 91 (1936) 238-245. This, however, was always unlikely, for if he had been a rival for the throne it is very doubtful that he would have been an amicus of Trajan. W. Eck, Senatoren, 152, considered him Trajan's first appointee (98/99). A.N. Sherwin-White, The Letters of Pliny. A Historical and Social Commentary (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1966) 173, thought him an appointee of Domitian since ILS 1015 pointedly fails to mention the Emperor who dispatched him to Syria. G. Alföldy and H. Halfmann have now demonstrated conclusively that Trajan's rival was M. Cornelius Nigrinus Curiatius Maternus, and that Priscus was governor of Syria from 97/98 to 99/100: "M. Cornelius Nigrinus Curiatius Maternus, General Domitians und Rivale Trajans", Chiron, 3 (1973) 362.

¹⁹⁵CIL XVI.33 (May 13, 86).

¹⁹⁶CIL XVI.39 (September 16, 94).

ferred to Pannonia in 95/96.¹⁹⁷ Sextus Hermetidius Campanus, governor of Iudaea in 93/94, may well be the elusive suffect consul of July-August, 97, "SE".¹⁹⁸ If so, then he too was designated by Domitian for the senior military commands.

Even the non-military praetorian governorships display a rapid turnover. Belgica provides two important names: L. Licinius Sura¹⁹⁹ and Q. Glitius Atilius Agricola. It is almost a certainty that Sura, governor of Belgica in 93/94-94/95, proceeded to the consulship in September-October of 97, with Agricola, who followed him as governor of Belgica (95/96-96/97), for his colleague.²⁰⁰ The chief architects of Trajan's adoption, these two consulars received suitable rewards. Immediately after Trajan's accession, Sura was posted to the legateship of Germania Inferior;²⁰¹ Agricola later replaced the reliable L. Iulius Ursus Servianus as governor of Pannonia.²⁰² Both received

¹⁹⁷CIL XVI.42 (February 20, 98).

¹⁹⁸R. Syme, "The Consuls of A.D. 97: Addendum", JRS, 44 (1954) 81-82.

¹⁹⁹If ILS 1022 is correctly ascribed to him. R. Syme has doubts: "The Friend of Tacitus", JRS, 47 (1957) 134 n. 31. Recently, Sosius Senecio has been forcefully suggested by C.P. Jones, "Sura and Senecio", JRS, 60 (1970) 98-104.

²⁰⁰The consulship of Sura: R. Syme, Tacitus, 641. The governorship of Agricola: ILS 1021, 1021a.

²⁰¹AE 1923, 33. Perhaps from 98 to 101; cf. again R. Syme, Tacitus, 17 n. 7.

²⁰²In 100/101. Cf. ILS 1021a; A. Dobó, Pannonien, 39-40.

early second consulates, the first such assigned by Trajan, Sura as ordinarius in 102, Agricola as suffectus in place of Trajan in 103.

Still, despite the immediate change in policy that Domitian introduced, it would take several years for the new generation of military leaders to qualify for the consular commands. In the interim, Domitian had to make do with the limited resources at his disposal. Gnaeus Iulius Agricola²⁰³ had been in Britain since at least 78; similarly D. Iunius Novius Priscus in Germania Inferior.²⁰⁴ Neither could be immediately replaced, despite four years of service. Q. Corellius Rufus, who probably began his governorship of Germania Superior in 79,²⁰⁵ would also have to stay on.

The Danube provinces were, however, a source of immediate concern. There was a certain tension, as the move-²⁰⁶ment in 82 of auxiliary troops in Moesia attests. L. Ceionius Commodus was recalled after three years in Syria, and T. Atilius Rufus dispatched to the eastern command from Pannonia (82/83).²⁰⁷ L. Funisulanus Vettonianus was promoted

²⁰³Since either 77 or 78: Agr. 9.

²⁰⁴AE 1960, 124; CIL XVI.158 (September 20, 82).

²⁰⁵CIL XVI.28 (September 20, 82). He was probably consul in 78: A. Degraffi, Fasti Consolari, 22. In this period the governors of the two Germanies were frequently appointed immediately after the consulship. See Geza Alföldy, "Die Legionslegaten der römischen Rheinarmeen", Ep. Stud., 3 (1967) 18 n. 96.

²⁰⁶ILS 1995; R. Syme, JRS, 18 (1928) 44.

²⁰⁷AE 1925, 95.

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from Dalmatia to replace him. C. Vettulenus Civica

Cerialis, whose brother had served in the province before

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him, was installed in Moesia.

In 83, when Domitian marched to the Rhine, he was accompanied among others by Sextus Iulius Frontinus. The latter had seen previous service in the north—against the Lingones²¹⁰—and there is a bare possibility that he replaced Novius Priscus, who now returned to Rome after five years in Germania Inferior.²¹¹ When Domitian himself returned to Rome in the summer or fall of 83, well might he feel confidence in his arrangements. Iulius Agricola in Britain, Corellius Rufus in Germania Superior, Funisulanus

²⁰⁸CIL XVI.30 (September 3, 84), 31 (September 5, 85). M. Pavan, Pannonia Superior, 410, and W. Eck, Senatoren, 131-136, date his tenure to 83-86. A. Dobo, Pannonien, 37, wrongly limits it to 84-85, and sends him to Moesia Superior in 86. In fact his Pannonian command must extend into the spring of 86.

²⁰⁹CIL XVI.28 (September 20, 82). Cf. pp. 77-78 and n. 174 above.

²¹⁰Str. iv.3.14. Cf. A. Kappelmacher, "Sex. Iulius Frontinus", RE, 10 (1919) 591; and J.B. Ward-Perkins, "The Career of Sex. Iulius Frontinus", CQ, 31 (1937) 102-105.

²¹¹E. Ritterling, Fasti des römischen Deutschland unter dem Prinzipat (Wien: L.W. Seidel & Sohn, 1932) 57-58, argued on the basis of an inscription unearthed at Xanten (CIL XIII.8624) that Frontinus was legatus Augusti pro praetore exercitus Germaniae inferioris immediately after his consulship in 73. Since, however, Frontinus must have been in Britain early in 74, as W. Eck, Senatoren, 81, pointed out, this would require a tenure of only a few months in Germany—a very unlikely possibility. Eck then argued that Frontinus' governorship must fall no earlier than 80, and probably during the Chattic war: Senatoren, 82. It is more probable that the inscription refers to a legionary legateship; cf. the review of Ritterling by R. Syme, JRS, 23 (1933) 97. Ward-Perkins suggests II Adiutrix in 70 A.D.: CQ, 31 (1937) 102-

Vettonianus in Pannonia, Atilius Rufus in Syria, and possibly Iulius Frontinus in Germania Inferior, all were legates with many years of experience. Talented younger men were waiting in the wings, among them Tettius Iulianus, Iavolenus Priscus, and Bucius Lappius Maximus. Only Moesia continued to cause trouble. Civica Cerialis proved unsatisfactory, or requested his recall, in 84. C. Oppius Sabinus,²¹² well thought of by the Emperor, replaced him.

Then, in 85 the structure began to break down. The reliable Atilius Rufus died in Syria, a serious loss. His experience would have been a valuable asset on the Danube in the following year. Agricola, however, won a decisive victory in Caledonia which permitted his recall, and allowed²¹³ yet more troops to be siphoned off. The end of the Chattic war must have prompted the recall of Corellius Rufus and Frontinus. Four interim appointments were made;²¹⁴ unfortunately, none of the four are known.

105. Given Str. iv.3.14, this is a highly attractive possibility.

²¹²He was consul ordinarius in 84 with Domitian. Nothing is known of his earlier career.

²¹³A whole legion, II Adiutrix, was transferred to the Danube in 86. Cf. p. 48 n. 108 above.

²¹⁴It has been suggested that D. Iunius Novius Priscus replaced Agricola in Britain. See G. Alföldy, "Herkunft und Laufbahn des Clodius Albinus in der Historia Augusta", Bonner Historia-Augusta-Colloquium (Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1966/67) 38. We regain sight of Syria and the two Germanies in 87/88: A. Bucius Lappius Maximus in Germania Inferior: ILS 1006; L. Antonius Saturninus in Germania

In the fall or winter of 85, the storm broke on the Danube, the "Moesia" of Agricola 41. The Dacians penetrated eastern Moesia. Unlike the raiding parties which periodically crossed the Danube, they were a disciplined and well-organized army. For the Romans, the results were catastrophic. Few details remain, but it is clear that the Dacians managed to overrun the frontier detachments, and to annihilate the inadequate force of auxiliaries which Oppius Sabinus brought up to oppose them. Sabinus himself fell on the field of battle; the four legion commanders

Superior: Suet. Dom. 6; P. Valerius Patruinus in Syria: CIL XVI.35, dated November 7, 88. Patruinus may have governed one of the two Germanies in 83/84-85/86; see my article forthcoming in Hermes.

²¹⁵Imperial acclamations provide the only clue to the outbreak of the war: Imperator IX on a military diploma dated September 5, 85, Domitian is Imperator XI before the end of the year, and Imperator XIII by September 13, 86. The repulse of the Dacians is saluted. Cf. P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2561; R. Syme, "Arthur Stein, Die Legaten von Moesien", JRS, 35 (1945) 110-111.

²¹⁶C. Patsch, Der Kampf um den Donaauraum unter Domitian und Trajan (Wien & Leipzig: Holder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1937) 18-19.

²¹⁷Exemplified by the Sarmatian raid of 69 A.D.: Hist. 1.79.

²¹⁸Dio Cass. lxvii.6.1; cf. F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 26-27.

²¹⁹Agr. 41.2: "tot militares viri cum tot cohortibus expugnati et capti."

²²⁰Suet. Dom. 6. The winter of 85/86. A. Stein, Die Legaten von Moesien (Budapest: Dissertationes Pannonicae, 1940) 34, dates his death to early 86. Perhaps at Stari Nikup: C. Patsch, Der Kampf um den Donaauraum, 19. Cf., however, the remarks of R. Syme in his review of Patsch, Germania, 22 (1938) 200.

were too far away to bring up their forces. Consequently, the Dacians were able leisurely and systematically to plunder the eastern portion of the province.

Domitian acted with resolution. Accompanied by the Praetorian Prefect Cornelius Fuscus, and probably by the entire Praetorian Guard, he left Rome in January, 86 for Moesia.²²¹ The seriousness of the situation is indicated by the fact that Domitian, who had had very little military experience, chose to entrust Fuscus with the actual command, while he himself remained in a Moesian city near the front²²² in order to spur on the soldiers by his near-presence.

Despite Tacitus²²³ and Juvenal,²²⁴ Cornelius Fuscus was a sound choice. He had previous military experience on the Danube;²²⁵ there was no doubting his energy or

²²¹The date seems to conflict with acclamations X-XI, but the Acta Fratrum Arvalium attest his presence in Rome in January, 86; cf. M-W 13. Domitian must have been acclaimed in absentia.

²²²Dio Cass. lxvii.6.3. The pejorative nature of this passage strongly suggests that it was culled from Tacitus' narrative of the campaign in a lost book of the Historiae. The city was probably the strategically located Naissus; cf. C. Patsch, Der Kampf um den Donauraum, 6.

²²³Hist. ii.86. Tacitus is hostile to other intimate associates of Domitian, such as Antonius Primus. Cf. T.A. Dorey, "Tacitus' Treatment of Antonius Primus", CPh, 53 (1958) 244, and pp. 160-161 below. G.A.T. Davies justly assesses Cornelius Fuscus: "He was a man of energy and ability, but certainly rash, with a tincture, possibly, of the military theorist and experimenter." "Topography and the Trajan Column", JRS, 10 (1920) 19 n. 2.

²²⁴iv.111-112.

²²⁵Hist. ii.86. For his career, cf. PIR² C 1365.

226 initiative. Funisulanus Vettonianus would have made an
 able deputy; he was transferred from Pannonia to the newly-
 227 formed Moesia Superior in 86. Dio Cassius seems to
 228 indicate a difficult campaign; still, Fuscus did expel
 the Dacians from Moesia in rapid order. Acclamations XII-
 229 XIIIIII celebrate his victories; the extent of the Dacian
 reverse is further indicated by Decebalus' overtures for
 230 peace, properly rejected by Domitian. The Emperor himself
 was active. To facilitate border defence, he divided Moesia
 into two provinces, Superior and Inferior, and called up
 231 the legio IV Flavia Felix from Dalmatia.

In order to restore Roman prestige on the Danube, a
 punitive campaign into the Dacian heartland would be
 necessary. With absolute confidence in the demonstrated
 ability of his Prefect, Domitian entrusted Fuscus with
 command of the expedition, and himself returned to Rome in
 232 the late summer of 86 to celebrate the Ludi Capitolini.

226 Hist. iii.42.

227 ILS 1005; AE 1946, 205. For the date see W. Eck, Senatoren, 137 n. 107.

228 Dio Cass. lxvii.6.1.

229 XII was registered between February 17 and May 13, 86; XIII-XIII by September 13. Cf. R. Syme, JRS, 35 (1945) 110.

230 Dio Cass. lxvii.6.5.

231 R. Syme, JRS, 18 (1928) 46. The so-called "Dobrudja vallum" may have been built at this time; its purpose is unclear. Cf. R. Syme, CAH, 11 (1936) 169-170.

232 R. Syme, JRS, 35 (1945) 111; P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2563.

Disaster, however, struck again. Fuscus crossed the Danube with a mixed body of troops, probably centered around the intact legio V Alaudae, and marched into Dacia. His route is unknown,²³³ but it is clear that Decebalus cleverly withdrew, drawing Fuscus deeper and deeper into Dacian territory. Forced to fight on a field of the enemy's choosing, Fuscus suffered a shattering defeat, and himself²³⁴ fell on the field of battle. V Alaudae was cut to pieces,²³⁵ and disappears from the legionary rolls.

²³³P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2563-2564 accepts the reconstruction of C. Cichorius, Die römischen Dankmäler in der Dobrudscha (Berlin, 1904), who interprets the memorial at Adamklissi as a commemoration of Fuscus' defeat. There is, however, absolutely no evidence linking Adamklissi with Fuscus' defeat, and conclusive evidence against: Agr. 41; Iuv. iv.111-112; Mart. vi.76. Cf. R. Syme, "The Colony of Cornelius Fuscus: An Episode in the 'Bellum Neronis'", AJPh, 58 (1937) 15. There is now general agreement that all three monuments at Adamklissi were built by Trajan on the site of his final victory in 101/102: the men whose names appeared on the altar seem to have fallen in this battle. See R. Vulpe and I. Barnea, Din Istoria Dobrogei, 2 (Bucharest: the Romanian Academy, 1968) 89-90. A possibility still remains, though, that the list includes the soldiers lost in Domitian's campaigns as well; R. Bianchi Bandinelli, Rome, the Late Empire (London: Thames & Hudson, 1971) 311. In this case, however, the number who appear to be commemorated from the various wars—some 3800—seems much too low.

Adamklissi was not the site of Fuscus' defeat. Sarmizegethusa was his goal. He proceeded either from the legionary camp at Viminacium to the Iron Gate Pass, or through the unexplored Red Tower Pass from the camp at Oescus. Tettius Iulianus was to proceed via the Iron Gate Pass—perhaps an indirect indication that Fuscus had proceeded via the Red Tower. A definitive answer will only be provided when it is determined where legio V Alaudae was based.

²³⁴There was probably only one engagement. See the discussion of C. Patsch, Der Kampf um den Donaauraum, 12-16.

²³⁵R. Syme, JRS, 18 (1928) 45-46.

This disaster must have occurred after the fourteenth acclamation of September 13, 86. Serious as it was for Rome, the carnage must also have been severe on the Dacian side. A pause ensues in 87; there is no evidence of a renewed Dacian invasion of Moesia while the Romans were regrouping their forces.²³⁶

The imperial court must have presented a grim scene in 87.²³⁷ Twice, Roman armies had suffered complete defeat at Dacian hands. The Emperor could not afford the luxury of a third miscalculation. Domitian abandoned the policy of immediate response, and concentrated on mustering a powerful striking force. II Adiutrix was transferred from Britain to Moesia to replace V Alaudae.²³⁸ I Adiutrix was summoned to Pannonia to strengthen its garrison.²³⁹ Most importantly, Domitian selected L. Tettius Iulianus to command the expedition. With former service on the Danube and in Numidia,²⁴⁰ he possessed the necessary military experience, and he proved to be another Corbulo. After raising the

²³⁶There were no imperial acclamations in 87. The much debated question of whether the campaigns of Fuscus and Iulianus together constitute one Dacian war, or represent two distinct Dacian wars, as in J. Janssen, "Utrum Domitiano Imperante Duo Bella Dacica Gesta Sint an Unum", *Mnemosyne*, 48 (1920) 154-156, is tendentious.

²³⁷The conspiracy of 87 will have added to the gloom. Cf. pp. 298-300 below.

²³⁸R. Syme, *JRS*, 18 (1928) 46.

²³⁹Cf. p. 48 n. 108 above.

²⁴⁰Cf. p. 81 above.

morale and strengthening the discipline of the troops,²⁴¹ he
 crossed the Danube near Viminacium and marched toward the
 Iron Gate Pass. A coin issued before September 14, 88 bears
 a fifteenth imperial acclamation; XVI and XVII follow before
 the end of the year.²⁴² Dio Cassius supplies the details.
 The two armies engaged at Tapae; the Dacian army was
 annihilated.²⁴³ The road to Sarmizegethusa lay open; Dio
 suggests that a stratagem induced Iulianus to abandon his
 objective.²⁴⁴ It may be doubted. The campaigning season
 was probably well advanced; further assaults, if planned,²⁴⁵
 would have to be postponed until the next year.

Because of events on the Rhine, and elsewhere along
 the Danube, that assault never came. On January 1, 89, the
 governor of Germania Superior, L. Antonius Saturninus, seized
 the deposit boxes of the two legions stationed at Mainz, XXI
 Rapax and XIV Gemina Martia Victrix, and persuaded them to
 acclaim him as Emperor. A late source attributes his revolt
 to a desire to avenge personal insults suffered at the
 Emperor's hands.²⁴⁶ Personal ambition, however, seems a more

²⁴¹Dio Cass. lxvii.10.1.

²⁴²R. Syme, JRS, 35 (1945) 111.

²⁴³Dio Cass. lxvii.10.2.

²⁴⁴Dio Cass. lxvii.10.3.

²⁴⁵There is no firm evidence that Iulianus had been instructed to conquer Dacia. The absence of peace negotiations in the aftermath of Tapae, however, hints that the campaign was not concluded by that victory.

²⁴⁶Aur. Vict. Caes. xi.10.

likely pretext than harbored insults. Saturninus was the instrument of a broader conspiracy; he had connections with a party of malcontents in the Senate. The indications are numerous. News of the revolt leaked out in Rome before it actually took place. Otherwise, it would have been impossible for Domitian to have learned of the revolt, mustered the Praetorian Guard, and left Rome on January 12—eleven days
²⁴⁷after the revolt broke out. When A. Lappius Maximus, the
²⁴⁸governor of Germania Inferior, defeated and killed Saturninus and captured his private correspondence, the extent of the conspiracy so alarmed him that he destroyed
²⁴⁹Saturninus' papers rather than hand them over to Domitian. Nevertheless, although details are few, we know that Domitian partially uncovered the extent of the conspiracy
²⁵⁰from other sources, and struck out. The governor of Britain, Sallustius Lucullus, was perhaps executed for
²⁵¹complicity with Saturninus. The latter would have tried

²⁴⁷G. Walser, "Der Putsch des Saturninus gegen Domitian", Provincialia: Festschrift für Rudolf Laur-Belart (Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe & Co., 1968) 501. The Acta Fratrum Arvalium attests the date of his departure: M-W 15 ll. 14-17.

²⁴⁸The epochal article which clearly established that Maximus was governor of Germania Inferior, and not governor of Pannonia, procurator of Raetia, or legate of legio VIII Augusta is that of E. Hitterling, "Der Aufstand des Antonius Saturninus", WdZ, 12 (1893) 203-234.

²⁴⁹Dio Cass. lxvii.11.1-2.

²⁵⁰Dio Cass. lxvii.11.2-4.

²⁵¹Suet. Dom. 10.3. Cf., however, pp. 304-305 below.

to win over the governor of Britain—and the governor of Germania Superior. Another reason for Maximus to destroy Saturninus' compromising correspondence.

The two legions also must have connived. It would take more than the seizure of their pay chests to induce them to revolt. The troops may have been discontented with the role assigned them by Domitian's Rhine policy.²⁵² The sources do not indicate a lack of enthusiasm on their part.

That Domitian took harsh measures against the conspirators in the aftermath of the revolt should not occasion surprise. The conspiracy was well-timed, and presented a grave threat not only to the Emperor personally, but to the security of the Empire as well. The Danube army was committed to the war against Dacia; Iulianus may even have been wintering in enemy territory. In the East, the Parthians²⁵³ were lending their support to yet another "False Nero". War threatened on that frontier as well. The shadow of civil war cast by the rebellion of Saturninus thus represented a crisis of grave proportions, a crisis which Domitian met with his usual resolution. Leaving Rome with the Praetorian Guard on January 12, he ordered Trajan to bring²⁵⁴ up legio VII Gemina from Spain, Maximus to mobilize the

²⁵²G. Walser, Provincialia, 499.

²⁵³Suet. Nero 57. Cf. A.E. Pappano, "The False Neros", CJ, 32 (1937) 385-392; and P.A. Gallivan, "The False Neros: A Re-Examination", Historia, 22 (1973) 364-365.

²⁵⁴Pliny Pan. 14.5.

legions stationed in Germania Inferior,²⁵⁵ and the procurator of Raetia to advance with the alae and cohorts under his²⁵⁶ command. If the governors of Britain and Germania Inferior had joined the revolt, then Domitian must have been prepared to fall back upon the Danube armies and wage a long, internecine struggle for the throne. Fortunately for the Empire, Maximus remained loyal, and by January 25²⁵⁷ Saturninus was dead, the rebellion crushed. Domitian²⁵⁸ received reports of the victory while on the march, but continued on to the Rhine, determined to take whatever steps were necessary to prevent further rebellion. Two administrative measures proved salutary. He abolished double encampments, and prohibited the deposit of more than 1000²⁵⁹ sesterces per soldier in the legionary chests. At one stroke this deprived potential conspirators of both the money and manpower needed to revolt successfully. Maximus seems briefly to have been entrusted with the command of both Germanies, and commissioned to settle accounts with the

²⁵⁵They were awarded the title "Pia Fidelis" for their loyalty to Domitian. See P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2569.

²⁵⁶G. Walser, Provincialia, 501; E. Ritterling, WdZ, 12 (1893) 230. Both so interpret CIL III.7397.

²⁵⁷Again attested by the Acta Fratrum Arvalium; cf. M-W 15 ll. 42-43.

²⁵⁸Plut. Aem. 25.

²⁵⁹Suet. Dom. 7.3.

Chatti, who had been allied with Saturninus. ²⁶⁰ Archaeology confirms the hints of Suetonius. Destruction of the frontier watchtowers between the Lahn and the Taunus, and damage to the forts at Okarben, Heddernheim, and Hofheim, point to Chatic incursions into the Neuwied Basin and the Taunus-Wetterau region during this period. ²⁶¹ The Chatti were expelled, and a treaty arranged. ²⁶² XXI Rapax was dispatched to Pannonia; XIV Gemina followed three years later when XXI Rapax was cut to pieces by the Iazyges. ²⁶³ Maximus was promoted to a five year term as governor of Syria (90-94), ²⁶⁴ and then recalled to a second consulship in 95. Domitian himself was to celebrate a dual triumph over the Chatti and Dacians in the course of 89/90. ²⁶⁵ First, however, develop-

²⁶⁰Suet. Dom. 6.2; E. Ritterling, WdZ, 12 (1893) 229; G. Walser, Provincialia, 505.

²⁶¹R. Syme, CAH, 11 (1936) 174-175.

²⁶²Stat. Silv. iii.3.168: "victis parcentia foedera Cattis." See the remarks of R. Syme in his review of J. Klose, Roms Klientel-Randstaaten am Rhein und an der Donau, JRS, 25 (1935) 96.

²⁶³R. Syme, JRS, 18 (1928) 45, 50.

²⁶⁴AE 1961, 319 (military diploma of May 12, 91); W. Eck, Senatoren, 141 n. 122.

²⁶⁵Dated to October, 89-September, 90 by Eusebius. See R. Helm, Eusebius' Werke, Siebenter Band, Die Chronik des Hieronymus (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1956) 273. S. Gsell, Domitien, 200, has dated it to November. The sequence of events is clear from Martial: the rebellion of Saturninus (iv.11); the embassy of Diegis (v.3); the triumph (v.19).

Suetonius' statement (Dom. 6) that the triumph was de Chattis Dacisque was questioned by E. Köstlin, Die Donaukriege Domitians (Tübingen: Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, 1910) 80, who wished to identify the "Germanis" of Eusebius'

ments on the Danube once again summoned him to that frontier.²⁶⁶

The sequence of events is clear in the excerpt
²⁶⁷surviving from Dio Cassius. The Marcomanni and Quadi were
 apparently bound by treaty obligations to supply auxiliaries
²⁶⁸to the Roman army. During Iulianus' campaign they
 studiously refused to do so. Domitian resolved to teach
 them an object-lesson and forcibly restore their respect
 for the Roman imperium. Twice they dispatched embassies to
 sue for peace; Domitian went so far as to put the second
²⁶⁹group of envoys to death as a signal of his intentions.
 The force which the Emperor led across the Danube, however,
²⁷⁰met with a reverse, a reverse sufficiently serious to lure
²⁷¹the Iazyges into the war against the Romans. The
 inability of the Danube armies to wage campaigns on two
 different fronts must have been apparent to Domitian, for
 the defeat administered by the Marcomanni and Quadi led him

account with the Marcomanni and Quadi. Suetonius is supported,
 however, by Stat. Silv. i.1.27.

²⁶⁶Whether he first returned to Rome, or proceeded
 directly to the Danube, is unclear. He may have led XXI
 Rapax to Pannonia in person. Acclamations XVIII-XXI attest
 his victories over the Chatti and Dacians.

²⁶⁷Dio Cass. lxvii.7.1.

²⁶⁸Dio Cass. lxvii.7.1; Tac. Germ. 42. See C.
 Patsch, Der Kampf um den Donauraum, 33.

²⁶⁹Dio Cass. lxvii.7.1.

²⁷⁰Dio Cass. lxvii.6.4.

²⁷¹The "Sarmatarum" of ILS 9200, which confirms Dio's
 account.

immediately to arrange a peace treaty with the Dacians.²⁷²
 That Decebalus accepted at once is an indication of the seriousness of the losses he had suffered in the battle at Tapae. There were other inducements. From the Dacian point of view, the war with the Romans had acquired an alarming dimension: twice the Romans had invaded the Dacian heartland. Equally, the danger which the Marcomanni, Quadi, and Iazyges posed for Rome's Danubian provinces also threatened the stability of the Dacian kingdom. Indeed, this threat may have been paramount in the minds of both Decebalus and Domitian when they entered negotiations.

A treaty satisfactory to both sides seems to have been quickly concluded. Rome was recognized as the victor. The Dacian embassy attended Domitian, and Roman arms and prisoners of war were returned.²⁷³ The Dacian envoy, Diegis, received a diadem from Domitian's hands, which²⁷⁴ formally reduced Dacia to the status of a client-kingdom. The Dacians, in return, benefited materially. They received an annual subsidy, and civil and military architects who were immediately put to work redesigning the kingdom's²⁷⁵ defences. The treaty brought peace to the lower Danube, and reaped an immediate dividend. A force was dispatched at

²⁷²Dio Cass. lxvii.7.2.

²⁷³Dio Cass. lxvii.7.2.

²⁷⁴Dio Cass. lxvii.7.3; cf. J. Klose, Roms Klientel-Randstaaten, 126.

²⁷⁵Dio Cass. lxvii.7.4.

once through the Dacian kingdom under the capable leadership of the veteran C. Velius Rufus, which fell upon the three Sarmatian tribes from the rear.²⁷⁶ The column's successes are attested by Rufus' military decorations, and by his promotion to the office of procurator of Pannonia.²⁷⁷

Domitian's treaty with the Dacians was controversial in his day, and remains so in ours. The ancient sources, particularly Dio Cassius, stigmatised it as an ignominious defeat for Rome. Many modern scholars, in turn, have tended to represent it as an unconditional victory.²⁷⁸ Both points of view are too extreme. There was a conservative element in the Senate that sincerely believed that the Emperor had disgraced himself by paying tribute to a barbarian people, an element that believed that peace had been purchased rather than won. The only peace satisfactory to them was a dictated peace following the enemy's unconditional surrender. The popularity of Trajan's policy of conquest with the Senate, and its grumbling over Hadrian's policy of retrenchment, illustrate this attitude. In defence of this point of view, it may be said that Roman honor was far from completely satisfied by this treaty. It is clear from Dio that not all

²⁷⁶ILS 9200. Cf. the extended discussion of this inscription on pp. 46-47 n. 101.

²⁷⁷ILS 9200; for his career see E. Ritterling, JOEAI, 7 (1904) 35.

²⁷⁸As C. Patsch, Der Kampf um den Donaauraum, 32; and J. Klose, Roms Klientel-Randstaaten, 126.

pay a heavy price in 89 in order to achieve a peace which would free them to concentrate their energies against another foe. Despite Decebalus' scrupulous adherence to the fundamental demand of the treaty, the maintenance of peace on the lower Danube, the settlement could only have been regarded by many in Rome as a temporary expedient. Trajan shared the viewpoint of this element. Dio Cassius provides us with an insight into his sentiments as he embarked upon the First Dacian War: he was impatient to end the subsidy; more importantly, he feared the daily increase in Dacia's power and pride.²⁸⁵ The latter motive is at the heart of the issue; R.P. Longden has expressed it best:

A policy of subsidy can only be so effectively used, as it has been in corners of the British Empire, where the recipients are numerically too weak or traditionally too disunited ever to constitute a serious menace to the neighbouring provinces. Elsewhere it can at best be a temporary measure, to tide over a period of general stress or to await better local conditions for a final settlement. But the Dacians were a united race, conscious of nationhood, and thoroughly organized under a prince of genius.²⁸⁶

The logic here is glaringly obvious: to subsidize a powerful enemy is only to increase the threat that he represents to you. The strongest proof of how dangerous the Dacians were considered is the savage thoroughness with which the Romans dispersed them after their victory in the Second Dacian War.

²⁸⁵Dio Cass. lxxviii.6.1.

²⁸⁶"The Wars of Trajan", CAH, 11 (1936) 224. His view of Dacia is shared by many, including V. Pârvan, Dacia (Cambridge: the University Press, 1928) 189. Most recently, L. Rossi, Trajan's Column, 20-22.

The Romans had never been idle practitioners of genocide.

All this is not to say that the treaty of 89 did represent an ignominious defeat for Rome. 89 A.D. was a year of "general stress". Furthermore, Domitian's aims on the Danube must be kept in mind. There is no evidence that he envisaged the conquest of Dacia. After the death of Sabinus, the invasions of Fuscus and Iulianus were designed to secure the frontier of Moesia against further incursions by inflicting a defeat upon Decebalus which would compel him to respect the Roman imperium. Domitian doggedly continued the war until he had achieved such a victory. Decebalus had seriously miscalculated the Roman response to his initial invasion of Moesia. He was alarmed by the escalation of the war, and sought peace on several occasions. By 89 he had been so thoroughly chastened that he could be trusted to respect the purpose of the treaty. Domitian thus achieved his basic aim. The Dacians did not once cross the Danube until Trajan declared war upon them in 101.

As for the recovery of Dacian military power, and the potential danger that it implied for Rome, in 89, when the Romans had finally mastered the Dacians, such a development seemed of little import. Nor for that matter was it completely undesirable. Dacian civilization was also threatened by incursions of the Iazyges and other Sarmatian tribes. A militarily strong Dacian kingdom could play a useful role in the harnessing of these tribes, and thereby

lessen the burden on the Roman legions.²⁸⁷ In conclusion, then, it may be argued with considerable persuasion that Domitian had taught Decebalus so salutary a lesson in Roman persistence that the Empire would have nothing to fear from the Dacians so long as Decebalus occupied the throne. Trajan's reversal of Domitian's policy in 101, therefore, cannot be used to prove that that policy was inadequate to meet the very different circumstances of 89.

The settlement of 89, then, represented a satisfactory if not unconditional diplomatic victory for Domitian. It was also through diplomacy that he succeeded in isolating the Marcomanni and Quadi. A king and high priestess of the Semnones, the most renowned of the Suebic tribes, visited Domitian, perhaps in Rome.²⁸⁸ The Romans remained on the best of terms with the Hermunduri.²⁸⁹ They supported the tribal confederation of the Lugii with a detachment of cavalry in a war against an unnamed Suebic opponent²⁹⁰ — probably the Marcomanni or Quadi.²⁹¹ Tacitus would have heartily approved of Domitian's attempts to keep the barbarians divided.²⁹²

²⁸⁷C. Patsch, Der Kampf um den Donaauraum, 32.

²⁸⁸Dio Cass. lxvii.5.3.

²⁸⁹Tac. Germ. 41.

²⁹⁰Dio Cass. lxvii.5.2.

²⁹¹Upon whom they bordered; cf. Tac. Germ. 43.

²⁹²Cf. Germ. 43.

Roman diplomacy succeeded in blocking the establishment of a broad Suebic coalition, but it could not prevent incursions by individual Danubian tribes. In the spring of 92, the Iazyges, Marcomanni, and Quadi broke into Pannonia.²⁹³ A legion advanced to expel them, and was cut to pieces.²⁹⁴ It was XXI Rapax, which now disappears from the rolls.²⁹⁵ For the third time in seven years, Domitian proceeded to the Danube. XIV Gemina was summoned from Germania Inferior, returning the Pannonian garrison to full strength.²⁹⁶ The Emperor remained on the frontier for eight months,²⁹⁷ was acclaimed Imperator for the twenty-second time²⁹⁸ —probably when the invaders were expelled—and returned to Rome, where he deposited a laurel wreath in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.²⁹⁹ The Pannonian frontier was to remain quiet for the next five years; it was a victory won by I Adiutrix over the Suebi which occasioned Nerva's

²⁹³Stat. Silv. iii.3.70 is the only proof of the Marcomanni's participation in this incursion. See J. Klose, Roms Klientel-Randstaaten, 75; C. Patsch, Der Kampf um den Donaauraum, 39-42.

²⁹⁴Suet. Dom. 6.1.

²⁹⁵R. Syme, JRS, 18 (1928) 45. It was probably not coincidence that XXI Rapax was the legion which first encountered these tribes. The legion undoubtedly hoped to regain the Emperor's favor by quickly expelling them.

²⁹⁶R. Syme, JRS, 18 (1928) 50.

²⁹⁷Until January, 93: Mart. ix.31.

²⁹⁸By July 13, 92: CIL III. p. 859.

²⁹⁹Suet. Dom. 6.1.

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adoption of Trajan.

Domitian continued to make provincial appointments in the Danube region on the basis of previous military experience. Procurator Pannoniae in 90, Velius Rufus also apparently served in Dalmatia and Raetia in the same capacity during the last years of Domitian's reign.³⁰¹ Sextus Octavius Fronto, the governor of Moesia Inferior from 90/91 to 92/93,³⁰² may have previously served as governor of Dalmatia.³⁰³ Gnaeus Pinarius Aemilius Cicatricula Pompeius Longinus, the afore-mentioned governor of Iudaea from 85/86 to 88/89, governed Moesia Superior from 92/93 to 94/95,³⁰⁴ before receiving promotion to Pannonia, then the most sensitive post in the Empire, in 95/96.³⁰⁵ Domitian thus ended his reign as he began it. Under him military training

³⁰⁰Pliny Pan. 8.2; ILS 2720.

³⁰¹ILS 9200. Because the inscription is not ordered chronologically, it is uncertain precisely when in Domitian's reign Rufus was procurator of Dalmatia and Raetia. If he was involved in the campaign against the Chatti, however, there hardly seems enough time for two procuratorships in the period 86-90, and they are accordingly most safely dated after 90 A.D.

³⁰²CIL XVI.37 (dated to June 14, 92); W. Eck, Senatoren, 141-143.

³⁰³The reconstruction of J. Fitz, "Contribution à la carrière d'un proconsul d'Afrique", Latomus, 27 (1968) 69.

³⁰⁴CIL XVI.39 (dated September 16, 94 by a fragment of the Fasti Ostienses); see R. Hanslik, "Die neuen Fastenfragmente von Ostia in ihrer Beziehung zu gleichzeitigen epigraphischen und literarischen Material", WS, 63 (1948) 118.

³⁰⁵CIL XVI.42 (dated to February 20, 98); W. Eck, Senatoren, 146-150.

and experience were consistently the preeminent criteria for appointment to the consular military commands.

There is, then, an element of truth in Tacitus' allegations. Four serious reverses on the Danube, with two legions lost, and a civil war in Germany do not make an enviable record. The record is not, however, disgraceful. Domitian was confronted with a very trying situation, yet eventually achieved a satisfactory settlement. Tacitus charges the imperial nominees with incompetence, and implies that they were selected precisely because their ineptitude would prevent them from realizing any secret ambition to occupy the throne. The Empire thus suffered because of the Emperor's insecurity. To the contrary, Domitian's appointments seem to have been uniformly sound. To attribute temeritas, ignavia, inertia, and formido to soldiers of the calibre of Vettonianus, Fuscus, Iulianus, and Maximus, all men of proven military ability whose claims on the senior commands were as strong as Agricola's, is both inaccurate and unjust. It is equally unfair to hold Domitian responsible for the timing of events. A decisive victory in Dacia could not be followed up because of the outbreak of civil war in Germany. The emergence of a new threat along the upper Danube dictated a generous settlement to end the conflict in Dacia, a politic concession which allowed the Emperor to focus military and diplomatic energies in Pannonia to minimize the impact of a dangerous barbarian coalition.

Failure should not be concealed, but neither should success. The defeats of Sabinus and Fuscus were redressed by the victory of Iulianus. Decebalus' pleas for peace, and his fidelity to the treaty of 89, attest his lack of enthusiasm for further engagements with Domitian. A lasting peace on the lower Danube was an achievement of no small order.

If the appointment of Saturninus proved a mistake, the Emperor's judgement, and his warm regard for the troops, were alike vindicated by the quick suppression of Saturninus' revolt by Maximus and the legions of Germania Inferior. The loyalty of the armies to the Flavian dynasty proved as firm as the allegiance they once gave to the Iulio-Claudians.

Two defeats were suffered at the hands of Marcomanni, Quadi, and Iazyges. The peace treaty with Dacia allowed a daring reprisal, while extensive diplomacy sowed discord among the Sarmatic tribes and frustrated any designs for a Suebic coalition. A lengthy peaceful interlude was also achieved on the upper Danube by this activity. Pannonia remained quiet throughout Trajan's campaigns in Dacia, a commitment which invited incursions along the upper Danube. Indeed, these three tribes remained quiescent until the reign
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 of Marcus Aurelius. It is ironic that this Emperor, who

³⁰⁶A brief military history of the exposed Dacian frontiers from 117 to 167 A.D. may be found in L. Balla, "To the Questions of the Military History of Dacia in the Second Century", ACD, 1 (1965) 39-48.

was beloved by his contemporaries, coped with disasters closely paralleling those of Domitian's reign, and achieved a similar result. If Marcus Aurelius' senatorial contemporaries appreciated his efforts on behalf of the Empire, then Domitian by his efforts certainly deserved a more generous verdict than that which Tacitus has accorded him.

Careful study thus proves that Tacitus' very derogatory remarks about Domitian and his subordinates in chapter 41 of the Agricola constitute premeditated libel. Malice and innuendo are deliberately employed to satisfy the rhetorical structure of the encomium, and the emotional needs of the author and his senatorial audience.

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Chapter 42

This chapter records the details of one historical incident, Agricola's withdrawal from candidacy for the proconsulship of Asia or Africa. In recent years, Tacitus' account of this episode has generated more controversy than any other single passage in this already overtaxed work. It has been variously dismissed as a malicious fabrication,

³⁰⁷With minor changes, this chapter subsection is forthcoming in RhM under the title "Tacitus, Domitian and the Proconsulship of Agricola".

³⁰⁸Most recently by I. Forni, De Vita Iulii Agricolae, 31-32; T.A. Dorey, "'Agricola' and 'Germania'", Tacitus, ed. T.A. Dorey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969) 6-7; and R. Urban, Domitianbild, 60-64.

and defended for its historical accuracy.³⁰⁹ Critics and defenders alike have expended a great deal of unnecessary effort. The latter have either accepted Tacitus' account even while conceding the palpable distortions upon which it rests,³¹⁰ or have gone to the extreme of defending the entire passage.³¹¹ The former in turn have felt compelled to offer alternatives to Tacitus' sinister presentation. Fanciful conclusions have resulted. H.W. Traub argued that Agricola's refusal of a proconsulate was neither unusual nor unprecedented,³¹² and that he did not even request the salarium. Von Fritz properly disputed this suggestion.³¹³ T.A. Dorey went so far as to argue that Agricola had to be persuaded to decline the proconsulship because of ill-health, and that Domitian was thus acting in Agricola's best interest.³¹⁴ As evidence he could cite only that three years later Agricola was dead! In fact, Tacitus' use of innuendo has obscured

³⁰⁹K. Von Fritz, "Tacitus, Agricola, Domitian and the Problem of the Principate", CPh, 52 (1957) 73-77; E.R. Schwinge, "Festinata Mors, zum Ende des Taciteischen Agricola", RhM, 106 (1963) 368-369; Ogilvie-Richmond, De Vita Agricolae, 18, 284, 294.

³¹⁰As R. Syme, Tacitus, 24, 67 n. 6.

³¹¹K. Von Fritz, CPh, 52 (1957) 73-77; Ogilvie-Richmond, De Vita Agricolae, 18, 284, 294.

³¹²H.W. Traub, "Agricola's Refusal of a Governorship", CPh, 49 (1954) 255-257.

³¹³K. Von Fritz, CPh, 52 (1957) 73-77.

³¹⁴T.A. Dorey, G&R, s.s. 7 (1960) 66-71; restated in Tacitus, 6-7.

what must have been a frequent and straightforward procedure.

Tacitus outlines the sequence of events as follows: during the year of Agricola's eligibility, individuals in the Emperor's confidence came to him and urged him to decline the proconsulship. Persuaded by their exhortations and threats, and with the murder of Cerialis as an example, Agricola allowed himself to be brought before Domitian, who granted his request to withdraw his candidacy. Domitian did not, however, offer the stipend normally granted to a proconsul-elect who had to decline his appointment. The sacrifice of a proconsulship thus deflected the Emperor's anger and hatred.

A cursory examination of the text will reveal the pervasiveness of the non-factual element in this passage:

Aderat iam annus, quo proconsulatum Africae et Asiae sortiretur, et occiso Civica nuper nec Agricolae consilium deerat nec Domitiano exemplum. accessere quidam cogitationum principis periti, qui iturusne esset in provinciam ultro Agricolam interrogarent. ac primo occultius quietem et otium laudare, mox operam suam in adprobanda excusatione offerre, postremo non iam obscuri suadentes simul terrentesque pertrahere ad Domitianum. qui paratus simulatione, in adrogantiam compositus, et audiit preces excusantis et, cum adnuisset, agi sibi gratias passus est, nec erubuit beneficii invidia. salarium tamen proconsulare solitum offerri et quibusdam a se ipso concessum Agricolae non dedit, sive offensus non petitum, sive ex conscientia, ne quod vetuerat videretur emissee. proprium humani ingenii est odisse quem laeseris: Domitiani vero natura praeceptum in iram, et quo obscurior, eo inrevocabilior, moderatione tamen prudentiaque Agricolae leniebatur, quia non contumacia neque inani iactatione libertatis famam fatumque provocabat.

Urban has ably demonstrated some of the contra-

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 dictions in this account. It might be added that the power of the narrative once again comes precisely from its weakest elements: the enigmatic reference to Civica Cerialis, the vague quidam, and particularly the menacing and hypocritical attitude arbitrarily ascribed to Domitian by a writer who personally witnessed none of the events described. 316
 The tone of the passage is certainly ominous, and the incautious reader will be properly horrified. The perceptive reader, however, will note that once again Tacitus is relying upon telepathic insight. Since Tacitus cannot have known that a base motive lay behind Domitian's conduct, this element of the episode must be regarded as a fiction, without substance and without value.

With the innuendo stripped away, then, the episode appears in a very different light. The year had arrived in which Agricola would be eligible for the sortitio for Africa or Asia. He was questioned as to his intentions. Choosing not to be a candidate, he appeared before Domitian, and formally requested the withdrawal of his name from consideration. 317
 The request was granted.

315 R. Urban, Domitianbild, 61.

316 Tacitus was abroad, probably holding either a legionary legateship or a praetorian governorship: Agr. 45. Cf. R. Syme, Tacitus, 68; R. Hanslik, "Die Ämterlaufbahn des Tacitus im Lichte der Ämterlaufbahn seiner Zeitgenossen", AAWW, 102 (1965) 49; Ogilvie-Richmond, De Vita Agricolae, 9.

317 The episode occurs after the death of Civica Cerialis while proconsul of Asia in 87/88. Not in 89—

Two points may further clarify the account. First, it is evident from Dio Cassius (lxxix.22.5) that the salarium was granted not to candidates for a proconsulship, but to proconsuls-elect who for one reason or another had to refuse their appointment. Agricola, however, never received a senatorial proconsulship. Quo proconsulatum Africae et Asiae sortiretur makes it very clear that he was eligible for one of the two proconsulships, but that he had withdrawn his candidacy before the sortitio actually took place. As a result, he was not offered the salarium, and did not request it, because he was not entitled to it.

Second, this passage is liable to misinterpretation only if it is assumed that the sortitio was genuinely random. The evidence, however, fragmentary as it is, supports Mommsen's contention that the candidates were carefully
³¹⁸screened. The Emperor seems to have drawn up a list of candidates, perhaps containing the names of six to ten
³¹⁹consulars, ³²⁰in order of seniority. The laws on marriage

Domitian was absent from Rome after January 12. As Agricola was consul in 77, presumably in 90 for the proconsulship of 90/91. P. Calvisius Ruso Iulius Frontinus, consul in 79, proconsul in 92/93, compares.

³¹⁸Th. Mommsen, Röm. Staatsr., 2.1 (3rd ed., rep. Basel: B. Schwabe & Co., 1952) 253.

³¹⁹Th. Mommsen, Röm. Staatsr., 2.1, 253.

³²⁰Tac. Ann. 111.71: "ita sors Asiae in eum, qui consularium Maluginensi proximus erat, conlata"; Dio Cass. lxxix.22: "τῷ Φαύστῳ τὴν Ἀσίαν, καί περ παροφθέντι τὴν τοῦ Κλήρου τῆς ἐπὶ τοῦ Σεουήρου, ἐνέλείπεται."

and children accelerated a consular's eligibility for the
³²¹sortitio; they also influenced the allotment among the
³²²successful candidates. An impartial sortitio thus definitely
appears not to have been employed in the election of the two
proconsuls, and was not consistently employed in the
³²³distribution of their provinces.

As it was the Emperor's responsibility to draw up a
list of candidates, it is obvious that Agricola, like all
other potential candidates, would have to be queried as to
his availability. Discussion of the episode could end on
this note: Agricola was approached, and declined to be a
candidate. However, to dispel Tacitus' innuendo, it is
important at least to try and determine Domitian's criteria
for the selection of candidates.

Apart from seniority and ineligibility due to
³²⁴previous tenure of a senatorial proconsulship, the list
of proconsuls for the years 85/86-96/97 reveals a pattern
that suggests a further restriction on the part of Domitian.

³²¹Tac. Ann. xv.19; M. Cornelius Fronto, Epistulae,
ed. M.P.J. Van Den Hout (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954) 161. The
rapid proconsulship of C. Asinius Gallus, who had five
children, is the best example (cos. 8 B.C., procos. of Asia
6/5 B.C.); PIR² A 1229.

³²²Tac. Ann. xv.19; Fronto Ep. 161.

³²³For the latter, see Tac. Ann. iii.32, 58, 71;
Dio Cass. lxxix.22; and the evidence presented below for the
proconsulships of virī militares under Hadrian.

³²⁴There are no examples of a man holding an iterated
senatorial proconsulship.

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Sixteen proconsuls are known; only two can be classified as viri militares: Sex. Iulius Frontinus (Asia, 86/87), formerly governor of Britain and possibly of Germania Inferior,³²⁶ and L. Funisulanus Vettonianus (Africa, 91/92), formerly governor of Dalmatia, Moesia Superior, and Pannonia.³²⁷ Tacitus of course would assert that Domitian was motivated by fear and hatred in excluding viri militares. This is easily dispelled. Vettonianus received the proconsulship of Africa at least two years after the execution of Civica Cerialis in Asia; the latter's execution thus did not alter imperial policy.³²⁸ Furthermore, as the two provinces did not contain troops, their governors could not possibly represent a threat to the Emperor. Equally, however, the striking absence of viri militares is not fortuitous. During the reign of Hadrian, for example, six of the twelve known proconsuls of Africa were viri militares,³²⁹ a

³²⁵W. Eck, Senatoren, 234, 236, is the most recent and authoritative listing.

³²⁶Asia: G. Monaco, "Sull'iscrizione della porta onoraria nord di Hierapolis di Frigia", ASAA, 25-26 (1963/64) 409-410. Germania Inferior: cf. p. 85 n. 211. Britain: Agr. 17.

³²⁷Africa: AE 1946, 205. Pannonia, Moesia Superior, and Dalmatia: ILS 1005; CIL XVI.30, 31.

³²⁸D. Magie, Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third Century after Christ (Princeton: the University Press, 1950) 578, suggested that he was executed for complicity in the rebellion of Antonius Saturninus. It is now clear, however, that if he was executed for taking part in a conspiracy, it was that of 87 rather than that of 89; cf. W. Eck, Senatoren, 138, and pp. 298-300 below.

³²⁹L. Minicius Natalis (cos. 106, governor of

percentage which suggests that they were allowed to compete for the proconsulships, and if successful, assigned to
³³⁰
 Africa.

It may be suggested, then, that it was Domitian's policy to reserve the proconsulships of Asia and Africa for those senators pursuing a civil rather than a military career, a class which considered these proconsulships the apex of the senatorial career. As for the two exceptions, Vettonianus perhaps qualified more because of age and past
³³¹
 impediments in his career than for his three consular legateships and services against the Dacians, Frontinus because of outstanding service to the Flavian dynasty in
³³²
 three military theatres.

An iterated consulship would normally be an appro-

Pannonia Superior, procos. 121/122); M. Atilius Metilius Bradua (cos. 108, Britain and Germania Inferior, procos. 122/123); L. Catilius Severus Iulianus Claudius Reginus (cos. 110, Cappadocia-Armenia and Syria, procos. 124/125); C. Ummidius Quadratus (cos. 118, Moesia Inferior, procos. 133/134); C. Bruttius Praesens (cos. anno incerto, Cappadocia and Moesia Inferior, procos. 134/135); L. Vitrasius Flamininus (cos. 122, Moesia Superior, procos. 137/138).

³³⁰In contrast, only one of the sixteen proconsuls of Asia was a vir militaris: Q. Pompeius Falco (cos. 108, Moesia Inferior and Britain, procos. 123/124).

³³¹He was legatus legionis of IV Scythica during Paetus' disastrous campaign of 62 A.D. (Ann. xv.7), and subsequently ignored by Nero.

³³²Against the Lingones in 70 (Str. iv.3.14); in Britain against the Silures in 74-77 (Agr. 17); and in Germany against the Chatti in 83-84 (Str. i.1.8; 3.10; ii.3.23; 11.7).

priate alternative for outstanding viri militares. A. Lappius Maximus, who suppressed the revolt of Antonius Saturninus, provides an example. ³³³ There was, however, severe competition for the consulship during the last years of Domitian's reign because the Emperor chose to limit the ³³⁴ fasti to two pairs of suffect consuls.

The restriction on iterated consulships, and on the senatorial proconsulships, meant that many eminent viri militares would have to forego further honors. Agricola is not even the most prominent example; that honor belongs to L. Tettius Iulianus, who defeated the Dacians in 88. There are ³³⁵ other examples.

Agricola, then, may well have been urged by Domitian's agents to renounce formally his candidacy for a senatorial proconsulship. Tacitus' sinister account of the episode, however, appears to be unfounded. If Domitian had an ulterior motive, it was not fear or jealousy, but a policy

³³³Cos. I suff. in 86, cos. II suff. in 95. He would, at any rate, have been ineligible for a proconsulship until 101. Tib. Iulius Candidus Marius Celsus, also cos. suff. in 86, was procos. of Asia in 101/102.

³³⁴From 91 to 96 A.D. That Maximus' iterated consulship was as a suffectus attests the pressure.

³³⁵P. Valerius Patruinus was governor of Syria in 88 (CIL XVI.35) when the appearance of a new "false Nero" threatened war with Parthia (Suet. Nero 57). He may have induced the Parthians to surrender the pretender. No further honors, however, are known. Similarly, M. Cornelius Nigrinus Curiatius Maternus, whose career has been fully elucidated by G. Alföldy and H. Halfmann, Chiron, 3 (1973) 331-373.

which reserved these proconsulships for senators pursuing the civil career.

The Epilogue

Chapter 42 concludes the account of Agricola's life. The following four chapters comprise the epilogue, with chapter 43 describing the death of Agricola, and chapters 44-46 presenting the consolatio. These four chapters differ from the main body of the narrative in style as well as content. Tacitus' debt to Cicero, and particularly to the de Oratore, is evident.³³⁶ The traditional content of the epilogue is, however, closely linked to the chapters immediately preceding by a continuing strand of malice and innuendo designed to blacken further Domitian's reputation.

Addressing himself to the death of Agricola, Tacitus concentrates his attention on two themes, Domitian's reaction to Agricola's death, and the rumor circulating through the city that Agricola was poisoned by the Emperor's agents. Although Tacitus is careful to remain aloof from the rumor, the consistent pattern of hatred, jealousy, and fear ascribed to Domitian in chapters 39-42 renders it plausible. This, of course, was the result Tacitus intended. The rumor was pitched in the now customary form:

augebat miserationem constans rumor veneno interceptum:
nobis nihil comperti adfirmare ausim (43.2).

³³⁶C.W. Mendell, "Literary Reminiscences in the Agricola", TAPA, 52 (1921) 61.

Everyone in the city, Tacitus says, sought news of Agricola's progress during his last illness:

vulgus quoque et hic aliud agens populus et ventitavere ad domum et per fora et circulos locuti sunt . . . (43.1).

Domitian was as concerned as anyone else. Tacitus reveals his concern, but neatly turns it against him by implying that the tyrant only sought news of Agricola's death, not of his recovery. This passage follows immediately upon the rumor presented above:

ceterum per omnem valetudinem eius crebrius quam ex more principatus per nuntios visentis et libertorum primi et medicorum intimi venere, sive cura illud sive inquisitio erat (43.2).

If Domitian had remained aloof, doubtless his conduct would have been treated in the same sinister manner that Tacitus used to describe Tiberius' attitude during the funeral of Germanicus.
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Tacitus continues in the same vein in the next sentence:

supremo quidem die momenta ipsa deficientis per dispositos cursores nuntiata constabat, nullo credente sic accelerari quae tristis audiret. speciem tamen doloris animo vultuque prae se tulit, securus iam odii et qui facilius dissimularet gaudium quam metum (43.3).

Fortunately, while this tissue of innuendo obscures the Emperor's reactions, it does not completely conceal them. Domitian was solicitous of Agricola's health to the extent that he dispatched his personal physicians to his bedside, and asked to be kept constantly informed of his progress.

³³⁷ Ann. iii.3. Cf. R. Urban, Domitianbild, 66.

Tacitus is correct when he describes this as cura. Again, Domitian heard the news of Agricola's death with sorrow (dolor), and seems to have felt genuinely honored when he learned that Agricola had named him one of the heirs to his estate. Tacitus is quick to add, however, that this was not a signal of friendship between the two men, but an effort to preserve at least a part of the estate from confiscation by the tyrant:

tam caeca et corrupta mens adsiduīs adulationibus erat, ut nesciret a bono patre non scribi heredem nisi malum principem (43.4).

Of all the accusations Tacitus levels against Domitian, this is historically the most plausible. Agricola died in 93; Suetonius explicitly states that by this date Domitian was resorting to confiscation in order to replenish the fiscus.³³⁸ Laetatum eum velut honore iudicioque is, however, a strong hint from Tacitus himself that Domitian had no designs on Agricola's estate. Such an act would also have been manifestly inconsistent with his behavior during Agricola's last illness. Pointedly, Tacitus does not state that Domitian accepted the bequest.

The rhetorical element so pervades the consolatio that it is futile to attempt historical arguments on the basis of its pronouncements. Two passages in chapter 44 could be used to dispose of the charge that Domitian

³³⁸ Dom. 12.1, which is to be preferred over 9.2, cited by R.S. Rogers, "The Roman Emperors as Heirs and Legatees", TAPA, 78 (1947) 151.

frustrated Agricola's career: et consulari ac triumphalibus ornamentis praedito quid aliud adstruere fortuna poterat (44.3); filia atque uxore superstitibus potest videri etiam beatus incolumi dignitate, florente fama (44.4). This would, however, be improper method; death at the height of fortune ³³⁹ was a conventional expression of solace.

The continued attacks on Domitian must be similarly treated. Tacitus says that by a premature death, Agricola avoided the worst excesses of Domitian's reign:

ita festinatae mortis grave solacium tulit evasisse postremum illud tempus, quo Domitianus non iam per intervalla ac spiramenta temporum, sed continuo et velut uno ictu rem publicam exhausit (44.5).

This is a corollary to the previous condolence, and equally ³⁴⁰ conventional. The deceased died at the height of his fortune; he avoided the misfortunes and calamities which descended upon those who survived him.

Chapter 45 opens with another vague rhetorical attack, inspired by remarks of Cicero on the death of the orator Crassus:

Non vidit Agricola obsessam curiam et clausum armis senatum et eadem strage tot consularium caedes, tot nobilissimarum feminarum exilia et fugas (45.1).³⁴¹

³³⁹Cic. Tusc. 1.109; Sen. Cons. ad Marc. xx.4-6; Plut. Cons. ad Apoll. 111 A-F.

³⁴⁰Cic. De Or. 111.8; Sen. Cons. ad Marc. xx.4-6.

³⁴¹Cic. De Or. 111.8: "Non vidit flagrantem bello Italiam, non ardentem invidia senatum, non sceleris nefarii principes civitatis reos, non luctum filiae, non exsilium generi, non acerbissimam C. Mari fugam, non illam post reditum

It is the following passage, in which Tacitus passes from the general to the specific, that is of vital significance:

una adhuc victoria Carus Mettius censebatur, et intra Albanam arcem sententia Messalini strepebat, et Massa Baebius etiam tum reus erat (45.1).

Tacitus is attempting to describe the reign of Domitian in the most lurid terms possible, yet at the same time conform to the theme of the consolatio, that Agricola has by a timely death avoided the tyrant's worst crimes. Although this passage must be approached with caution because of the conventional nature of the consolatio, still it may provide an indication of the course of delation during Domitian's reign.

Three men are named in this connection: Mettius Carus, L. Valerius Catullus Messalinus, and Baebius Massa. The three were notorious delators. It is instructive for the history of Domitian's relations with the Senate to realize that at the time of Agricola's death in 93, Carus³⁴² had claimed only one victim, Messalinus and Massa, by Tacitus' own admission, none. Four and one-half years after³⁴³ the revolt of Saturninus, this occasions surprise. The

eius caedem omnium crudelissimam, non denique in omni genere deformatam eam civitatem in qua ipse florentissima multum omnibus praestitisset." The consulares and feminae of Agr. 45.1 are undoubtedly the Stoics, who were crushed after Agricola's death.

³⁴²Possibly the vestal Cornelia, of whom Pliny makes so much: Ep. iv.11. Cf. pp. 224-230 below.

³⁴³Cf. p. 297 n. 75 below for further discussion.

next passage lists four members of the Stoic party claimed by delation shortly after Agricola's death:

mox nostrae duxere Helvidium in carcerem manus; nos Maurici Rusticique visus <adflixit,> nos innocenti sanguine Senecio perfudit (45.1).

This continues the theme of delation introduced in the first sentence of the chapter, and echoes chapter 2, where the execution of the Stoics receives pride of place in the enumeration of Domitian's crimes. Alternative explanations are in order. This passage may indicate that the only occasion on which Domitian really unleashed the delators was the suppression of the Stoic opposition. Tacitus and Pliny are both pointedly silent about the executions of Flavius Sabinus, Civica Cerialis, Sallustius Lucullus, Salvidienus Orfitus, Salvius Otho Cocceianus, and Mettius Pompusianus. Chapter 45 seems to indicate that they were not victims of delation; are Tacitus and Pliny silent because their executions were justified? It is a thought, but it cannot be offered as more than a hazardous suggestion.³⁴⁴

The alternative is more plausible. It has already been suggested that Tacitus' own political career provides an explanation for the overtures to the Stoics lodged in the Agricola.³⁴⁵ Rome must have been an uncomfortable place for the former protégés of Domitian in the winter of 97/98 A.D.

³⁴⁴See the detailed discussion on pp. 298-307 below for an analysis of the reasons for the execution of these six senators.

³⁴⁵See pp. 18-19 above.

The exiled Stoics were returning, anxious for revenge. It might be politic for Tacitus to open and close the encomium of his father-in-law with the appropriate expressions of horror and remorse. This is a ready explanation for the construction of chapter 45; it has been suggested as the motive behind the Agricola as a whole. The controversial question of Tacitus' motive must now be investigated.

The Purpose of the Agricola

Many explanations have been tendered by modern scholars in an attempt to discern the purpose of the Agricola. It has been viewed as a political pamphlet, designed solely to whitewash the complicity of Agricola and Tacitus in the tyranny of Domitian (Furneaux, Paratore, Syme).³⁴⁶ It has also been characterized as a philosophical tract, ennobling the ideal of service to the res publica, whatever the character of the particular Emperor occupying the throne (Anderson, Ogilvie-Richmond, Earl).³⁴⁷ In an even more philosophic vein, it has been interpreted as a biting social commentary, with the suppression of libertas and its consequences the theme uniting the whole (Liebeschuetz).³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶Furneaux-Anderson, De Vita Agricolae, xxix; E. Paratore, Tacito, 36-41; R. Syme, Ten Studies in Tacitus (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1970) 3.

³⁴⁷Furneaux-Anderson, De Vita Agricolae, xxxi; Ogilvie-Richmond, De Vita Agricolae, 17; D.C. Earl, Moral and Political Tradition, 23.

³⁴⁸W. Liebeschuetz, "The Theme of Liberty in the Agricola of Tacitus", CQ, n.s. 16 (1966) 138.

Passages may be cited to support all of these views; this illustrates the complexity of the Agricola, and of the mind of its author.

Two factors have influenced the character of the Agricola, and any explanation of its purpose must consider the impact which each has made upon the work. First, the dual nature of the work: it is a combination of encomium and history. Second, the background of the author: Tacitus was a politician steeped in two traditions, the senatorial and the rhetorical. Something has already been said about the dual nature of the work, and the contradictions and tensions which it has introduced into the text.³⁴⁹ Here the focus will be upon the contribution of the twin traditions to Tacitus' point of view.

The interpretation of Liebeschuetz, who views "the consequences of the loss of liberty" as the unifying theme of the Agricola,³⁵⁰ exemplifies the kind of mistaken notion that can arise if the impact of the two traditions is not taken into account. Liebeschuetz's thesis is weakened fatally because the references to libertas upon which it rests are to be found in the most heavily rhetorical passages of the Agricola: the prologue, the epilogue, the excursus on Britain, and the two British speeches in chapters 15 and 30-

³⁴⁹See especially p. 68 above.

³⁵⁰W. Liebeschuetz, CQ, n.s. 16 (1966) 138.

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 32. The rhetorical content of the prologue and epilogue
 have already been discussed;³⁵² the British speeches were
 textbook exercises,³⁵³ a point Liebeschuetz himself saw.³⁵⁴
 These passages will simply not support the thesis he builds
 upon them.

In contrast, Tacitus seems sincerely to have believed
 in the ideal of service. The emotional climax to the
 narrative proper in the last sentence of chapter 42 reveals
 how deeply he had absorbed the senatorial tradition of
 service to the res publica. It is evident from Agricola
 42.4 that Tacitus regarded the Stoic tactics of obstruction-
 ism, and their failure to serve the State even when it was
 ruled by an Emperor whom they considered a tyrant, as an
 abdication of duty. His attitude to the res publica is
 consonant with that of Cato the Censor and Scipio Africanus,
 the idealized heroes of what must have seemed not only an
 older but also a purer society. Tacitus believed that
 Agricola possessed their virtus, and that even under a tyrant
 like Domitian he also possessed an arena in which to display

351W. Liebeschuetz, CQ, n.s. 16 (1966) 132-136.

352See pp. 14-35 and 117-123 above.

353See the comparative analysis of Ogilvie-Richmond,
De Vita Agricolae, 194, 253-254.

354CQ, n.s. 16 (1966) 138: "there was in use at Rome
 a traditional stock of arguments that might be used to
 attack empires in general and that of Rome in particular."

it, if only he observed obsequium and modestia.³⁵⁵ This sentence thus balances the pessimism of the prologue, and emphasizes the rhetorical nature of its contrast between past and present, summed up in the phrase tam saeva et infesta virtutibus tempora. Tacitus' unease over the relationship between Senate and Princeps may be genuine, but Agricola 42.4 shows clearly that he still believed it possible for a bonus to exercise virtus. Nor was his belief haphazard; it reflects the force of senatorial tradition at work upon his personality.

The ideal of service to the res publica, however, does not explain why there is not one passage in the Agricola concerning Domitian, or Agricola's relations with Domitian, that is free from malicious distortion. This, and Tacitus' obvious sensitivity about Agricola's service to Domitian, suggest a less noble kind of senatorial influence at work—political pressure.

The Senate as a body invoked damnatio memoriae against Domitian. Its attitude would be expected to conform with that of the new Emperor. Nerva clearly expressed his opinion of his predecessor on his coinage, a traditional medium for the dissemination of imperial propaganda.

Libertas Publica and Salus Publica are the slogans of the

³⁵⁵The components of Agricola's virtus are the subject of a study by M. Streng, Agricola, Das Vorbild römischer Statthalterschaft nach dem Urteil des Tacitus (Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1970).

new regime.³⁵⁶ The Senatorial issues went even further:
Roma Renascens; Providentia Senatus.³⁵⁷ It may therefore be
 stated flatly that the prevailing attitude of the Emperor
 and the Senate alike compelled distortion in any historical
 treatment of Domitian. This certainly accounts in the first
 instance for Tacitus' distorted account, for apart from the
 issue of his sincerity, as Bessie Walker has put it, "it is
 certain that Tacitus wrote of Domitian as he felt he must."³⁵⁸

This dictum would apply with particular force to a
 senator of Tacitus' political background. It was his mis-
 fortune not only to owe his career to Domitian, but to be
 the son-in-law and political protégé of a man with a history
 of long and enthusiastic service to the Flavian dynasty.
 Agricola, who had advanced through the lower offices of the
cursus honorum during the stormy final years of Nero's reign,
 made a calculated decision to support Vespasian during the
 Civil War despite the fact that the latter was in some sense
 the avenger of Otho, whose troops had murdered Agricola's
 mother.³⁵⁹ His reward was the command of Britain's twentieth
 legion, followed by the governorship of Aquitania, the
 consulship, and the prestigious consular legateship of

³⁵⁶RIC II, 223.

³⁵⁷RIC II, 227, 229. For the coinage of Nerva see
 also BMC, 1-30.

³⁵⁸The Annals of Tacitus, 5.

³⁵⁹Agr. 7; cf. E. Paratore, Tacito, 37.

Britain, upon which he entered at the youthful age of 38! The record speaks for itself—rapid promotions, service to all three Flavian dynasts in turn.

Tacitus also served the three Flavians, and does not deny that his political career stemmed entirely from their favor.³⁶⁰

Without entering upon the vexed question of Tacitus' family origins,³⁶¹ which, if he was a novus homo, would make both his marriage to a consular's daughter and his political career the more remarkable, a glance at his cursus honorum will reveal the degree of his debt to

Domitian.³⁶² Tacitus began his senatorial career when Vespasian gave him the rank of an eques senatoria dignitate.³⁶³

A post in the vigintivirate and a laticlave military tribunate followed, also from Vespasian.³⁶⁴ Tacitus' political and oratorical ability must have impressed the managers of political patronage even at this early stage.

³⁶⁰Hist. i.1.3: "mihi Galba Otho Vitellius nec beneficio nec iniuria cogniti. dignitatem nostram a Vespasiano inchoatam, a Tito auctam, a Domitiano longius provectam non abnuerim."

³⁶¹R. Syme, Tacitus, 63, and C.W. Mendell, Tacitus: the Man and His Work (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957) 3, both believe that he was probably the son of the like-named Procurator of Gallia Belgica attested by Pliny HN vii.76.

³⁶²The most detailed discussions of Tacitus' career, which are followed here, are those of P. Fabia, "La Carrière de Tacite", JS (1926) 193-208; R. Syme, Tacitus, 59-74; and R. Hanslik, AAWW, 102 (1965) 47-60.

³⁶³P. Fabia, JS (1926) 201; R. Hanslik, AAWW, 102 (1965) 48.

³⁶⁴R. Syme, Tacitus, 64.

The use of a instead of sub before the names of Vespasian, Titus and Domitian in Historiae i.1 presumably means that Tacitus steadily advanced as a candidatus Augusti in those offices which did not depend wholly upon imperial ³⁶⁵commendatio.

Tacitus owed some office to Titus, presumably the quaestorship. He may well have been designated quaestor by Titus in 81, and served under Domitian in 82. ³⁶⁶ Tribune of the plebs or aedile around 84, ³⁶⁷ he was praetor in 88, the year of Domitian's Ludi Saeculares. ³⁶⁸ He was already perhaps in possession of a priesthood, being a quindecimvir sacris faciundis. This was one of the four most esteemed sacerdotal colleges, and it was an extraordinary honor for a novus homo ³⁶⁹ to hold such a dignity before the consulate. Tacitus' eminent colleagues included the poet Valerius Flaccus, and ³⁷⁰ Fabricius Veiento, three times consul. No clearer indication exists of the high favor which Tacitus enjoyed ³⁷¹ with the Emperor.

³⁶⁵P. Fabia, JS (1926) 196.

³⁶⁶P. Fabia, JS (1926) 201.

³⁶⁷P. Fabia, JS (1926) 201; R. Syme, Tacitus, 65; R. Hanslik, AAWW, 102 (1965) 49.

³⁶⁸Ann. xi.11.1.

³⁶⁹R. Hanslik, AAWW, 102 (1965) 49; R. Syme, Ten Studies, 15.

³⁷⁰R. Syme, Tacitus, 664; Ogilvie-Richmond, De Vita Agricolae, 9.

³⁷¹R. Syme, Tacitus, 66.

Tacitus argues that it was in this very period that Agricola's career was prematurely closed because of the Emperor's jealousy and hatred. Tacitus' own career, however, belies the impression of Agricola's disgrace. Tacitus might have received his priesthood as the result of a petition by Agricola;³⁷² certainly Tacitus' progress through the cursus honorum continued unimpeded. He was absent from Rome for four years after his praetorship, not returning until after the death of Agricola in August, 93.³⁷³ A legionary command, followed by the governorship of a lesser praetorian province,³⁷⁴ may be conjectured. On Tacitus' return to Rome, he would expect promotion to the consulship. In 94-96 Domitian kept the lists at the minimum, however, only three pairs of consuls per year. Tacitus would have to wait his turn. Another post, perhaps in Italy, may have intervened;³⁷⁵ the consulship came in 97. That Agricola and Tacitus both enjoyed high favor with Domitian is thus manifest. If, given the attitude of Senate and Princeps, a historian of Tacitus' political background had treated Domitian

³⁷²E. Paratore, Tacito, 48. Cf. the petitions by Verginius Rufus and Iulius Frontinus for a priesthood for Pliny: Ep. ii.1.8; iv.8.3.

³⁷³Agr. 45.5.

³⁷⁴R. Syme, Tacitus, 68. Cf. pp. 219-220 below for a more detailed discussion.

³⁷⁵The interval separating praetorian governorship and consulship suggests that Tacitus was not marked out for the career of a vir militaris.

impartially, it would have constituted political suicide. Tacitus' loyalty to historical truth was not that compelling.

Thus while the Agricola does constitute a defence of the ideal of service to the res publica, it is pre-eminently an apologia for what many must have censured as a too enthusiastic service. To dispute this view is to divorce the Agricola from its political context. It must always be remembered that it was composed in a period of political upheaval for the former adherents of Domitian's regime.³⁷⁶ Tacitus had the fate of his coeval, Publicius Certus,³⁷⁷ deprived of his consulship, as an example. The powerful Aquillius Regulus feared prosecution by Pliny. The latter has undoubtedly exaggerated Regulus' trepidation, but the basic outline is true.³⁷⁸ Trajan dealt harshly with the minions of Domitian;³⁷⁹ nor did the Senate misuse its opportunities for revenge. The extraordinary judicial procedure invoked at the trial of Norbanus Licinianus, whom Pliny expressly charges with profiting from Domitian's regime,³⁸⁰ shows that the passage of time had not alleviated that body's bitterness toward the supporters of the former tyrant.

³⁷⁶Cf. R. Urban, Domitianbild, 71.

³⁷⁷Pliny Ep. ix.13.23.

³⁷⁸Pliny Ep. i.5.

³⁷⁹Pliny Pan. 34-35.

³⁸⁰Pliny Ep. iii.9.29-34.

It was Paratore who correctly gauged the nature of the Agricola. It is a special type of biography, found only during the Empire, a biography dedicated to the martyr for liberty.³⁸¹ In chapters 39-45 Tacitus tries to transform the loyal subordinate who had even named the tyrant as co-heir to his estate into a martyr sacrificed to tyranny. Did the distortion disarm Tacitus' senatorial peers? Some will have been persuaded. The execution of Agricola's father, Iulius Graecinus, would strengthen the rumor that Agricola had also been murdered. Tacitus did avoid the enmity of his fellow-Senators, and eventually reached the pinnacle of the senatorial career, serving as proconsul of Asia in the year 112/113 A.D.

³⁸¹E. Paratore, Tacito, 41.

II

TACITUS AND DOMITIAN: THE HISTORIAE

Introduction

The composition and publication of the Agricola can be dated with precision to 97/98 A.D., but the Historiae presents a problem. While Tacitus alludes to the undertaking in the prologue of the Agricola,¹ it is doubtful whether he had already commenced writing.² Recitation or publication, at any rate, will have awaited the completion of several books.³ As late as 105/106, the approximate date of the fifth book of Pliny's Epistulae,⁴ the latter in a letter to Titinius Capito (v.8) could describe the material for a proposed history of the Flavian period as intacta et nova.⁵

¹Agr. 3.3.

²R. Syme, Tacitus, 119. Agr. 3.3 suggests that the Historiae was originally designed to encompass the reigns of Domitian, Nerva, and Trajan. Subsequent to 98, Tacitus radically revised his original plan.

³R. Syme, Tacitus, 118. The publication of the Historiae in several parts has been demonstrated by F. Münzer, "Die Entstehung der Historien des Tacitus", Klio, 1 (1901) 313-330.

⁴Th. Mommsen, "Zur Lebensgeschichte des jüngeren Plinius", Ges. Schr. IV (rep. Berlin/Dublin/Zürich: Wiedmann, 1965) 382-383; R. Syme, Tacitus, 661; A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 34-35.

⁵Pliny's description is not wholly accurate. Earlier writers, notably Pliny the Elder and Iosephus, had continued

Yet in the following book, assigned to 106/107⁶—only one year later—Pliny is providing Tacitus with materials on the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 (vi.16; 20). In the interim,⁷ Tacitus had certainly announced his design. It is also possible that he went further, and released a first instalment.⁸ Nothing in this correspondence suggests that Tacitus had proceeded very far by 106. Nevertheless, there is now general agreement that the entire work was published not later than 107-110 A.D.⁹ The assumption that Tacitus could finish the Historiae in so brief a period of time is not unreasonable, however, if Tacitus had been assembling his

their narratives beyond the accession of Vespasian. The period 72-96 A.D., however, does seem to have been intacta et nova until Tacitus wrote the Historiae. See p. 144 below for further comment.

⁶Th. Mommsen, Ges. Schr. IV, 384-385; R. Syme, Tacitus, 661; A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 36.

⁷J. Heurgon, "Pline le Jeune tenté par l'histoire", Mélanges Marcel Durry (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1970) 345-354, and R. Syme, Tacitus, 117, both argue that Pliny eschewed history because he was aware of Tacitus' undertaking. Contra, A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 335: "he has not yet heard of or received any volume of the Histories of Tacitus, or been approached by him . . ."

⁸R. Syme, Tacitus, 118-119: "Books I and II may have been published at the same time."

⁹S. Borszák, "P. Cornelius Tacitus", RE, supp. 11 (1968) 445: "So waren einige Bücher der Hist. schon um 105 bekannt, und das Ganze ist um 109 erschienen"; D.R. Dudley, The World of Tacitus (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1968) 16: "The most likely date for the publication of the Histories is 107-108"; R. Syme, Tacitus, 120: "By the end of 109 Tacitus (it may well be) had completed and published the second half of his work".

materials for the eventful reign of Domitian since 98. This the prologue of the Agricola seems to imply. Certainly, despite his own misgivings,¹⁰ Pliny did not believe that Tacitus would encounter insurmountable obstacles. In 107 he furnished Tacitus with an unsolicited account of his role in the trial of Baebius Massa in 93 A.D. (vii.33),¹¹ an event which would fall late in the narrative. There is, then, no need to question the current belief that the Historiae was completed approximately a decade after the Agricola.

In the abstract, the Agricola and Historiae are as disparate in nature as in date of composition. The Agricola is an expression of pietas,¹² its subject-matter vita defuncti hominis. Tacitus is unashamedly partisan, but does apologize for issuing a work so unsuited to tempora infesta virtutibus. It is also, however, a political manifesto, proclaiming loyalty to the new order and disdain for the old. A first effort, this uneasy and contradictory fusion of encomium and history at times betrays the novice.¹³ Composed in the immediate aftermath of Domitian's assassination,

¹⁰In Ep. v.8, he remarks on the dangers of writing contemporary history: "Graves offensae levis gratia tum si laudaveris parcus, si culpaveris nimius fuisse dicaris, quamvis illud plenissime, hoc restrictissime feceris."

¹¹The approximate date of the seventh book. Cf. R. Syme, Tacitus, 661; A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 38.

¹²Agr. 3.3.

¹³Cf. p. 68 above.

when the adherents of the departed regime were exposed to considerable political pressure, it reflects the turbulence¹⁴ of the period.

The subject-matter of the Historiae, in contrast, is a period opimum casibus, atrox proeliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace saevom (i.2.1). Tacitus claims to write not as a participant, but as an impartial historian: neque amore quisquam et sine odio dicendus est (i.1.3). When he addressed himself to Domitian, Tacitus was writing some ten years after his assassination. He was no longer politically suspect; he had had time to pause and reflect, to acquire a perspective on the Flavian era. Thus it is arguable that to turn from the Agricola to the Historiae is to turn from a hastily composed encomium to a reasoned and mature work of history.

Careful analysis, however, proves the inference false. Despite the fragmentary state of the Historiae, its few extant references to Domitian prove that the passage of time and the adoption of a new format had not softened Tacitus' caustic and self-serving opinion of the last Flavian dynast. The Historiae thus does not offer a new perspective. To the contrary, the chapters devoted to Domitian display the same malicious bias that is to be found

¹⁴Especially Agr. 42.4, Tacitus' most reasoned defence of co-operation with the fallen tyrant.

in the Agricola. It is not the reiterated condemnation of Domitian, therefore, but Tacitus' continuing lack of objectivity towards Domitian that compels the Historiae to be judged harshly, in this respect more a work of propaganda than of history.

A more dispassionate treatment might of course still have been precluded by political considerations. It is doubtful whether Trajan would have permitted the dissemination of a favorable historical judgement when it was so politically expedient to cast Domitian as a tyrant,¹⁵ while the damnatio memoriae still represented the official attitude of the Senate. Thus the Historiae may be viewed both as a product of the continuing transformation of Domitian into the archetype of a tyrant, and as evidence of the extent to which, during the decade after his death, that transformation had progressed. The Historiae itself further¹⁶ accelerated the reduction of Domitian's reign into a topos.

¹⁵K.H. Waters, Antichthon, 4 (1970) 62-77, has remarked in another context upon the totalitarian character of Trajan's regime. The portrayal of Domitian as a tyrant allowed Trajan to accentuate the benevolence of his own rule. Behind the façade, however, Trajan pursued a course as autocratic as Domitian's. His interference in the provinces under senatorial jurisdiction is a notable example. In 108 he dispatched a certain Maximus to Achaëa (Pliny Ep. viii.24), followed by the consular C. Avidius Nigrinus (SIG³.827). Cf. F. Millar, "The Emperor, the Senate and the Provinces", JRS, 56 (1966) 164-165. Pliny, and later Cornutus Tertullus (ILS 1024), were dispatched to Bithynia. Cf. also the discussions of the curator rei publicae in F.F. Abbott and A.C. Johnson, Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire (Princeton: the University Press, 1926) 90-92, 200-201.

¹⁶As such, his reign became a suitable topic for the satirist Juvenal.

As a sequel to the Agricola and the Panegyricus, it consolidated Domitian's unfavorable historical reputation, detailing what the two earlier works generally had been content to refer to by allusion.

The first four books, and a portion of the fifth, are all that have survived of the Historiae. While the number of books which composed it remains uncertain,¹⁷ to judge from the extant material, Domitian's personality and behavior must have been one of the most important unifying elements. He first appears in chapter iii.59,¹⁸ a youthful

¹⁷Jerome states that the Annales and Historiae encompassed thirty books, Commentariorum in Zachariam Prophetam iii.14: "Cornelius Tacitus, qui post Augustum usque ad mortem Domitiani vitas Caesarum triginta voluminibus exaravit". The favored divisions are 16-14 or 18-12. Books i-v of the Historiae seem only to have reached the closing of the temple of Janus in 71—hence three years covered in five books. If the Historiae totalled twelve books, this would leave only seven books to cover the twenty-five years from 71 to 96 A.D. The imbalance demanded by this arrangement has led some scholars to postulate a 16-14 division, as F.G. Moore, "Annalistic Method as Related to the Book Divisions in Tacitus", TAPA, 54 (1923) 15-20. This, in turn, requires extreme compression of the events of Nero's reign subsequent to the suicide of Thrasea Paetus into what remained of Book xvi of the Annales, a criticism forcefully argued by R. Syme, Tacitus, 686-687, who favors an 18-12 division.

Syme's argument seems the more cogent. A third hexad in the Annales corresponding to i-vi (Tiberius) and vii-xii (Gaius and Claudius) has great attraction. Similarly, if Book vi of the Historiae concluded with Vespasian's death, then a second hexad is neatly devoted to his sons, Book vii to Titus, and viii-xii to Domitian, as Syme has again pointed out: Tacitus, 213. A (3+3) + (1+5) arrangement seems to do justice to the relative importance of the obvious divisions: the Civil Wars, the reign of Vespasian, the reign of Titus, and the reign of Domitian. Cf. S. Hammer, "Reflexions sur Tacite", Eos (1929) 555-557.

¹⁸Subsequently at iii.69; 74; and 86.

pawn in the game of civil war, as the reign of Vitellius approached its violent climax. He makes frequent appearances in the fourth book,¹⁹ and doubtless was a central figure in the books devoted to Vespasian and Titus as well as to his own reign. His death-scene will have concluded the Historiae, with the appropriate remarks appended on the passing of the²⁰ dynasty and the rewards of tyranny.

The nature rather than the number of his appearances is an even more important clue to the role Tacitus designed for Domitian. While his experiences in 69-70 may have been personally traumatic, they were of little immediate historical

¹⁹ Chapters iv.2; 3; 39; 40; 44; 46; 47; 51-52; 68; 80; and 85-86.

²⁰ Cf. the similarly structured character assessments of Galba (i.49), Otho (ii.50), and Vitellius (iii.86). P. Fabia, "La Préface des Histoires de Tacite", REA, 3 (1901) 47-49, has argued with some justice that Domitian's forbidding presence was the centerpiece of the entire work. It is clear from Agr. 3.3 that it had been Tacitus' original intention to contrast Domitian's tyranny with the benevolent regimes of Nerva and Trajan. Fabia argues that contemporary history proved too difficult (or too dangerous), so Tacitus inverted his design and presented the felicitous regimes of Vespasian and Titus as a contrast to the gloomy tyranny of Domitian. The account of the civil wars, he argues (inaccurately), was only a brief prelude designed to get the principal actors on stage. Tacitus therefore began with January 1, 69 instead of with the fall of Nero because this was the first point at which he could realistically introduce Vespasian. The reasons Tacitus outlines in Hist. i.1 for his choice of subject are thus a subterfuge: "Tacite essayait de motiver le choix de son sujet sans avouer que la principale raison de ce choix avait été le désir d'exercer contre Domitien les représailles de l'histoire" (p. 69). Very different reasons are suggested by F. Münzer, Klio, 1 (1901) 300-313; and O. Seeck, "Der Anfang von Tacitus Historien", RhM, 56 (1901) 227-232.

consequence. Young and inexperienced, Domitian could neither materially improve nor impede the Flavian cause. Still, this did not discourage Tacitus from casting Domitian as one of the pivotal figures in his narrative of affairs at Rome. In the fourth book, Vespasian, Titus, and Mucianus—the three personalities who actually possessed the power to sway events—react at certain crucial points to the alleged plots and misdeeds of Domitian. Vespasian's return to Rome is occasioned by reports of Domitian's misconduct (iv.51). Titus' only active appearance in this book is in defence of his younger brother (iv.52). Mucianus could not leave Domitian behind when he set out for the Rhine because Domitiani indomitae libidines timebantur (iv.68.1). Alternatively, he had to resort to elaborate arrangements in order to forestall the impetuosity of his companion, and prevent him from damaging the Flavian cause (iv.68.3). The multiple recurrence of this technique precludes coincidence; rather, it reflects deliberate design.

Tacitus' striking choice of book divisions also mirrors design. The third book closes, not as might be expected, with the death of Vitellius (iii.86.1-2), but with Domitian's emergence from hiding and enthusiastic reception by the Flavian army, which hailed him as Caesar (iii.86.3). In the last sentence of the fourth book, after a display of personal licentiousness (iv.2.1) and an unfortunate attempt to win power for himself (iv.36.1), Domitian retires from

public life (iv,96.2). The purpose of this chiasmic arrangement is evident. Domitian's appearances in the fourth book form a self-contained episode in which he displays for the first time that consuming lust for power and tendency towards authoritarian behavior which later characterized his reign. Tacitus has consciously arranged his materials to presage Domitian's future conduct as
²¹
 emperor.

The role which Tacitus accords Domitian in the Historiae thus makes careful study of the extant references to him mandatory. Such a study will reveal that the Historiae possesses dramatic design, and that Tacitus' judgement of Domitian remains subjective.

The Siege of the Capitol

The first three references to Domitian in the Historiae—chapters iii.59, 69, and 74—concern his conduct during the events immediately prior to and during the siege of the Capitol, and his subsequent escape when the Vitellians stormed the position. This conflict—the bellum Capitolinum—resulted in the destruction of the temple and its precincts. Tacitus harshly declares that id facinus post conditam urbem luctuosissimum foedissimumque rei publicae populi Romani accidit (iii.72.1). The impiety was grave. Responsibility

²¹A. Briessmann, Tacitus und das flavische Geschichtsbild (Hermes Einzelschriften, Heft 10, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1955) 91.

had to be apportioned, and the behavior of the participants judged. The task was suitable for historian and propagandist alike.

The issue was sensitive to the victorious party, which had founded a dynasty in the ashes of civil war. Flavian propaganda extolled Domitian's role in the affair. He was not the destroyer of the temple, but its defender and benefactor. Martial is representative of the so-called "court poets": adseruit possessa malis Palatia regnis,²²
prima suo gessit pro Iove bella puer. Domitian undoubtedly provided the lead by personally composing a poem, now unfortunately lost, to commemorate his participation in the²³ war.

Monuments offered concrete proof of his piety. During his father's reign, Domitian erected a small chapel²⁴ dedicated to Jupiter Conservator on the site of the battle. This was replaced during his own principate with a temple

²²Mart. ix.101.13-14. Cf. Stat. Silv. i.1.79-81: "tu bella Iovis, tu proelia Rheni,/ tu civile nefas, tu tardum in foedera montem// longo marte domas"; Theb. i.21-22: "aut defensa prius vix pubescentibus annis/ bella Iovis teque"; Sil. Pun. iii.609-611: "nec te terruerint Tarpei culminis ignes,/ sacrilegas inter flammis servabere terris;// nam te longa manent nostri consortia mundi".

²³Mart. v.5.7: Capitolini caelestia carmina belli. Domitian's interest in poetry has been discussed in detail by G. Thiele, "Die Poesie unter Domitian", Hermes, 51 (1916) 240-249.

²⁴Tac. Hist. iii.74.1.

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consecrated to Iupiter Custos. It contained a statue
 which symbolically implied that his escape was due to divine
 26
 protection.

Intacta et nova—so Pliny describes the Flavian era
 from the historian's point of view. Nevertheless, there
 were sources of an historical nature which recounted the
 Flavian accession. The A fine Aufidi Bassi of Pliny the
 27
 Elder went beyond that event, conceivably breaking off
 28
 with Titus' return to Rome, or the closing of the temple
 29
 of Janus. Vipstanus Messala, a subordinate of Antonius
 30
 Primus, seems to have concluded his account with the

²⁵Hist. iii.74.1; Suet. Dom. 5. The date is
 uncertain; see F.C. Bourne, The Public Works of the Julio-
 Claudians and Flavians (Princeton: the University Press,
 1946) 66. He also instituted quinquennial games in honor of
Iupiter Capitolinus: Suet. Dom. 4.

²⁶Hist. iii.74.1: "mox imperium adeptus Iovi Custodi
 templum ingens seque in sinu dei sacravit". The apotheosis
 of Domitian, and his identification with various members of
 the Pantheon, particularly Iupiter and Hercules, received
 particular impetus from two of the court poets—Martial and
 Statius. See K. Scott, "Statius' Adulation of Domitian",
AJPh, 54 (1933) 247-259; and F. Sauter, Der römische Kaiser-
 kult bei Martial und Statius (Stuttgart/Berlin: W. Kohl-
 hammer, 1936). Cf. D. McFayden, "The Occasion of the
 Domitianic Persecution", AJTh, 24 (1920) 46-66.

²⁷NH praef. 20.

²⁸E. Groag, "Zur Kritik von Tacitus' Quellen in den
 Historien", JCPH, supp.-bd. 23 (1897) 777.

²⁹R. Syme, Tacitus, 180.

³⁰He was acting commander of legio VII Claudia in
 the absence of Tettius Iulianus. See R. Hanslik, "Vipstanus
 Messala", RE, 9A, 1 (1961) 171.

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execution of Vitellius, the final act of the civil war. Both, however, will have described the conduct of the Flavian party in Rome before and during the bellum Capitolinum, the capture of Rome by the Flavian army, and the circumstances surrounding the execution of Vitellius.

A third source is fortunately extant: the Bellum Iudaicum of Iosephus. He was a Flavian propagandist, and not to be trusted—that is the usual verdict. Hence his account has been condescendingly dismissed.³² Too hastily. While Iosephus' account of the bellum Capitolinum parallels Tacitus', there are significant differences. A client of the imperial family, Iosephus conceals or contradicts those parts of the tradition which were damaging to his patrons. His version, however, does not necessarily stand condemned. Tacitus, who uniformly incorporated this same material into his narrative, was also affected by bias. He wrote under the influence of the damnatio memoriae invoked after the assassination of Domitian, for an audience which shared the sentiments of Martial:

³¹E. Groag, JCPH, supp.-bd. 23 (1897) 786; R. Hanslik, RE, 9A, 1 (1961) 171-172. The nature and starting-point of his work are both unknown.

³²R. Syme, in his review of Briessmann, CR, n.s. 8 (1958) 53-54, characterizes Iosephus as "official history". Cf. W. von Christ, Geschichte der griechischen Literatur, rev. W. Schmid and O. Stählin, II. ii⁶ (rep. Munich: C.H. Beck, 1959) 600; G. Karpeles, Geschichte der jüdischen Literatur, I (4th ed., Berlin: M. Poppelauer, 1920) 199: "erster offizieller Schriftsteller".

Flavia gens, quantum tibi tertius abstulit heres!
paene fuit tanti non habuisse duos.³³

The conflict centers on two issues. Iosephus declares that the Vitellians were responsible for the crisis, and blames them for the destruction of the temple and its precincts: Flavius Sabinus and Domitian (the leaders of the Flavian party in Rome) were blameless. Tacitus attempts to implicate Sabinus in the outbreak of the crisis, and to absolve Vitellius and his partisans from responsibility for the destruction of the temple. His account, if accepted, convicts the Flavian party and its leaders of the impiety³⁴ which they had gone to such great lengths to deny.

Respectively the elder brother and younger son of Vespasian, Flavius Sabinus and Domitian were the natural heads of the Flavian party which emerged in Italy after Vespasian's acclamation. Iosephus says that they were expected to play a decisive role, acting as a fifth column. Vespasian's ἡγεμόνες and στρατιῶται hoped that Domitian would be able to organize support among the younger nobility, and that advantages might be derived from Sabinus' position as praefectus urbi:

³³This epigram, attested by the scholiast on Iuv. Sat. iv.38, is of uncertain position.

³⁴The conflict is neatly laid out, but without any attempt to weigh the sources, by W. Weber, Josephus und Vespasian, Untersuchungen zu dem jüdischen Krieg des Flavius Iosephus (Stuttgart/Leipzig: W. Kohlhammer, 1921) 179-181.

καὶ τοὺς ἐπὶ τῆς Ἰταλίας δὲ συμμάχους, ἀδελφὸν
 Οὐεσπασιανοῦ καὶ παῖδα ἕτερον, ὧν τῷ μὲν
 προσυῆσθαι πολλοὺς τῶν ἐν ἀξιώματι νέων, τὸν δὲ
 καὶ τὴν τῆς πόλεως φυλακὴν πεπιστευθῆαι, μέρος
 οὐκ ὀλίγον εἰς ἐπιβολὴν ἡγεμονίας (iv.598-599).

These expectations proved illusory. Iosephus resumes the narrative of events in Rome after relating the destruction of the Vitellian army at Cremona (BJ iv.641-643). His account, introduced by ἀνεθάρσει, strongly suggests that Sabinus had remained aloof from the conflict until Primus neared Rome. Nor is there any indication that Domitian had either attempted or succeeded in recruiting support:

ἀνεθάρσει δὲ ἤδη καὶ κατὰ τὴν Ῥώμην Σαβίνος, ὥς
 πλησίον Ἀντωνίου, ὧν ἀπηγγέλλετο, καὶ συναθροίσας
 τὰ τῶν νυκτοφυλάκων στρατιωτῶν τάγματα νύκτωρ
 καταλαμβάνει τὸ Καπετώλιον. μεθ' ἡμέραν δ' αὐτῷ
 πολλοὶ τῶν ἐπισήμων προσεγέροντο καὶ Δομετιανὸς ὁ
 τὰ δειλφῶ παῖς, μεγίστη μῆρα τῶν εἰς τὸ κρατεῖν
 ἐλπίδων (iv.645-646).³⁵

This passage further implies that Sabinus arbitrarily mustered the νυκτοφύλακες, and occupied the Capitol of his own volition. Iosephus tenders no explanation for this sudden change of behavior — only Vitellius' violent reaction.
 36
 The latter, he affirms, immediately ordered his troops to

³⁵Presumably, the τὰ τῶν νυκτοφυλάκων στρατιωτῶν τάγματα are the vigilum cohortes of Tac. Hist. iii.64.

³⁶E.T. Salmon has raised to me the intriguing possibility that Sabinus' occupation of the Capitol was timed to coincide with Petillius Cerialis' cavalry attack on Rome along the Via Salaria. Hist. iii.78, however, is too vaguely worded to permit accurate determination of how events unfolding in Rome chronologically relate to the movements of Primus' army outside the city.

attack the Capitol:

Οὐτελλὰν δὲ Πρέμιον μὲν ἐλάττω φροντὶς ἦν,
τεθύμωτο δ' ἐπὶ τοὺς συναποστάνας τῷ Σαβίνῳ,
καὶ διὰ τὴν ἐμφύτιον ὁρότητα διφῶν αἵματος
εὐγενοῦς τοῦ στρατιωτικοῦ τὴν συγκαταθέουσαν
αὐτῷ δύναμιν ἐπαφύσει τῷ Καπετωλίῳ (iv.647).

In the battle that followed, both sides acquitted themselves honorably. It was only superior numbers that eventually decided the issue in favor of the Vitellians:

Πολλὰ μὲν οὖν ἔκ τε ταύτης καὶ τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ
μαχομένων ἐτολήθη, τέλος δὲ τῷ πληθεῖ περιόντες οἱ
ἀπὸ τῆς Γερμανίας ἐκράτησαν τὸν λόφον (iv.648).

Domitian was one of many eminent members of the Flavian party who managed to escape in the aftermath of the battle. Sabinus, however, was captured, brought before Vitellius, and summarily executed:

καὶ Δομετιανὸς μὲν σὺν πολλοῖς τῶν ἐν τέλει Ῥωμαίων
δαμονιώτερον διασώζεται, τὸ δὲ λαπὸν πληθεὺς ἅπαν
κατέκρεψε, καὶ Σαβίνος ἀναχθεὶς ἐπὶ Οὐνιτέλλιον
ἀνασρεῖται (iv.649).

The Vitellians then celebrated their victory by plundering and firing the temple: διαρπάσαντες τε οἱ στρατιῶται
τὰ ἀναθήματα τὸν ναὸν ἐνεπρήσαν (iv.649).

Iosephus thus claims that Sabinus remained impassive until the Flavian army neared Rome, when he suddenly seized the Capitol. Vitellius, outraged and spurred by base motives, ordered his troops to attack. The Flavian positions were overwhelmed, Sabinus captured and executed. The Vitellians then impiously looted the temple, and deliberately destroyed it. They were thus wholly to blame for the bellum

Capitolinum, and for the desecration which concluded it.

The Flavian party was completely blameless, that is the conclusion reached by a pro-Flavian writer. Tacitus contradicts several particulars of his version.³⁷

Tacitus initially agrees with Iosephus that Sabinus displayed no apparent enthusiasm for his brother's cause. He makes it clear, however, that Sabinus' attitude stemmed from his age and temperament. Sabinus' first active appearance in the Historiae concerns the accusation of treason lodged against Cornelius Dolabella by Plancius Varus (ii.63). Because he is ingenio mitis, ubi formido incessisset, facilis mutatu et in alieno discrimine sibi pavens, Sabinus³⁸ procrastinates. There is a sting in Tacitus' concluding remark: ne adlevasse videretur, impulit ruentem.

As the Flavian army approached Rome, Petillius Cerialis, who was related by marriage to Vespasian, eluded his guards: agresti cultu et notitia locorum custodias Vitellii elapsum (iii.59.2). His escape is pointedly contrasted with the indolence of both Sabinus and Domitian:

³⁷M. Fortina, C. Licinio Muciano, 19, fails to note this conflict in the sources. Cf. P. Arias, Domiziano, Saggio Storico con Traduzione e Commento della Vita di Suetonio (Catania: G. Crisafulli, 1945) 40: "Tutte le altre fonti sono d'accordo nella narrazione dell'avvenimento . . ." This is representative of the widespread but uncritical acceptance of Tacitus' version.

³⁸Hist. ii.63.2: "cunctantem super tanta re Flavium Sabinum . . ." On M. Plancius Varus see now G. Houston, "M. Plancius Varus and the Events of A.D. 69-70", TAPA, 103 (1972) 167-180.

Flavio quoque Sabino ac Domitiano patuisse effugium multi tradidere; et missi ab Antonio nuntii per varias fallendi artes penetrabant, locum ac praesidium monstrantes.

Tacitus carefully outlines the reasons for their failure to escape. In the case of Sabinus, he says not unreasonably that inhabilem labori et audaciae valetudinem causabatur.

The possibility of treachery on the part of his guards precluded Domitian's flight: Domitiano aderat animus, sed custodes a Vitellio additi, quamquam se socios fugae promitterent, tamquam insidiantes timebantur (iii.59.3).

Tacitus maliciously adds that his fears were baseless: atque ipse Vitellius respectu suarum necessitudinum nihil in
³⁹
Domitianum atrox parabat (iii.59.3).

With the Flavian army at Narnia, primores civitatis Flavium Sabinum praefectum urbis secretis sermonibus incitabant, victoriae famaеque partem capesseret (iii.64.1).

Sabinus, however, rejected all such advice: haudquaquam erecto animo eas voces accipiebat, invalidus senecta sensuque (iii.65.1). He was, Tacitus says, so obviously lacking in enthusiasm for his brother's cause that he was accused of deliberately impeding his party's final victory.

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Invidia was mentioned, but firmly rejected by Tacitus:

³⁹F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 7, details the reasons given by Tacitus for Domitian's hesitation, but misses the malicious remark which follows. Similarly, S. Gsell, Domitien, 5; P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2544; G. Corradi, "Domitianus", in E. de Ruggiero, ed., DE, 2 (1910) 1965.

⁴⁰Hist. iii.65.1: "erant qui occultis suspicionibus incesserent, tamquam invidia et aemulatione fortunam fratris moraretur."

melior interpretatio, mitem virum abhorrere a sanguine et caedibus (iii.65.2).

So far, the portrait of an elderly man with an aversion to violence. Tacitus offers some discordant facts. The list of defectors to the Flavian cause includes Lucilius Bassus, prefect of the fleet at Ravenna,⁴¹ and Aulus Caecina, commander-in-chief of the Vitellian forces.⁴² As Tacitus does not suggest that they were in communication with Antonius Primus, it is not unreasonable to presume that Sabinus, as head of the Flavian party, extended a discreet offer of clemency in exchange for a well-timed defection. In the case of Caecina, Tacitus specifically adds that a rumor to this effect was commonplace: credidere plerique Flavii Sabini consiliis concussam Caecinae mentem, ministro sermonum Rubrio Gallo: rata apud Vespasianum fore pacta⁴³ transitionis (ii.99.2). The opportune arrival of Apinius Tiro at Misenum to lead the fleet stationed there in revolt

⁴¹Hist. iii.12.1: "classis Ravennatis praefectus ambiguos militum animos". Rewarded by being adlectus inter praetorios, he subsequently became governor of Iudaea. See W. Eck, Senatoren, 98 n. 22, 117.

⁴²Hist. iii.13. He survived the destruction of Cremona, and was dispatched to Vespasian: Hist. iii.31.4. Subsequently a confidant of Vespasian, he was executed by Titus in 79 for alleged conspiracy: Suet. Titus 6; Dio Cass. lxxv.16.3. See J.A. Crook, "Titus and Berenice", AJPh, 72 (1951) 162-175.

⁴³Once again the formula credidere plerique should put the reader on his guard. If Tacitus had an ulterior motive for making use of this rumor, however, it is well hidden. M. Fortina, C. Licinio Muciano, 16-17, ignores Sabinus' role in the affair.

is hardly coincidental.⁴⁴ There are other indications of fifth-column activity which also suggest that Sabinus might have been actively involved in Vespasian's cause.⁴⁵

Whatever doubts may be entertained about Sabinus' participation in this activity, Tacitus implies that his well-intentioned desire to avoid further bloodshed by negotiating Vitellius' abdication precipitated the crisis. Several meetings were held, and an agreement finally reached:

mitem virum abhorrere a sanguine et caedibus, eoque crebris cum Vitellio sermonibus de pace ponendisque per condicionem armis agitare. Saepe domi congressi, postremo in aede Apollinis, ut fama fuit, pepigere (iii.65.2).

These negotiations transformed Sabinus into the active head of the Flavian party in Rome. In addition, they unfortunately had the invidious but natural side-effect of making his presence the rallying-point for the Flavian party inside the city: igitur tamquam omnis res publica in Vespasiani sinum cecississet, primores senatus et plerique equestris ordinis omnisque miles urbanus et vigiles domum Flavii Sabini complevere (iii.69.1). Fully committed as the standard-bearer of the Flavian cause, Sabinus now learned that the

⁴⁴Hist. iii.57.1. Citing Eprsius Marcellus and Helvidius Priscus in addition to Bassus, Caecina, and Tiro, G.E.F. Chilver concluded that "his [Vespasian's] achievement in Italy, presumably due to his brother, was more astonishing still.": "The Army in Politics", JRS, 47 (1957) 34. Sabinus is once again ignored by M. Fortina, C. Licinio Muciano, 19.

⁴⁵Notably the defection of Campania to the Flavian cause, which impelled Vitellius unwisely to divide his forces and fight on two fronts: Hist. iii.58.1.

Roman mob and the Vitellian troops had forced Vitellius to
 abrogate the agreement, and remain on the throne.⁴⁶ Sabinus
 was compelled reluctantly to take up arms, for as Tacitus
 declared, longius iam progressus erat quam ut regredi posset
 (iii.69.2). Worsted in a chance encounter, Sabinus re trepida,
quod tutissimum e praesentibus, arcem Capitolii insedit
mixto milite et quibusdam senatorum equitumque (iii.69.3).

Thus in contrast to Iosephus, who does not mention
 the negotiations between Sabinus and Vitellius, and who
 states that Sabinus suddenly seized the Capitol of his own
 volition, Tacitus implies that the crisis erupted precisely
 because Sabinus became actively involved in Vespasian's
 cause, and states that he was driven into the Capitol after
 suffering a defeat in the streets.⁴⁷

Tacitus and Iosephus also sharply conflict on the
 role which Vitellius played in the crisis. While Iosephus
 asserts that Vitellius ordered his troops to attack the
 Capitol, Tacitus twice states that the Emperor was no longer
 in control of his own partisans,⁴⁸ and that the assault on

⁴⁶Hist. iii.69.1: "illuc de studiis volgi et minis Germanicarum cohortium adfertur."

⁴⁷J. Janssen, Vita Domitiani, 4, notes but does not discuss the discrepancy. G. Corradi, DE, 2 (1910) 1965, completely overlooks Iosephus' conflicting testimony.

⁴⁸Hist. iii.62.2: "tanta torpedo invaserat animum, ut, si principem eum fuisse ceteri non meminissent, ipse oblivisceretur"; iii.70.4: "ipse neque iubendi neque vetandi potens non iam imperator, sed tantum belli causa erat." Accepted by F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 7.

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the Capitol was spontaneous. Again, Iosephus' account suggests that Vitellius ordered Sabinus' execution.

Tacitus, however, clearly states that Vitellius wished to spare Sabinus' life, but was overruled by his own supporters. Tacitus thus exonerates Vitellius from personal responsibility for both the crisis and its outcome, while Iosephus implicates him fully.

Finally, the destruction of the temple. Iosephus asserts in the clearest possible terms that the Vitellians first plundered and then fired the temple (iv.649). Tacitus, in contrast, knows nothing of the looting, and professes uncertainty about the origins of the fire. He adds, however, that a widespread rumor placed the blame on the Flavians: hic ambigitur, ignem tectis obpugnatores iniecerint, an obsessi, quae crebrior fama, nitentes ac progressos depulerint (iii.71.4).⁵¹ The Flavians, at any rate, were definitely guilty of an additional impiety. Tacitus mentions that Sabinus fashioned a makeshift barricade

⁴⁹Hist. iii.71.1: "Vixdum regresso in Capitolium Martiale furens miles aderat, nullo duce, sibi quisque auctor."

⁵⁰Hist. iii.74.2: "stantem pro gradibus Palatii Vitellium et preces parantem pervicere, ut absisteret". Accepted by F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 8. Cf. A. Briessmann, Flavische Geschichtsbild, 72.

⁵¹As Tac. Hist. iii.71 says, such a rumor might arise because it was to the advantage of the defending and not the attacking force to fire the temple. A fire might either repel the attack, or create a diversion which would allow the besieged to escape. Cf. A. Briessmann, Flavische Geschichtsbild, 74.

out of temple statuary in order to repulse the Vitellians' initial assault: ni Sabinus revolsas undique statuas, decora maiorum, in ipso aditu vice muri obiecisset (iii.71.2).

Thus even if the Vitellians did start the fire, the Flavians were also guilty of desecrating the temple.

If the conflict between Iosephus and Tacitus is manifest, it is nevertheless difficult to decide which version is the more accurate and reliable. The accounts of two later writers, Suetonius and Dio Cassius, reflect the conflict. Their ambivalence suggests that neither Iosephus nor Tacitus can be completely trusted.

Concerning the alleged negotiations between Sabinus and Vitellius, Suetonius fully supports Tacitus: atque ubique aut superatus aut proditus salutem sibi et milies sestertium a Flavio Sabino Vespasiani fratre pepigit (Vit. 15.2). The epitome of Dio Cassius, while vague, also seems to confirm Tacitus' version:

συνελθόντες οἱ τε Ὑπατορ Γάιος Κυνέτιος Ἀττικὸς καὶ Γναῖος Καϊκίλιος Σίμπλεξ καὶ Σαβίνος (συγγενὴς οὗτος Οὐεσπασιανῶν) τῶν τε ἑλλήνων οἱ πρῶτοι γυνώμης ἐπεσχέσαντο, καὶ ἐς τὸ Παλάτιον ὤρμησαν σὺν τοῖς ὁμογνώμονοις σφίσι στρατιώταις ὥς ἡ πείσονται ἢ καὶ καταναγκάσονται τὸν Οὐιτέλλιον τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀπεκτεῖν (lxiv.17.1).⁵²

Similarly, Dio confirms Tacitus' statement that the Flavians were forced to take refuge in the Capitol after

⁵²Neither Suetonius nor Dio will be quoting Cluvius Rufus, who according to Tac. Hist. iii.65 was an eyewitness to the negotiations. Cf. R. Syme, Tacitus, 675.

losing an encounter in the streets:

καὶ περιπεσόντες τοῖς Κελτοῖς τοῖς φρονροῦσιν αὐτὸν
κακῶς ἀπῆλλαξαν, καὶ τούτων ἔς τε τὸ Καπιτώλιον
ἀνέφθην (lxiv.17.2).

Suetonius also describes the skirmish, but as an ambush rather than a fortuitous encounter: animum resumpsit Sabinumque et reliquos Flavianos nihil iam metuentis vi subita in Capitolium compulit . . . (Vit. 15.3). He thus seems clearly to have believed that Vitellius deliberately attacked the Flavians, who were taken completely by surprise, and routed.

The testimony of Suetonius and Dio Cassius thus warrants the conclusion that Iosephus concealed the negotiations between Sabinus and Vitellius, which Tacitus claims to have precipitated the crisis. A fight did erupt in the streets, and all three later authors contradict Iosephus, stating that Sabinus took refuge in the Capitol. On these two particulars, therefore, Tacitus seems the more accurate source. Suetonius' account, however, also implies treachery on the part of Vitellius.

Suetonius and Dio are both ambiguous concerning the attack on the Capitol and the execution of Sabinus. The passage of Suetonius cited above strongly implies, but does not explicitly state, that Vitellius ordered the attack on the Capitol. The epitome of Dio says of the attack merely that τῇ δ' ὑστεραίᾳ προσβαλόντων σφίσι τῶν ἐναντιῶν χρέων μὲν τινα ἀπεκρούσαντο αὐτοῖς (lxiv.17.3). Again, Suetonius

says nothing of the circumstances surrounding the death of Sabinus, while the epitome of Dio states that he was delivered to Vitellius, but does not give details of his execution: *τὸν τε Σαβῖνον καὶ τὸν Ἀρρικὸν συλλαβέντες πρὸς τὸν Οὐιτέλλιον ἔπεμφαν* (lxiv.17.3).

Both authors, however, support Iosephus' assertion that the Vitellians destroyed the temple and its precincts. Suetonius says that succensoque templo Iovis Optimi Maximi oppressit, cum et proelium et incendium e Tiberiana prospiceret domo inter epulas (Vit. 15.3). While he does not add that the Vitellians first plundered the temple, Dio Cassius supports Iosephus on both points:

καὶ οὕτως ἐπαναβάντες οἱ τοῦ Οὐιτελλίου στρατιῶται ἐκείνων τε σελήνους ἐφένευσαν, καὶ διαρπάζοντες πάντα τὰ ἀντικείμενα κατέπρησαν αἷμα τε καὶ τὸν ναὸν τὸν μέγαν (lxiv.17.3).⁵³

Thus their testimony, while meagre, does confirm Iosephus' contention that the Vitellians were responsible for the destruction of the temple. While Dio cannot be pressed, Suetonius also seems to support Iosephus' assertion that Vitellius was still in control of his supporters, and personally responsible for the assault on the Capitol. On these matters, Iosephus' account is therefore to be preferred.

Neither Tacitus nor Iosephus, then, seems to have given a fully accurate and impartial account of the bellum

⁵³Noted, but not discussed by J. Janssen, Vita Domitiani, 5.

Capitolinum. The Flavian party was not as blameless as Iosephus, nor as involved as Tacitus, claims. The negotiations upon which he entered did involve Sabinus in his brother's cause, and precipitated the crisis—a point Iosephus conceals. Still, Vitellius cannot be exonerated, for he seems personally to have ordered the assault on the Capitol. Nor must the sensitive question of responsibility for the impious destruction of the temple remain unanswered. Iosephus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius all agree that the Vitellians were culpable. Tacitus' attempt to discredit the Flavian party, and with it the adolescent Domitian, must therefore apparently be rejected.

The Arrival of Mucianus

Domitian's role in the events which occurred in Rome after the death of Vitellius (iii.86.2), and before the arrival of Mucianus (iv.11.1), is a subject upon which Iosephus and Tacitus again display fundamental disagreement.

In the immediate aftermath of Vitellius' execution, Iosephus avers that Antonius Primus lost control of his army. A massacre resulted, with Vitellians and civilians slaughtered indiscriminately:

ἔτι γὰρ ἐξερευνῶμενοι τὰς οἰκίας πολλοὺς μὲν τῶν
 οὐκ ἐλλείπον στρατιωτῶν πολλοὺς δὲ τῶν δημοτικῶν ὡς
 ἐκεῖνον ἀνέβρουν φθάνοντες τῷ θυμῷ τῇ ἀκριβῇ
 δακρυῇ. . . (iv.654).

On the following day, Mucianus entered the city, and quickly restored order: τῇ δ' ὑστεραίᾳ Μουκιανὸς εἰσεὶς μετὰ τῆς

στρατίας, καὶ τοὺς σὺν Ἀντωνίῳ παύσας τοῦ κτείνειν . . .

(iv.654). Domitian appears already to have established contact with Mucianus, for with military discipline restored, he was at once brought forward. Presented to the assembled populace by Mucianus, Domitian witnessed his father's enthusiastic acclamation, and was welcomed as his surrogate:

προαγαγὼν δὲ τὸν Δομετιανὸν συνίστησι τῷ πλήθει
μέχρι τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς ἀφίξεως ἡγεμόνα. ὁ δὲ δῆμος
ἀπηλλαγμένους ἤδη τῶν φόβων αὐτοκράτορα οὐκ ἐκπασιανὸν
ἐνφύημεν . . . (iv.654-655).

Dio Cassius takes up the account, and adds an important detail. He affirms that the appropriate constitutional procedures were invoked to legitimize Vespasian's accession. The Senate was convened, formally⁵⁴ bestowed the Principate, and hailed both Titus and⁵⁵ Domitian as "Caesars". Mucianus' unobtrusive direction

⁵⁴Presumably in the session also outlined by Tacitus in *Hist.* iv.3.3-4, that is, on December 23, 69; cf. *Hist.* iv.6.3. Vespasian, however, dated his *imperium* from July 1, 69, the date of his acclamation by the legions stationed in Egypt. See M. Hammond, "The Transmission of the Powers of the Roman Emperor from the Death of Nero in A.D. 68 to that of Alexander Severus in A.D. 235", *MAAR*, 24 (1956) 77. The powers bestowed upon Vespasian are outlined in a unique document. See F.B.R. Hellems, *Lex de Imperio Vespasiani* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1902) for text, translation, and commentary. See also H. Last, "The Principate and the Administration", *CAH*, 11 (1936) 407; and K.H. Waters, "The Second Dynasty of Rome", *Phoenix*, 17 (1963) 213.

⁵⁵Coinage from the first year of Vespasian's reign (69/70) confirms the acclamation of Titus and Domitian. Three different legends—CAESAR AUG. F. COS. CAESAR AUG. F. PR.; CAESARES VESP. AUG. FILI; and TITUS ET DOMITIAN CAESARES PRIN. IVVEN., or a variant thereof—appear on the reverse of coinage bearing the legend IMP. CAESAR VESPASIANUS

of the session(s) in question may be assumed:

Ταῦτα μὲν οὕτως, ἔσχεν, αὐτοκράτωρ δὲ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς
ὁ Οὐεσπασιανὸς καὶ πρὸς τῆς βουλῆς ἀπεδέκθη,
καὶ Καίσαρες ὁ τε Τίτος καὶ ὁ Δομιτιανὸς
ἐπεκλήθησαν (lxv.1.1).

A regrettable lapse of military discipline, quickly suppressed, thus preceded the enthusiastic reception of the new dynasty by the Roman populace. Antonius Primus was wholly to blame for the lapse; Domitian, who was still in hiding, could not be associated or reproached. He was welcomed by the masses and hailed by the Senate, in formal session.

Such is the version avowed by the Flavians and their supporters. Self-serving propaganda, that is the usual and plausible reproach. The story conveniently undermines the reputation of Antonius Primus, whose prominence was an unwanted embarrassment, and whose political demise⁵⁶ was an objective of dynastic policy. It forms part of a⁵⁷ concerted effort to minimize his service to the dynasty.

AUG. on the obverse. The legends appear on both senatorial and imperial issues, from both Roman and provincial mints. See RIC II, nos. 2, 3, 23-27, 270, 283, 292-293, 386, 390-391.

⁵⁶See the comments of R. Syme, Tacitus, 593.

⁵⁷A considerable body of literature, for and against, seems to have centered on Primus. Pliny the Elder, an intimate associate of the dynasty, was apparently highly critical, while Vipstanus Messala, a former subordinate of Primus', defended his reputation. M. Treu, "M. Antonius Primus in der Taciteischen Darstellung", Wurzbürger Jahrbücher, 3 (1948) 241-262, argues (correctly) that the source-conflict is transmitted in Tacitus' Historiae. Contra, A.

The conclusion is hasty, and unwarranted. Other sources may be cited in support of Iosephus, including Tacitus himself. Tacitus presents a vivid description of the sacking of the city in the opening chapter of the fourth book of the Historiae:

Interfecto Vitellio bellum magis desierat quam pax coeperat. armati per urbem victores implacabili odio victos consectabantur: plenae caedibus viae, cruenta fora templaque, passim trucidatis, ut quemque fors obtulerat. ac mox augescente licentia scrutari ac protrahere abditos: si quem procerum habitu et iuventa conspexerant, obtruncare nullo militum aut populi discrimine. quae saevitia recentibus odiis sanguine explebatur, dein verterat in avaritiam. nihil usquam secretum aut clausum sinebant, Vitellianos occultari simulantes. initium id perfringendarum domuum, vel si resisteretur, causa caedis; nec deerat egentissimus quisque e plebe et pessimi servitiorum prodere ultro dites dominos; alii ab amicis monstrabantur. ubique lamenta, conclamationes et fortuna captae urbis, adeo ut Othoniani Vitellianique militis invidiosa antea petulantia desideraretur (iv.1).

In the following chapter, he adds that during the period encompassing this eruption, summa potentiae in Primo Antonio (iv.2.1). He reaffirms in chapter iv.11, declaring that discord and strife remained unchecked until the arrival of Mucianus:

Tali rerum statu, cum discordia inter patres, ira apud victos, nulla in victoribus auctoritas, non leges, non princeps in civitate essent, Mucianus urbem ingressus cuncta simul in se traxit.

The primacy of Primus was broken at once: fracta Primi Antonii Varique Arrii potentia . . . (iv.11.1).

Briessmann, Flavische Geschichtsbild, 105; and T.A. Dorey, CPh, 53 (1958) 244, who believe Tacitus uniformly hostile to Primus.

Dio Cassius, who seems to have been familiar with the accounts of both Iosephus and Tacitus, concurs.⁵⁸ The outrages committed by the Flavian army preceded the arrival of Mucianus and his alliance with Domitian: *πεπραγμένων δὲ τούτων ἤδη ὡς ἐκώστων ὁ Μουκιανὸς ἐπῆλθε, καὶ τότε ἄλλα συνδιδώκει τῷ Δομιτιανῷ . . .* (lxiv.22.2).

Similarly, in his account of the death of Vitellius, Suetonius mentions only one Flavian officer by name: Antonius Primus.⁵⁹ Neither here, nor in his biography of Domitian, does his narrative implicate the latter in the excesses of the Flavian army.⁶⁰

Our sources, then, are in agreement. Antonius Primus was in command of the Flavian army, but lost control. Two of these sources further estimate that some 50,000 Vitellian partisans and innocent civilians perished as a result. The account of Iosephus, even if written with an ulterior motive, is accurate and reliable.

⁵⁸Dio Cass. lxiv.19.3 agrees with Joseph. BJ iv.654 that some 50,000 persons perished in the Flavian assault on Rome. Dio Cass. lxiv.22, like Tac. Hist. iv.2, narrates the execution of Lucius Vitellius after the capture of Rome, but before the arrival of Mucianus. Dio's narrative suggests that several days elapsed before Mucianus' arrival, which may also be inferred from the structure and content of Hist. iii.86-iv.11.

⁵⁹Vit. 18: "siquidem ab Antonio Primo adversarum partium duce oppressus est . . ."

⁶⁰Dom. 1.3: "Post victoriam demum progressus et Caesar consalutatus . . ." See A. Briessmann, Flavische Geschichtsbild, 84-85; and R. Urban, Domitianbild, 77-78.

Iosephus further avers that Domitian was still in⁶¹ hiding, and uninvolved. Suetonius does not impeach, and Dio Cassius supports his version. Nevertheless, Tacitus⁶² contradicts it in both substance and chronology. Domitian's emergence from hiding concludes the third book of the Historiae. In contrast to both Iosephus and Dio, Tacitus asserts that Domitian presented himself to the duces partium (Antonius Primus and Arrius Varus) immediately after

⁶¹The language of Tacitus and Suetonius agrees so closely that it is clear that either Suetonius borrowed from Tacitus, or both borrowed from a common source: *inruptione-irrupentibus; sacrilegum-sacrilegus; postquam nihil hostile metuebatur-post victoriam; progressum-progressus; Caesarem consalutatum-Caesar consalutatus; praetura Domitiano et consulare imperium-praeturae urbanae consulari potestate*. See K. Wellesley, "Three Historical Puzzles in Histories 3", CQ, 49 (1956) 212. Despite linguistic similarities, however, the compressed account of Suetonius, which links Domitian's acclamation as Caesar with his appointment to the urban praetorship and grant of consular imperium, cannot be cited in support of Tacitus, who separates the two events, and specifies different agents (respectively the duces partium or Flavian army, and the Senate). There is a further variation. After Domitian's escape from the Capitol, Tacitus asserts that he concealed himself with a family client named Cornelius Primus (Hist. iii.74). Suetonius, in contrast, states that he took refuge with the mother of one of his school companions (Dom. 1.2).

⁶²M. Fortina, C. Licinio Muciano, 21, is representative of the current uncritical acceptance of Tacitus: "Quanto a Domiziano, che in un primo momento si era abbandonato all'inerzia, dovette presto rappresentare nella capitale il padre ed il fratello assenti—praetura Domitiano et consulare imperium decernuntur—ai quali il senato decretò l'onore del consolato ordinario." In a footnote, Fortina cites the discrepancy between Iosephus and Tacitus on the date of Mucianus' arrival in Rome, but follows Tacitus without further comment. Similarly, S. Gsell, Domitien, 6 n. 6. The discrepancy is overlooked by F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 8; P. Weyand, RE, 6 (1909) 2544-2545; and G. Corradi, DE, 2 (1910) 1966.

Vitellius' execution: Domitianum, postquam nihil hostile metuebatur, ad duces partium progressum . . . (iii.86). We are next told that it was Primus and Varus, or their troops (the text is unclear), and not the Senate, which hailed Domitian as "Caesar": Caesarem consalutatum miles frequens utque erat in armis in paternos penates deduxit (iii.86). Tacitus must have been aware of the counter-tradition, now extant only in the account of Dio Cassius. The Senate, he asserts, could not be convened because its members were either in hiding or had fled the city:

Praecipiti in occasum die ob pavorem magistratuum senatorumque, qui dilapsi ex urbe aut per domos clientium semet occultabant, vocari senatus non potuit (iii.86).⁶³

The first session of the Senate is postponed until the following book. At that point (iv.3.3-4) Tacitus carefully notes that Domitian received the office of praetor with consular imperium, but conceals his ~~salutation~~ acclamation as "Caesar". The evasion is skillful; it implies that his acclamation by the Flavian army was never sanctioned by the Senate. That anomaly is disturbing, and unflattering to Domitian.

Tacitus and Josephus agree that order was not restored in Rome until after the arrival of Mucianus. Tacitus refrains from mentioning that decisive moment until chapter iv.11.1. Ten chapters thus intervene between his initial appearance

⁶³Cf. A. Briessmann, Flavische Geschichtsbild, 86.

and that of Domitian. While no attempt is made to date the two events, subjectively this long interval in the narrative leaves the impression that several days have passed.⁶⁴ That impression is enhanced by the materials contained in these chapters. The surrender and execution of Lucius Vitellius, and the transport of his forces to Rome, are taken up in chapter iv.2. The following chapter details the suppression of disorder in Campania by Lucilius Bassus, and the first session of the Senate. Senatorial affairs, and particularly the accusations and counter-accusations which the Stoics and delators levelled against each other, fill out the remaining chapters. Again, several sessions, spread across a period of several days, are implied. This is in clear contrast to Iosephus, who states that Mucianus entered the capital the day after Vitellius' execution.

Domitian is thus in Tacitus made to emerge, and is hailed illegally as "Caesar", before the sacking of the city, and before the arrival of Mucianus, which is postponed indefinitely. The discrepancies are significant, and designed. Chapter iv.1 again offers the clue. Tacitus concludes his narrative of the sacking of Rome with a harsh blanket judgement of the duces partium:

Duces partium accendendo civili bello acres, temperandae victoriae impares, quippe inter turbas et discordias

⁶⁴R. Urban, Domitianbild, 78. In Hist. iv.4.1, Tacitus does say that Mucianus was expected to arrive paucos post dies. This is the only firm reference that can be cited.

pessimo cuique plurima vis, pax et quies bonis
artibus indigent.

The censure applies to Primus and Varus, and a third person as well: Domitian. His emergence from concealment, and acclamation as "Caesar", enrolled him among the duces partium. Tacitus drives the point home in the next sentence, citing the three by name, and linking them together. Domitian is thus made partly responsible for the destructive eruption of⁶⁵ the Flavian army which followed his acclamation.

Tacitus does not stop, however, merely at implicating Domitian. An attempt is made to absolve Primus and Varus, and to cast responsibility for the atrocities entirely upon Domitian. Iosephus, while admitting the slaughter of civilians, conceals the looting of the city, and claims that the slaughter resulted from an attempt to extirpate the remnants of the Vitellian party. Tacitus declares this a pretext, and avaritia the true motive of the⁶⁶ Flavian army. The war was over, he declares most emphatically in the opening sentence of the fourth book, the contest for empire resolved: interfecto Vitellio bellum magis desierat

⁶⁵Cf. R. Urban, Domitianbild, 81-82.

⁶⁶And of its commanders. Avaritia was a dominant trait of Primus' personality. Cf. Hist. iv.2: "Is pecuniam familiamque e principis domo quasi Cremonensem praedam rapere: ceteri modestia vel ignobilitate ut in bello obscuri, ita praemiorum expertes." It is also one of the most common vices attributed to tyrants in Roman political invective. Cf. Cic. Fin. iii.75 (Sulla); Sall. Cat. xiii.5, xxxi.12 (Roman nobles); and the general discussion of J.R. Dunkle, CW, 65 (1971) 15.

quam pax coeperat. The sacking of the city was an unnecessary sequel, and it left an indelible effect. Civitas pavida et servitio parata occupari, so Tacitus describes the state of mind of the Roman populace prior to the arrival of Mucianus (iv.2).

Nevertheless, in chapter iv.39.3 Tacitus asserts that Mucianus feared the rivalry of Primus and Varus precisely because they were popular with the Roman masses. They had retained their popularity, he says, quia in neminem ultra aciem saevierant! With Primus and Varus thus acquitted, Domitian suddenly becomes wholly to blame for the sacking of the city. This belated and malicious proposal will have appealed to many of the senators in Tacitus' audience.

Nomen sedemque Caesaris Domitianus acceperat, nondum ad curas intentus . . . (iv.2.1). Tacitus does not elaborate upon the vague and all-encompassing term curae. He does, however, describe Domitian's activity during the sacking of the city in an emotionally charged clause: sed stupris et adulteriis filium principis agebat. His meaning is clear. Whatever Domitian's responsibilities, he had abdicated them in order to satiate his own lusts. He was, therefore, completely unworthy of the high position which he now occupied by right of birth alone. That theme will have
67
recurred, when Domitian acceded to the Principate.

⁶⁷Cf. R. Urban, Domitianbild, 81-82.

This sentence provides a reason for the indefinite postponement of mention of Mucianus' arrival. Domitian's dereliction of duty could be plausibly construed as injurious to the Flavian cause only if it persisted for a period of several days. The plural stupris et adulteriis loses meaning and impact if Mucianus is allowed to enter the city within twenty-four hours of its capture.

Thus a desire to make Domitian culpable for the sacking of Rome compelled Tacitus to embroider the tradition transmitted by Iosephus. Domitian must join the Flavian command immediately after Primus' entry into the city, and Mucianus' arrival must be postponed, if Domitian is to have sufficient time and freedom of action to behave in the unflattering manner Tacitus describes.

Domitian and Mucianus

The parallel accounts of Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius on Domitian's abuse of his urban praetorship in 70 A.D. have already been analyzed.⁶⁸ It was concluded that for two reasons Tacitus' criticism of Domitian was intentionally vague. First, Tacitus could not censure Domitian for improper appointment of urban and peregrine officials (a charge raised by Suetonius) because one of the appointees in question was his own father-in-law. Second, the only anti-Domitianic tradition upon which Suetonius and Dio Cassius

⁶⁸Cf. pp. 37-41 above.

agree is that Domitian abducted Domitia Longina, the wife of L. Aelius Plautius Lamia Aelianus. Since Domitian later married her, this was insufficiently damaging. A vague accusation, combined with detailed accounts of negligence or criminal conduct, would mislead the reader and be far more effective.⁶⁹

In the fourth book of the Historiae, Tacitus relates in considerable detail two other episodes which are far more damaging. He implies that Vespasian hastened his return to Rome because of reports of Domitian's misconduct (iv.51.2), and that during his campaign in Gaul, the latter attempted to persuade Petillius Cerialis to betray his army to him (iv. 85-86). Both of these stories merit searching comment.

In the first instance, Tacitus has Vespasian informed of Domitian's alleged misconduct in a brief passage at the end of the same chapter in which he has Vespasian learn of the death of Vitellius:

Vespasianus in Italiam resque urbis intentus adversam de Domitiano famam accipit, tamquam terminos aetatis et concessa filio egrederetur: igitur validissimam exercitus partem Tito tradit ad reliqua Iudaici belli perpetranda.

52. Titum, antequam digrederetur, multo apud patrem sermone orasse ferunt, ne criminantium nuntiis temere accenderetur integrumque se ac placabilem filio praestaret.

Once again, Tacitus has carefully structured the entire

⁶⁹The vague slur in Hist. iv.2.1 is preceded by the detailed account of the sacking of Rome; iv.51-52 is followed by Titus' defence of Domitian.

sequence of events for an ulterior purpose. He first describes Vespasian as laetum when informed of the death of his rival and the end of the civil war. His euphoria, however, was quickly shattered by the news of Domitian's excesses. This aroused the wrath of Vespasian and—in consonance with the tradition related by Dio Cassius, that Domitian expected to be punished by his father for his misdeeds—seems to have been designed to justify the humiliation of Domitian narrated in a subsequent (and now lost) chapter of the Historiae.⁷⁰ Tacitus' account will have agreed with⁷¹ the tradition extant in Suetonius.

Historiae iv.51-52 may be compared with the parallel version of Iosephus. Initially, the two agree. Both writers begin with the statement that Vespasian had been⁷² informed of the victory won in the west. Both next relate⁷³ the reception of embassies. At this point, however, Tacitus deviates, to interweave the unfavorable rumor out-

⁷⁰Dio Cass. lxxv.3.4: "ὁ δὲ Δομιτιανός, ἐξ ἧν ἔδρασε καὶ πολλὰ μάλλον ἐξ ἧν ἐπελείρησεν (οὐδὲν γὰρ μικρὸν ἐπένει) φοβηθεὶς τὸν πατέρα . . ."

⁷¹Suet. Dom. 2: "Ob haec correptus, quo magis et aetatis et condicionis admoneretur, habitabat cum patre una sellamque eius ac fratris, quotiens prodirent, lectica sequebatur . . ."

⁷²Hist. iv.51.1: "At Vespasiano post Cremonensem pugnam et prosperos undique nuntios cecidisse Vitellium multi cuiusque ordinis . . . nuntiavere." BJ iv.656: "Εἰς δὲ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν ἀφγμένῳ τῷ Οὐέσπασιανῷ τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς Ῥώμης ἐναγγεῖα ἦκε . . ."

⁷³Hist. iv.51.1: "aderant legati regis Vologaesi

lined above. Iosephus continues to present the most logical sequence of events:

κεκυρωμένης δὲ ἤδη τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀπάσης καὶ σεσωσμένων
παρ' ἐλπίδα Ῥωμαίους τῶν πραγμάτων Οὐεσπασιανὸς ἐπὶ τὰ
λείψανα τῆς Ἰουδαίας τὸν λογισμὸν ἐπέστρεφεν (iv.657).

Vespasian accordingly commissioned Titus to conclude the bellum Iudaicum, and began to make arrangements for his return to Rome:

αὐτὸς μέντοι γε εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ὤρμητο ληξάντος τοῦ
χειμῶνος ἀνάγεσθαι καὶ ταῖς τὰ κατὰ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν
δυνάμεις, τὸν δὲ υἱὸν τίτον μετὰ τῆς ἐκκρίτου δυνάμεως
ἀπέστειλεν ἐξαιρῆσοντα τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα (iv.658).

Tacitus' embroidering of the basic tradition is replete with difficulties. First of all, the source of the alleged report unfavorable to Domitian cannot be identified.⁷⁴ Vespasian's fierce loyalty to his sons is well-attested; it would take something a good deal more concrete than fama to turn him against Domitian. Of the Flavian officials in Rome, only Mucianus would seem to have been in a position to influence the Emperor's judgement. However, he could hardly criticize Domitian without inviting a harsh rebuke of his own administrative failures. As Vespasian's surrogate in Italy, he was responsible for Domitian's conduct. If

quadraginta milia Parthorum equitum offerentes." BJ iv.656:
"καὶ πρέσβεις ἐκ πάσης τῆς ἑξέως εἰκουμένης συνηδόμενοι . . .

⁷⁴See the famous remark recorded by both Suet. Vesp. 25 and Dio Cass. lxv.12.1.

Domitian did act irresponsibly, it would signal that Mucianus had failed in the performance of his commission—a failure which he would be most anxious to conceal.⁷⁵ Mucianus is not the source of the rumors.

Titus' speech in defence of Domitian is also especially vulnerable to criticism. In public, Vespasian would obviously desire to maintain an image of family harmony. Titus' speech, therefore—if it ever really occurred—will have been made in the privacy of the Emperor's bedroom, and not before a public gathering.⁷⁶ This assumption once accepted, questions immediately arise. How, for example, did Tacitus learn of the speech? More importantly, how did he obtain a written copy of what would manifestly have been an intimate verbal conversation? Ferunt is a conveniently vague term;⁷⁷ clearly, hidden behind this device is a speech of Tacitus' own creation.⁷⁸

In this speech, Tacitus characterizes Titus as a generous and forgiving person, loyal to his father and brother, and always prepared to place family above personal interest. This black and white contrast between the good-

⁷⁵See again Hist. iv.11.1, and cf. Dio Cass. lxxv.2.3.

⁷⁶R. Urban, Domitianbild, 97-98; K.H. Waters, Phoenix, 18 (1964) 56.

⁷⁷Cf. A. Briessmann, Flavische Geschichtsbild, 88.

⁷⁸"Pure fiction": K.H. Waters, Phoenix, 18 (1964) 56.

hearted Titus and the vicious Domitian will have constantly recurred. It was designed to buttress what must have been a major theme of the eighth book of the Historiae: Domitian's incessant intrigue against, and murder of, his brother.

There are, however, disquieting stories which suggest that this speech is not quite in character. Suetonius has a great deal to say about Titus' character before his accession—all of it bad:

ita ad praesens plurimum contraxit invidiae, ut non temere quis tam adverso rumore magisque invitis omnibus transierit ad principatum.

7. Praeter saevitiam suspecta in eo etiam luxuria erat, quod ad mediam noctem comissationes cum profusissimo quoque familiarum extenderet; nec minus libido propter exoletorum et spadonum greges propterque insignem reginae Berenices amorem, cui etiam nuptias pollicitus ferebatur; suspecta rapacitas, quod constabat in co(g)n(itionibus patris nundinari praemiari-que solitum; denique propalam alium Neronem et opinabantur et praedicabant (Titus 6-7).

80

Suetonius' account is supported by Dio Cassius. This hints at a major conflict in the source tradition, and raises the possibility that Tacitus' characterization of Titus may have been as distorted as his portrait of Domitian. Certainly, the theme of fraternal discord could be more fully exploited if the characters of Titus and Domitian were polarized.

81

79R. Urban, Domitianbild, 107-108.

80Dio Cass. lxvi.18.1: "ὁ δὲ δὴ τίτος οὐδὲν οὔτε φενικὲν οὔτε ἐρωτικὴν μεταρχήσας ἐπραξεν . . . τάχα μὲν γὰρ <οἱ> καὶ μετεβόλετο . . ."

81The stories of Vespasian's humiliation of Domitian, and the alleged discord between Titus and Domitian, have been widely accepted. Cf. F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 11;

A further point. This passage implies that
 Vespasian would depart for Rome in order to rectify the
 damage caused by Domitian's excesses as quickly as possible.⁸²
 In fact, Iosephus informs us that Vespasian returned at a
 leisurely pace along an indirect route:

καθ' ὃ δὲ καιροῦ τίτος καίσαρ τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις
 παλιωκῶν προσηύδρευεν, ἐν τούτῳ νεὺς φορτίδος
 οὐέσπασιανὸς ἐπιβὰς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας εἰς Ῥόδον
 δέβαινε. εὐτεθθεν δὲ πλέων ἐπὶ τριήρων καὶ πᾶσας
 τὰς ἐν τῷ παράτῳ πῶλεις ἐπελθὼν εὐκταίως αὐτὸν
 δεχομένης, ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰωνίης εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα περανοῦται,
 κακεῖθεν ἀπὸ Κερκύρας ἐπ' ἄκραν Ἰαπυγίαν, ὅθεν ἦδη
 κατὰ γῆν ἐποικέτο τὴν πορείαν (BJ vii.21-22).

If Domitian had precipitated a crisis, Vespasian could have
 sailed directly for Rome, and reached the capital in two to
 three weeks. It has been estimated, however, that his passage⁸³
 consumed approximately two months. He had not yet landed
 in Italy on June 21, when reconstruction of the Capitol⁸⁴
 began. Domitian and Mucianus, who were to meet him in

P. Weynand, *RE*, 6 (1909) 2547; G. Corradi, *DE*, 2 (1910) 1969;
 M.P. Charlesworth, "The Flavian Dynasty", *CAH*, 11 (1936) 19;
 M. Hammond, *MAAR*, 24 (1956) 84; M.P.O. Morford, "The Training
 of Three Roman Emperors", *Phoenix*, 22 (1968) 70. *Contra*, S.
 Gsell, *Domitien*, 13; K.H. Waters, *Phoenix*, 18 (1964) 63.

⁸²A conclusion drawn by P. Weynand, *RE*, 6 (1909)
 2546-2547; and G. Corradi, *DE*, 2 (1910) 1967.

⁸³A. Chambalu, "Wann ist Vespasian i. j. 70, Titus
 i. j. 71 aus dem Orient nach Rom zurückgekehrt?", *Philologus*,
 44 (1885) 503-506.

⁸⁴*Hist.* iv.53. As R. Urban has pointed out, if his
 arrival was imminent, the ceremony would have been postponed:
Domitianbild, 96. .

southern Italy,⁸⁵ had at this date apparently not yet even set
 out for Gaul.⁸⁶ As Titus was not informed of his father's
 arrival in Italy until he reached Berytus in November,⁸⁷
 Vespasian may not have reached Rome until mid-September or
 October.⁸⁸

There are other difficulties. Iosephus states that
 on the fourteenth of the month Xanthicus, that is, April 14,
 70 A.D.,⁸⁹ Titus was besieging Jerusalem. He apparently had
 arrived a few days earlier,⁹⁰ after a march from Alexandria
 via Caesarea. According to Iosephus, fourteen days were
 required to reach Caesarea.⁹¹ Another week should be set
 aside for the approach to Jerusalem.⁹² If, as Urban logically

⁸⁵Dio Cass. lxxv.9.3.

⁸⁶The dedication of the new Capitol is narrated in Hist. iv.53, the departure for Gaul in Hist. iv.68. This structure accurately reflects the chronology of these events; a senior Flavian official would have to be present at this important ceremony. Contra, S. Gsell, Domitien, 7 n. 1, 11 n. 7. Vespasian has still not reached Rome when the Historiae breaks off at v.26; cf. R. Urban, Domitianbild, 96.

⁸⁷Ioseph. BJ vii.63.

⁸⁸A. Chambalu, Philologus, 44 (1885) 506 argues for the first half of October.

⁸⁹BJ v.99. See B. Niese, "Zur Chronologie des Iosephus", Hermes, 28 (1893) 199, 204; R. Urban, Domitianbild, 90 n. 5.

⁹⁰BJ v.67-70 narrates the encampment of the legions. One battle, involving legio X Fretensis, intervenes before 14 Xanthicus: BJ v.71-97.

⁹¹BJ iv.659-663. Not 22 days, as stated by R. Urban, Domitianbild, 90-91.

⁹²Eight days: W. Weber, Iosephus und Vespasian, 197-

suggests, Titus had remained in Caesarea for a week in order to marshal and rest his forces,⁹³ then he must have departed⁹⁴ from Alexandria no later than March 15.

During the winter, maritime communication between Italy and Egypt was so dangerous that it virtually ceased.⁹⁵ Tacitus makes the point himself, when describing how Vespasian learned of the death of Vitellius: multi . . . pari audacia fortunaque hibernum mare adgressi (Hist. iv.51.1). No hope of reward would urge on those who brought reports of Domitian's misbehavior; they would follow the coastal route rather than brave the direct passage. Such a voyage would consume at least six weeks. Therefore, for Titus to defend Domitian before departing for Jerusalem on or before March 15, the reports of Domitian's misconduct would have to leave Rome at the latest by the end of January. This leaves barely a month for him to commit his misdeeds. During this period, Tacitus raises against Domitian only the vague charge contained in chapter iv.2, which, as discussed above and in a previous chapter, can only refer to the abduction of Domitia Longina.⁹⁶ Certainly, even if there were unfavorable reports,

198; ten days: R. Urban, Domitianbild, 90-91.

⁹³R. Urban, Domitianbild, 91.

⁹⁴Urban's estimate of 40 days, with a departure around February 25, is at least 8 days too long: Domitianbild, 91. My own estimate, however, should be taken as the minimum length of time required for the journey. The first or second week of March is more probable.

⁹⁵A. Chambalu, Philologus, 44 (1885) 504.

⁹⁶Cf. pp. 37-41 and 168-169 above.

the crisis could not have been very serious if Vespasian only took steps in mid-October to deal with a situation brought to his attention in mid-March.

These various criticisms completely undermine Tacitus' allegation that Vespasian returned hurriedly to Rome because of Domitian's outrageous conduct. The account of Iosephus, which apart from this rumor agrees with Tacitus', is therefore to be preferred. It was accepted and repeated by Dio Cassius:

τὸν δὲ υἱὸν αὐτοῦ Τίτον εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα καταλελοιπὸς
 πορθῆσαι αὐτὰ, τὴν ἐκείνων ἀνέμενεν ἄλυσεν, ἵνα μετὰ
 τοῦ νείεος ἐπανέλθῃ πρὸς τὴν Ῥώμην. τριβυμένον δὲ
 χρόνον ἐν τῇ πολιορκίᾳ τὸν μὲν Τίτον ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ
 κατέλειπεν, αὐτὸς δὲ ὁλκάδος ἐπιβάς ἐς Λυκίαν ἐπλευσε,
 κῆκεῖθεν τὰ μὲν περὶ τὴν ταῖς ναυτιλλόμενος ἐς τὸ
 βρεντέσιον ἐκομίσθη (lxv.9.2a).

In Historiae iv.51-52, therefore, igitur validissimam exercitus partem Tito tradit ad reliqua Iudaici belli perpetranda is the natural sequel to the report on Vitellius' death. Iudaea then remained the only war-zone in the East; Vespasian would naturally make arrangements for the suppression of the Jewish revolt before planning his return to Rome. His decisions for this theatre once made, however, it would be natural for Vespasianus in Italiam resque urbis intentus.⁹⁷ He would desire to return to Rome, not because of Domitian's conduct, but because it was the capital and nerve-center of

⁹⁷Cf. R. Urban, Domitianbild, 99.

the Empire.

The campaign of Mucianus and Domitian in Gaul has
98
already been briefly discussed in another context.

Tacitus devoted three chapters to the campaign, Historiae
iv.68 and iv.85-86. Despite the manifest conflict between
the accounts of Tacitus and Iosephus, Tacitus' version has
99
received broad and largely unquestioned acceptance.

Tacitus initially states that Mucianus, on his own
initiative, decided personally to reinforce Annius Gallus and
Petillius Cerialis because he feared that they would be un-
100
able to deal with the crisis along the Rhine:

At Romae cuncta in deterius audita Mucianum angebant,
ne quamquam egregii duces (iam enim Gallum Annium et
Petilium Cerialem delegerat) summam belli parum
tolerarent (iv.68.1).

This provides the setting for another vague criticism of
Domitian, to which Tacitus adds in passing that Antonius
Primus and Arrius Varus also could not be trusted:

⁹⁸Cf. pp. 40-41 above.

⁹⁹Cf. F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 10; S. Gsell, Domitien, 11; P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2546; G. Corradi, DE, 2 (1910) 1967-1968; A. Briessmann, Flavische Geschichtsbild, 89; and M. Fortina, C. Licinio Muciano, 27. The latter states that Domitian could not be left behind because of his "sfrenata ambizione". Mucianus tried to restrain Domitian "per evitare il pericolo che il Cesare diciottesimo, se fosse riuscito ad assumere il comando degli eserciti, riuscisse pernicioso alla cosa pubblica e per la pace e per la guerra."

¹⁰⁰Cf. A. Birley, "Petillius Cerialis and the Conquest of Brigantia", Britannia, 4 (1973) 183, who argues convincingly that, if Tacitus may be believed, Cerialis' history of rashness in the field was the real source of Mucianus' concern.

nec relinquenda urbs sine rectore; et Domitiani indomitae libidines timebantur, suspectis, ut diximus, Primo Antonio Varoque Arrio (iv.68.1).¹⁰¹

This criticism of Domitian is doubly inconsistent. First, it conflicts with an assessment previously given in chapter iv.40.1.¹⁰² Domitian's character was unknown, Tacitus says, and the Senate wrongly judged him a modest young man. Wrongly or not, since it did so judge him, we are left to speculate in vain about the persons who feared Domitian's ungoverned passions. Second, it is stated in both chapters iv.11 and iv.39 that Mucianus regarded Primus and Varus as his chief rivals and objects of suspicion. The change of emphasis in chapter iv.68 is therefore a clever piece of sophistry, and yet another example of the facility with which Tacitus could shift his historical judgement of a given individual to suit the needs of the moment.

The caretaker administration which Mucianus left in Rome during his absence reflects his concern with Primus and Varus. Varus was demoted from the praetorian prefecture to the office of praefectus annonae, and the trusted Arrecinus Clemens placed in command of the Guard:

Varus praetorianis praepositus vim atque arma retinebat: eum Mucianus pulsum loco, ne sine solacio ageret, annonae praefecit; utque Domitiani animum Varo haud alienum deleniret, Arrecinum Clementem, domui Vespasiani per adfinitatem innexum et gratissimum Domitiano, praetorianis praeposuit . . . (iv.68.2).

¹⁰¹Libido is another common trait of the tyrant in Roman political rhetoric; cf. J.R. Dunkle, "The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective of the Late Republic", TAPA, 98 (1967) 159; CW, 65 (1971) 13.

¹⁰²Hist. iv.40.1: "Decorus habitu; et ignotis adhuc

While Tacitus' account of Varus' demotion is sound, the reason which he initially gives for Clemens' appointment is absurd. Mucianus' choice was not dictated by an attempt to assuage Domitian's ruffled feelings; rather, as domui Vespasiani suggests, Clemens was appointed because he was a member of Vespasian's family and hence could be trusted. ¹⁰³

Tacitus presents other and equally cogent reasons:

patrem eius sub C. Caesare egregie functum ea cura dictitans, laetum militibus idem nomen, atque ipsum, quamquam senatorii ordinis, ad utraque munia sufficere (iv.68.2).

These arrangements completed, Mucianus personally ¹⁰⁴ selected the retinue to accompany himself and Domitian, and set out for Gaul. Tacitus professes to know their moods:

simul Domitianus Mucianusque accingebantur, dispari animo, ille spe ac iuventa properus, hic moras nectens, quis flagrantem retineret, ne ferocia aetatis et pravis impulsoribus, si exercitum invasisset, paci belloque male consuleret (iv.68.3).

The accuracy of his information is as questionable as its source. Tacitus certainly did not possess the confidence of either Domitian or Mucianus; and it is very unlikely that such dissension in the ranks of the Flavian leadership, if it existed, would be publicized. Thus deprived of a primary

moribus crebra oris confusio pro modestia accipiebatur."

¹⁰³His sister, Arrecina Tertulla, was Titus' first wife. See G. Townend, "Some Flavian Connections", JRS, 51 (1961) 56; PIR² A 1072; P. von Rohden, "Arrecina Tertulla", RE, 2 (1896) 1226.

¹⁰⁴Hist. iv.68.2: "adsumuntur e civitate clarissimus quisque et alii per ambitionem."

source, Tacitus is once again reduced to reliance on telepathic insight. Here, as in the instances previously cited where this technique is employed, Tacitus' assertion should be regarded as contrived.

Moreover, it is not completely consistent. As will
¹⁰⁵be pointed out below, hitherto in this book Tacitus has at times portrayed Domitian as a prudent and thoughtful young man not given to recklessness of any kind. Second, even if Domitian was being urged on by bad advisers, the responsibility lay with Mucianus, for in chapter iv.68 Tacitus has already clearly stated that Mucianus selected the retinue accompanying himself and Domitian! This is further confirmed by a subsequent statement that Mucianus would not permit Antonius
¹⁰⁶Primus to attend Domitian.

That Mucianus retained control over Domitian during the campaign is made clear when Tacitus resumes his narrative in chapter iv.85. As they approached the Alps, Mucianus and Domitian received reports of the operations successfully
¹⁰⁷conducted against the Treveri. Accordingly, Mucianus,
quod diu occultaverat, ut recens exprompsit:

¹⁰⁵Cf. pp. 185-187.

¹⁰⁶Hist. iv.80.1: "neque Antonium Primum adsciri inter comites a Domitiano passus est, favore militum anxius et superbia viri aequalium quoque, adeo superiorum intolerantis."

¹⁰⁷Hist. iv.85.1: "At Domitianus Mucianusque antequam Alpibus propinquarent, prosperos rerum in Treveris gestarum nuntios accepere."

quoniam benignitate deum fractae hostium vires forent,
parum decore Domitianum confecto prope bello alienae
gloriae interventurum . . . ipse Luguduni vim
fortunamque principatus e proximo ostentaret, nec
parvis periculis immixtus et maioribus non defuturus
(iv.85.2).

Tacitus cannot, however, resist once again reading Domitian's
mind: intellegebantur artes, sed pars obsequii in eo, ne
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deprehenderetur (iv.86.1).

Chapter iv.86 is a masterpiece of innuendo. A fact—
ita Lugdunum ventum—is followed by an unfounded rumor:

unde creditur Domitianus occultis ad Cerialem nuntiis
fidem eius temptavisse, an praesenti sibi exercitum
imperiumque traditurus foret (iv.86.1).

Conveniently vague in itself, this rumor is immediately
cited as the factual basis for a second and still more
vicious set of rumors:

qua cogitatione bellum adversus patrem agitaverit an
opes viresque adversus fratrem, in incerto fuit: nam
Cerialis salubri temperamento elusit ut vana pueriliter
cupientem (iv.86.1).

Neither Tacitus' method, nor the fact that Petillius Cerialis
was related to Vespasian and could expect to profit fully
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from his regime, inspires confidence in Tacitus' account.

¹⁰⁸Accepted uncritically by F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 10; S. Gsell, Domitien, 12; P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2546; and G. Corradi, DE, 2 (1910) 1968.

¹⁰⁹Cf. R. Urban, Domitianbild, 101. Yet the tale is accepted without question by P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2546; and G. Corradi, DE, 2 (1910) 1968, who writes: "Se fosse scopo di Domiziano di ribellarsi al padre o se volesse prepararsi delle forze sicure contro il fratello era incerto per Tacito, e rimane anche per noi un problema"! The tale is rejected by F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 10, and given only partial credence by S. Gsell, Domitien, 12.

Tacitus' explanation of Domitian's subsequent behavior demands both that this rumor be accepted as accurate, and that Tacitus again possess telepathic insight into Domitian's motivations:

Domitianus sperni a senioribus iuventam suam cernens modica quoque et usurpata antea munia imperii omittebat, simplicitatis ac modestiae imagine in altitudinem conditus studiumque litterarum et amorem carminum simulans, quo velaret animum et fratris <se> aemulationi subduceret, cuius disparem mitioremque naturam contra interpretabatur (iv.36.2).

Domitian's alleged overtures to Cerialis also rest upon a second questionable premise: the tradition of fraternal discord. Tacitus tries to exploit it in chapter iv.36, and it seems to have been a major theme of the Historiae. A passage in the Argonautica of Valerius Flaccus, however, seriously weakens this premise. He mentions that Domitian wrote a poem to celebrate his brother's achievements in the ¹¹⁰bellum Iudaicum. This is hardly consistent with the murderous intent foisted upon Domitian by Tacitus, and suggests that Domitian's objective in the Gallic expedition

¹¹⁰Valerius Flaccus Argonautica i.12-14: "versam proles tua pandit Idumen,/ sancte pater, Solymo nigrantem <et> pulvere fratrem/ spargentemque faces et in omni turre furentem." On the much-debated date of the poem, see especially R. Syme, "The Argonautica of Valerius Flaccus", CQ, 23 (1929) 129-137. On Domitian's poem in honor of Titus, see E. Lefèvre, Das Prooemium der Argonautica des Valerius Flaccus. Ein Beitrag zur Typik epischer Prooemium der römischen Kaiserzeit (Mainz: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1971) 24-25. S. Gsell, Domitien, 26, surpasses the ancient sources by attributing this poem to an effort on Domitian's part to conceal his hatred for his brother! Cf. Domitien, 39.

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was to win honors for himself, a context supported by Iosephus' parallel account at Bellum Iudaicum vii.85-88. Iosephus' account of Domitian's activities differs from Tacitus' both in tone and content:

ἡνίκα γὰρ πρῶτον ἢ τῆς ἀποστάσεως αὐτῶν ἀγγελία
τῇ Ῥώμῃ προσέπεσε Δομετιανὸς καὶ σαρ πνθόμενος οὐκ
ὡς ἂν ἕτερος ἐν τούτῳ τῆς ἡλικίας, νέος γὰρ ἦν ἐτι
παντάπασι, τῆς αἰδοῦντος ἀρᾶσαι μέγεθος πραγμάτων
ἠκύνθη, ἔκιν δὲ πατρόςθεν ἐμφύτον τὴν ἀδελφικὴν
καὶ τελευτότατον τὴν ἀσκήσειν τῆς ἡλικίας πεποιημένος
ἐπὶ τοὺς βαρβάρους εὐθὺς ἤλαυνεν. ἃ δὲ πρὸς τὴν
φῆμιν τῆς ἐφοδου καταπεσούτες ἐπ' αὐτῷ σφᾶς αὐτοῦ
ἐπαιήσαντο μέγα τοῦ φόβου κέρδος εὐράμενα τὸ λωρὶς
συμφερῶς ὑπὸ τὸν αὐτὸν πάλιν συγὸν ὑπαχθῆναι.
πᾶσιν οὖν ἐπιθεὶς τοῖς περὶ τὴν Γαλιταίαν τάξιν τὴν
προσῆκονσαν Δομετιανὸς, ὡς μὴδ' αὐθις ἂν ποτε ῥαδίως
εἰς τὰς ἐκ τῆς Γαλιταίας, ἀμπερὶς καὶ πέρυ βλεπτοῦς ἐπὶ
κρείττους μὲν τῆς ἡλικίας πρέπουσι δὲ τῷ πατρὶ
κατορθώμενοι εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ἀνεστρέφε.

Iosephus' account is of course highly exaggerated, but it has the merit of reflecting the attitude which Vespasian and Titus might be expected to assume in public with regard to Domitian's role in the Gallic campaign. That fact seriously jeopardizes Tacitus' account. He is forced to penetrate the façade of family solidarity, whether real or assumed, which Vespasian maintained for dynastic purposes. His credibility thus comes into question. Iosephus' account, in contrast, is strengthened because it conforms to the façade. In this particular instance, Iosephus' version is

111 Cf. R. Urban, Domitianbild, 105.

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supported by the passage cited above from Valerius Flaccus. Tacitus' narrative, with its fictitious sources and manifest inconsistencies, must therefore be rejected.

Ultimately, the credibility of the accusations which Tacitus raises against Domitian hinges upon the consistency of his characterization of Domitian as both dissolute and treasonable. Scattered throughout the fourth book of the *Historiae*, however, there is evidence sufficient in itself to bring that characterization into serious question. To begin with, it is clear that throughout the interval between the execution of Vitellius and the arrival of Vespasian, Domitian was completely subordinate to Mucianus. Tacitus makes the point himself: eius [Domitian's] nomen epistulis edictisque praeponeretur, vis penes Mucianum erat (iv.39). Always lacking a forum for independent activity, Domitian could perform only those duties assigned to him. However, if in the chapters following iv.39 Mucianus' direction of Domitian is obvious, it also appears that the

¹¹²And by the reliefs from the Palazzo della Cancelleria, which depict the meeting of Domitian and Vespasian on the latter's return to Rome in 70 A.D. See H. Last, "On the Flavian Reliefs from the Palazzo della Cancelleria", *JRS*, 38 (1948) 9-14. Cf. J. Béranger, "Les Génies du Sénat et du Peuple romain et les reliefs flaviens de la Cancelleria", *Hommages à Jean Bayet* (Bruxelles: Collection Latomus, 1964) 79-80, who describes Domitian's appearance on the reliefs at his meeting with his father as "grave, mais sereine". However, he then repeats what the written sources tell us about their meeting, which would have made Domitian feel anything but serene!

latter's mild temperament and ready co-operation were not feigned but genuine traits of character.

In one session of the Senate, for example, Domitian proposed the restoration of Galba's honors, a policy endorsed¹¹³ by Mucianus, and probably originating with Vespasian.

When he was then asked by Iunius Mauricus to submit to the Senate documents from the imperial archives which would incriminate the delators active under Nero, Domitian prudently replied that consulendum tali super re principem (iv.40.3). Caught off guard, Domitian thus neatly dodged the issue. This conflicts with Tacitus' description of him as an unbridled adolescent lusting to abuse his father's¹¹⁴ authority.

In chapter iv.44, which details the next meeting of the Senate, Domitian outlines the Flavian attitude towards the political flotsam of previous regimes: proximo senatu inchoante Caesare de abolendo dolore iraque et priorum temporum necessitatibus. The following passage infers that he had been carefully coached by Mucianus:

censuit Mucianus prolixè pro accusatoribus; simul eos, qui coeptam, deinde omissam actionem repeterent, monuit sermone molli et tamquam rogaret (iv.44.1).

In chapter iv.46, Domitian is hustled off to the camp in an attempt to forestall an incipient mutiny; Mucianus

¹¹³J. Gagé, "Vespasien et la Memoire de Galba", REA, 54 (1952) 290-315, discusses the reasons underlying Vespasian's restoration of Galba's memory.

¹¹⁴Hist. iv.39: "pleraque Domitianus instigantibus amicis aut propria libidine audebat."

remained in the background, and only intervened and acceded to the soldiers' demands when the ploy failed. Chapter iv.47 details still another session of the Senate, and Domitian proposes two additional items from Mucianus' agenda: abrogati inde legem ferente Domitiano consulatus, quos Vitellius dederat, funusque censorium Flavio Sabino ductum The journey to Gaul, and the malicious rumors emerging from it, in particular should be weighed in this context.

It is clear, then, that Domitian was unable to act independently at any time during his praetorship. As a subordinate of Mucianus, he could never have been the pernicious influence on the course of events which Tacitus makes him out to be. The ugly rumors and slanders raised against him are vague of necessity; these embroideries conflict not only with Iosephus' account but with elements in the narrative of Tacitus' Historiae itself.

Structure of the Non-Extant Portion of the Historiae

There remains only to surmise the treatment of Domitian in the non-extant portion of the Historiae, and the manner in which Tacitus structured his materials in order to substantiate his judgement of Domitian's reign. The extant portion provides a few hints.

In the preface of the Historiae, Tacitus outlines the basic themes which he intends to pursue. He first states that it was a turbulent period, with four emperors meeting

violent deaths, and three civil wars erupting.¹¹⁵ Hence the assassination of Domitian, and the rebellion of L. Antonius Saturninus, must have been fully covered. There were a variety of provincial and foreign crises during his reign: perdomita Britannia et statim missa, coortae in nos Sarmatarum ac Sueborum gentes, nobilitatus cladibus mutuis Dacus, mota prope etiam Parthorum arma falsi Neronis ludibrio (1.2.1).

These must have served as lengthy interludes in the continuing account of terror and moral decay in Rome. Pollutae caerimoniae, magna adulteria—the deaths of the Vestal Cornelia, and of Iulia, were undoubtedly narrated in close proximity to one another.¹¹⁶ Plenum exiliis mare, infecti

caedibus scopuli—lurid accounts of Domitian's exile or murder of his own relatives, of those suspected of complicity with Saturninus, and of the Stoics, will have been interspersed throughout the narrative with the same care given to the arrangement of similar materials in the account of the reign of Tiberius.¹¹⁷ All will have been treated as the innocent victims of tyranny. Much will have been made of the deaths of the Emperor's cousin Flavius Sabinus,¹¹⁸ Civica

¹¹⁵Hist. 1.2.1: "quattuor principes ferro interempti; trina bella civilia . . ."

¹¹⁶H.W. Traub, "Pliny's Treatment of History", TAPA, 86 (1955) 217.

¹¹⁷B. Walker, The Annals of Tacitus, 20-21.

¹¹⁸Suet. Dom. 10.4: "Flavium Sabinum alterum e patruelibus, quod eum comitiorum consularium die destinatum

119 Cerialis, Acilius Glabrio, 120 Aelius Lamia, 121 Salvius
 122 Cocceianus, Mettius Pomposianus, 123 and Sallustius
 124 Lucullus. The Stoics will have received special sympathy,
 125 as was the case in the Agricola. The executions of
 Arulenus Rusticus, Herennius Senecio, and Helvidius Priscus
 126 will have climaxed the terror, already painted in the
 blackest of terms in the preface itself:

atrocius in urbe saevitum: nobilitas, opes, omissi

perperam praeco non consulem ad populum, sed imperatorem pronuntiasset." Cf. Dio Cass. lxvii.14.1-2.

119 Suet. Dom. 10.2: "Complures senatores . . . interemit; ex quibus Civicam Cerealem in ipso Asiae proconsulatu . . ."

120 Suet. Dom. 10.2: "Acilium Glabrionem <in> exilio . . ." Cf. Dio Cass. lxvii.14.3.

121 Suet. Dom. 10.2: "Aelium Lamiam ob suspiciosos quidem, verum et veteres et innoxios iocos, quod post abductam uxorem laudanti vocem suam eutacto dixerat quodque Tito hortanti se ad alterum matrimonium responderat: μή καὶ σὺ γαμήσαι θέλεις . . ."

122 Suet. Dom. 10.3: "Salvium Cocceianum, quod Othonis imperatoris patrui sui diem natalem celebraverat . . ."

123 Suet. Dom. 10.3: "Mettium Pomposianum, quod habere imperatoriam genesim vulgo ferebatur et quod depictum orbem terrae in membrana[s] contionesque regum ac ducum ex Tito Livio circumferret quodque servis nomina Magonis et Hannibalis indidisset . . ." Also murdered in exile; cf. Dio Cass. lxvii.12.2-4.

124 Suet. Dom. 10.3: "Sallustium Lucillum Britanniae legatum, quod lanceas novae formae appellari Luculleas passus esset . . ."

125 See Agr. 2.1; 45.1.

126 See, in addition to Agr. 2.1 and 45.1, Suet. Dom. 10.3-4 and Dio Cass. lxvii.13.2-3.

gestique honores pro crimine, et ob virtutes certissimum exitium. nec minus praemia delatorum invisa quam scelera, cum alii sacerdotia et consulatus ut spolia adepti, procurationes alii et interiorum potentiam, agerent verterent cuncta odio et terrore. corrupti in dominos servi, in patronos liberti; et quibus deerat inimicus, per amicos oppressi (i.2.3).

There are two additional references to topics covered in the non-extant portion of the Historiae which seem to confirm the accuracy of the outline presented in the preface. In chapter ii.8, Tacitus alludes to his subsequent treatment of the "false Neros" who arose under Titus and Domitian—a subject explicitly mentioned in the preface.¹²⁷ In chapter iv.50, he refers for the first time to Baebius Massa, the notorious delator who was to prosecute Helvidius Priscus.¹²⁸ Massa's career, along with those of A. Didius Gallus Fabricius Veiento, M. Aquillius Regulus, and Valerius Messallinus, will have inspired the sweeping condemnation of delation lodged in the preface. The narrative of their activities will have formed an important element in the account of Domitian's tyranny.

A late historian also provides confirmation. In his Seven Books Against the Pagans, Paul Orosius says:

¹²⁷Hist. ii.8: "ceterorum casus conatusque in contextu operis dicemus . . ." See A.E. Pappano, CJ, 32 (1937) 385-392; F. Grosso, "Aspetti della Politica Orientale di Domiziano II: Parti e Estremo Oriente", Epigraphica, 17 (1955) 32-78, especially 70-78; and P.A. Gallivan, Historia, 22 (1973) 364-365.

¹²⁸Hist. iv.50.2: "Baebius Massa e procuratoribus Africae, iam tunc optimo cuique exitiosus et in<ter> causas malorum, quae mox tulimus, saepius rediturus."

nam quanta fuerint Diurpanei Dacorum regis cum Fusco
duce proelia quantaeque Romanorum clades, longo textu
evolverem, nisi Cornelius Tacitus, qui hanc historiam
diligentissime contexuit, de reticendo interfectorum
numero et Sallustium Crispum et alios auctores
quamplurimos sanxisse et se ipsum idem potissimum
elegisse dixisset (vii.10).

This passage proves that Tacitus composed a detailed account of the Dacian wars, an account still extant at the end of the fourth century A.D. It also provides a valuable insight into Tacitus' method. It indicates that, as in Agricola 41, Tacitus was purposefully vague in his enumeration of Roman casualties. The original passage was undoubtedly couched in terms sufficiently lurid to compel the reader to infer a far larger number of casualties than the facts warranted.¹²⁹

There is also a strong possibility that Tacitus' account of one very significant episode—the death of Titus and the accession of Domitian—has been faithfully transmitted through Dio Cassius. Dio was definitely not drawing upon Suetonius, because while their accounts are similar, Dio provides greater detail. More importantly, his format of fact and rumor is characteristically Tacitean.

Dio begins with a malicious rumor:

ὥς γὰρ ἡ φήμη λέγει, πρὸς τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ ἀναλῶν θεός,
ὅτι καὶ πρότερον ἐπεβεβόλυντο ὑπ' αὐτοῦ . . .
(lxvi.26.2).

For the sake of apparent objectivity, he adds: ὥς δέ τινες
γράφουσι, νοσήσας. Then, however, he recounts the original

¹²⁹ The passage further indicates that Tacitus justified his method by appeal to the practice of Sallust.

rumor in detail:

ἔμπνευσεν γὰρ τοῖς αὐτὸν ὄντα καὶ τάχα περιγίνεσθαι
δυνάμενον ἐς λάρνακα χείρους πολλῆς γέμουσαν, ὃ
Δομιτιανὸς ἐνέβαλεν, ὡς δεομένης τῆς ῥέσου τάχα
τινὸς περιψύξεως, ἵνα θάσσειν ἀπο θάνη (lxvi.26.2).

The next sentence is clearly extracted from a narrative history. Out of context, it appears quite neutral. As it appears in the narrative, however, it is very unflattering to Domitian:

ἔτι γοῶν ζῶντος αὐτοῦ ἐς τε τὴν Ῥώμην ἀφίππευσε
καὶ ἐς τὸ στρατόπεδον ἐσηλθε, τὴν τε ἐπικλήσιν καὶ
τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος ἔλαβε, τοὺς αὐτοῖς
ὅσους περ καὶ ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ ἐδεδώκει (lxvi.26.3).

On his deathbed, Titus made the enigmatic comment that ἐν μόνον ἐπλημμέλησα.¹³⁰ Dio adds that τί δὲ δὴ τοῦτο εἶη οὐ διεσάφησεν, ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἄλλος σὺνδεῖς ἀκριβῶς ἀνέγνω.

What follows is precisely the kind of conjecture which Tacitus normally uses to full advantage:

οἱ μὲν γὰρ τὸ αἰ δὲ τὸ κατείκασαν· κρατὲς δ' οὖν, ὡς
μὲν πυνθεῖς ἄγουσιν, ὅτι τὴν Δομιτιανὴν τὴν τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ
γυναικα ἔσχεν, ὡς δ' ἔπειτα, οἷς ἐγὼ πείθομαι, ὅτι
τὸν Δομιτιανὸν σαφῶς ἐπεβουλεύσαντά αἱ λαβὼν οὐκ
ἀπέκτεινεν, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς τε ὑπ' ἐκείνου παθεῖν τοῦτο
μᾶλλον ἔλετο (lxvi.26.3-4).

Turning to the deification of Titus, Dio goes on to say:

αὐτὸς τε γὰρ καὶ φιλεῖν τὸν ἀδελφὸν καὶ περθεῖν
προσεποιεῖτο, καὶ τοὺς τε ἐπαίνους τοὺς ἐπ' αὐτῷ

¹³⁰Cf. Suet. Titus 10.

μετὰ δακρύων ἔλεξε καὶ ἐς τοὺς ἥρωας αὐτὸν
σπουδῇ ἐσεγράψεν, πάντα τὰ ἐναντιώτατα ὧν
ἐβούλετο σκηπτόμενος (lxvii.2.6).

The fusion of fact and impression in this sentence, and its reliance on telepathic insight, again suggest Tacitus.

If Dio has indeed modeled his account on the Historiae, as his methodology certainly suggests, then with the aid of Suetonius Titus ll Tacitus' narrative may be reconstructed approximately as follows:

Taken with fever, Titus dies—

It was widely rumored that Domitian had hastened his death—

While some people believe that Titus died a natural death, most in fact believe that Domitian was responsible—

It is said that Domitian disposed of Titus by giving him a chill to increase his fever—

Even before Titus' death, Domitian hurried back to Rome from Reate. Ignoring the assembled Senate, he proceeded directly to the praetorian camp, where he ensured his accession with a donative equal to that distributed by his brother—

The Senate, meanwhile, had gathered to mourn Titus, not so much because of his virtue, but because they realized how much more tyrannical a master Domitian would be—

Harboring a grudge against the Senate for this reason, Domitian convenes it. Masking his resentment, he allows himself to be constitutionally invested—

He hypocritically proposes the deification of Titus—

This measure approved, the more slavish members of the Senate rival each other in flattering the new Emperor—

A Senator finally proposes that the Emperor resolve not to execute any member of the Senate. Domitian rejects the proposal—

This confirms the Senate's fears, and unveils Domitian's intention to create an autocracy.

At some point in this episode, Tacitus will have concluded the seventh and opened the eighth book of the Historiae. The last five books seem to have been devoted exclusively to Domitian's reign; Sir Ronald Syme has ably reconstructed the book divisions, and the subjects worthy of emphasis.¹³¹ It need only be added that the steady degeneration of the Principate into an undisguised tyranny will have been the principal theme, and that Domitian will have been treated even more venomously here than in the fourth book.

Conclusion

Iosephus' narrative of the accession of the Flavian dynasty has been condescendingly dismissed as "official history".¹³² While it is true that Iosephus was a court historian, that does not in itself render him invariably untrustworthy—a point too often overlooked. The lengthy and detailed analysis presented above has argued that the discrepancies between the accounts of Iosephus and Tacitus are significant, and that Tacitus is not always the more accurate and reliable narrator. For this reason, Iosephus' account deserves very careful consideration. The magnitude

¹³¹R. Syme, Tacitus, 214-216.

¹³²Cf. p. 145 n. 32 above.

of Tacitus' reputation, however, has always prevented Iosephus—like Velleius Paterculus—from receiving an impartial hearing.¹³³

Tacitus, it should be noted, was also writing a kind of "official history", a point which has never received sufficient emphasis. Tacitus was not an historian by profession; rather, a senator writing history. The distinction has vast implications. If Iosephus' estimate of the accomplishments of the Flavian dynasty reflects an imperial point of view, certainly Tacitus' judgement of that dynasty's achievements reflects a senatorial point of view.¹³⁴ For this reason, both authors should be approached with great caution.

It is equally important to note that in his narrative of the Flavian era, and particularly of the reign of Domitian, Tacitus was writing contemporary history—and writing under intense pressure. The Senate had invoked damnatio memoriae, enforced for reasons of political self-interest by Trajan. Whatever Tacitus' own personal relationship with Domitian

¹³³R. Syme, Tacitus, 367-368, is representative of the modern historical attitude to Velleius. His sole advocate is G.V. Sumner, "The Truth about Velleius Paterculus: Prolegomena", HSCPh, 74 (1970) 257-297.

¹³⁴This writer agrees with the assessment of J.S. Reid, "Tacitus as a Historian", JRS, 11 (1921) 193: "He [Tacitus] is essentially a Roman 'Society' writer. He wrote for the circle of great families living in Rome, and nothing outside had any independent interest for him excepting war."

may have been, the account of his reign—and of his participation in public affairs before his accession—was heavily influenced. An impartial verdict could not be entertained; Tacitus' account of Domitian's actions and temperament had to be tailored to conform with the tyrant-stereotype into which he had been officially relegated.

The strains and contradictions in Tacitus' treatment of Domitian in the Historiae, as in the Agricola, stem from this stricture. Compelled to make his portrait of Domitian conform to a simplistic but official stereotype, Tacitus was encouraged to perfect a methodology which relied heavily upon rumor, half-truth, distortion and concealment of fact, and designed arrangement of material. This method may have been very convincing when applied to Domitian's principate; turned against a politically naive adolescent suddenly caught up in the vortex of civil war, however, it has proven remarkably unwieldy.

Tacitus' objectivity will have been strained even when dealing with lesser personalities. Many of the participants in the events which he describes in the Historiae will still have been alive and politically active when he was writing his account. Others will have been survived by sons pursuing political careers of their own. All will have shared more than passing interest in the verdicts which
¹³⁵
 Tacitus cast. Pliny stated the problem quite succinctly

¹³⁵C. Oppius Severus, the son of C. Oppius Sabinus,

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in his letter to Titinius Capito.

Interested personalities will have influenced the Historiae in a second important dimension. As already mentioned, in the same letter to Titinius Capito Pliny also describes the Flavian period from the historian's point of view as intacta et nova. Tacitus was the first person to compose a history of the period as a whole. Pliny was requested to submit materials on his uncle's activities during the eruption of Vesuvius (vi.16; 20), but also dispatched an unsolicited account of his own role in the trial of Baebius Massa (vii.33). Tacitus will have received similar submissions from some of his colleagues, and will have conducted both formal and informal interviews with others who had played important roles in the events covered in the Historiae. Oral testimony, necessarily self-serving, will thus have been one of Tacitus' most important

was not admitted to the senatorial order until the reign of Hadrian because of the stigma attached to his father's defeat in Moesia. He finally attained the consulship during the period 130-138 A.D. For his cursus honorum, see ILS 1059, and E. Groag, "C. Oppius Severus", RE, 18.1 (1939) 746. [T.] Pomponius Mamilianus Rufus Antistianus Funisulanus Vettonianus, a son of the Flavian marshal L. Funisulanus Vettonianus, who was destined to hold the consulship in 100, will not have appreciated Tacitus' remark about Domitian's generals in Agr. 41, which was penned in 98. His son, the consul of 121, who would be starting his senatorial career around 98-100, would share his sentiments (omitted by RE). The article by R. Hanslik, "T. Pomponius Mamilianus Rufus Antistianus Funisulanus Vettonianus", RE, 21 (1951) 2342, is untrustworthy.

¹³⁶Ep. v.8. Cf. p. 136 n. 10 above.

sources,¹³⁷ and one of the most difficult to control. Signs of its influence on his judgement have already been detected by other scholars;¹³⁸ one of Pliny's letters will shed further light.

In epistula iii.16, Pliny passes on stories related to him by the Stoic Fannia about her grandmother Arria. When Arria's husband was being extradited from Illyricum to Rome to stand trial for conspiracy with Camillus Scribonianus, she was refused permission to accompany him. Accordingly she hired a small boat, and braved the stormy passage from Illyricum to Italy on her own. Again, at the trial she rebuked Scribonianus' wife for testifying against her late husband, and gave the ultimate proof of her constancy by committing suicide in order to give her husband the courage to seek a similar release. In relating the first story, Pliny says: Scribonianus arma in Illyrico contra Claudium moverat. Tacitus uses very similar language in the Annales: Pater Scriboniani Camillus arma per Dalmatiam moverat (xii.52). This suggests that Tacitus consulted the same source, either at first or second-hand, and used oral

¹³⁷C. Mendell, Tacitus, 201; E. Groag, JCPH, supp.-bd. 23 (1897) 793-794.

¹³⁸Notably in the very sympathetic treatment of Verginius Rufus, with whom Tacitus was sufficiently intimate to be asked to deliver his funeral oration: Pliny Ep. ii.1.5. See G.B. Townend, "The Reputation of Verginius Rufus", Latomus, 21 (1961) 337-341.

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testimony even for the Annales.

These various pressures will have affected both the writer and his text. It is, therefore, fair to say in summary that the Historiae as a whole must be approached with caution, while the treatment of Domitian and the events in which he participated is so seriously distorted that it must be regarded as discredited. In a word, Tacitus has abandoned the canons of historical accuracy and objectivity, and has treated Domitian not as an impartial historian, but as a senatorial propagandist.

¹³⁹For Tacitus' use of oral evidence in Annales i-vi, see F.B. Marsh, "Tacitus and Aristocratic Tradition", CPh, 21 (1926) 289-310.

III

PLINY AND DOMITIAN: THE EPISTULAE AND PANEGYRICUS

Pliny's Career Under Domitian

The assassination of Domitian, sudden and unexpected, produced an immediate political upheaval in the Roman Senate. The deceased Emperor immediately suffered damnatio memoriae, and many of the senators, perhaps a majority, demonstrated their long-suppressed anger and hatred with acts of manifest savagery:

Iuvabat illidere solo superbissimos vultus, instare ferro, saevire securibus, ut si singulos ictus sanguis dolorque sequeretur. Nemo tam temperans gaudii seraeque laetitiae, quin instar ultionis videretur cernere laceros artus truncata membra, postremo truces horrendasque imagines obiectas excultasque flammis, ut ex illo terrore et minis in usum hominum ac voluptates ignibus mutarentur (Pan. 52.4-5).

Thus Pliny rhetorically describes the Senate's reaction.

The sincerity of at least some of the participants is suspect.

The more prudent senators, pondering the uncertain future of an aged and fragile caretaker administration, and weighing the possibilities of civil war between the legates¹ of Syria and Germania Superior,² will have refrained from

¹The commander of the amplissimus exercitus in Ep. ix.13.11 is now known to be M. Cornelius Nigrinus Curiatius Maternus, governor of Syria ca. 94/95-96/97. See G. Alföldy and H. Halfmann, Chiron, 3 (1973) 331-373.

²Nerva's adoption of Trajan in the aftermath of the revolt of the Praetorian Guard (Dio Cass. lxviii.3.3) gave

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such intemperate and premature enthusiasm. Rather, they dissociated themselves from the condemned regime while defending their personal conduct.⁴ Hence the Agricola of Tacitus. Spurred on by an uncomfortable awareness that his father-in-law had been an important marshal of Domitian, while his own career had rapidly advanced during his reign, Tacitus felt compelled to acquit himself of any suspicion of collusion with the tyrant. The Agricola was designed to strike a balance between condemnation of Domitian, and defence of service in his government.

Pliny associated himself with the more strident elements of the Senate. With considerable candor, he stated in a letter addressed to Ummidius Quadratus (ten to twelve years after the fact):⁵ occiso Domitiano statui mecum ac deliberavi, esse magnam pulchramque materiam insectandi nocentes, miseros vindicandi, se proferendi (ix.13.2).

legitimacy to an ill-concealed coup d'état. Cf. R. Syme, Tacitus, 10-18.

³Note the advice tendered Pliny by a consular when Pliny was preparing publicly to attack Publicius Certus: quid praesentibus confidis incertus futurorum? Ep. ix.13.11.

⁴The notorious delator and consul ter A. Didius Gallus Fabricius Veiento springs immediately to mind. He was an intimate dinner companion of Nerva during the latter's principate: Ep. iv.22.4; cf. R. Syme, Tacitus, 5-6. He quickly came to the defence of Publicius Certus when the latter was threatened with prosecution by Pliny: Ep. ix.13.13. Veiento's career has recently received sympathetic treatment from W.C. McDermott, "Fabricius Veiento", AJPh, 91 (1970) 129-148.

⁵The letters contained in Book IX range from late 106 to the middle of 108: A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 41.

Despite lavish denials, Pliny in fact adopted the very
 tactic which he professed to deplore.⁶ Prosecution of the
 rich and influential Neronian delator M. Aquillius Regulus
 was contemplated, and prudently forgotten—but not until
 receiving widespread publicity (i.5).⁷ On this occasion
 Pliny played heavily upon his connections with the Stoic
 opposition to Domitian. He contemplated prosecution on the
 flimsy pretext that Rustici Aruleni periculum foverat,
exsultaverat morte . . . lacerat Herennium Senecionem tam
intemperanter quidem, ut dixerit ei Mettius Carus "Quid tibi
cum meis mortuis?" (i.5.2-3). Despite the intercession of
 the powerful Vestricius Spurinna on Regulus' behalf (i.5.8-9),⁸
 Pliny avers that he decided to wait and act solely on the
 advice of another Stoic, Iunius Mauricus: "exspecto Mauricum
. . . facturum quidquid ille decreverit; illum enim esse
huius consilii ducem, me comitem decet" (i.5.10).

Pliny abandoned this venture, presumably because
 Regulus was, as he admits, locuples factiosus, curatur a
multis, timetur a pluribus, quod plerumque fortius amore est

⁶Cf. Ep. ix.13.4: "ac primis quidem diebus redditae libertatis pro se quisque inimicos suos, dumtaxat minores, incondito turbidoque clamore postulaverat simul et oppresserat."

⁷The details of Regulus' career remain a matter of controversy. Cf. A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 93-94; contra, C.P. Jones, JRS, 60 (1970) 98 n. 7.

⁸For Spurinna's career, cf. R. Syme, Tacitus, 634-635; M. Schuster, "Vestricius Spurinna", RE, 8A (1955) 1791-1797. A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 761, is untrustworthy.

(1.5.15). If Pliny's sense of outrage was genuine, one wonders why he did not indict Mettius Carus, the delator responsible for the prosecution of Herennius Senecio, and intended prosecutor (it is alleged) of Pliny himself.⁹

Instead, he attacked Publicius Certus, a senator of praetorian standing who had secured the condemnation of Helvidius Priscus (ix.13). Once again, Pliny stresses that his action on behalf of this Stoic victim of Domitian's tyranny was compelled by amicitia: fuerat aliqui mihi cum Helvidio amicitia, quanta potuerat esse cum eo, qui metu temporum nomen ingens pares-que virtutes secessu tegebat; fuerat cum Arria et Fannia, quarum altera Helvidi noverca, altera mater novercae (ix.13.

3). Although a charge was never formally laid against Certus, he was deprived of an expected consulship.¹⁰

Pliny did not restrict himself, however, to publicizing his close ties with the Stoic victims of Domitian. On six occasions—once in the Panegyricus and five times in the Epistulae—he claims that during Domitian's reign his friendship with dissident elements placed him in grave personal danger. The passages in question are as follows:

⁹Ep. vii.27.14. Although Mettius Carus was one of the most powerful senatorial delators under Domitian, little is known of his career. Cf. A. Stein, "Mettius Carus", RE, 15 (1932) 1499.

¹⁰Ep. ix.13.22-23: "Et relationem quidem de eo Caesar ad senatum non remisit; obtinui tamen quod intenderam: nam collega Certi consulatum, successorem Certus accepit . . ."

Praeterea cum recorderer, quanta pro isdem Baeticis superiore advocazione etiam pericula subissem . . . (iii.4.6).

This enigmatic passage refers to Pliny's role in the trial of Baebius Massa in 93 A.D. Pliny does not elaborate upon the pericula to which he was exposed; fortunately, however, a subsequent letter addressed to Tacitus provides the details. When Massa accused his most earnest prosecutor, Herennius Senecio, of impietas, Pliny claims that he immediately replied that the charge should also be brought against him, so that he would not be thought guilty of the opposite offence, praevaricatio:

Horror omnium; ego autem "Vereor" inquam, "clarissimi consules, ne mihi Massa silentio suo praevaricationem obiecerit, quod non et me reum postulavit" (vii.33.8).

Pliny clearly wishes to imply that his courageous act exposed him to prosecution, and that he might have shared Senecio's fate if Massa had acted upon his challenge.

As a result of the subsequent expulsion of the philosophers from Rome, Pliny once again found himself endangered:

Equidem, cum essent philosophi ab urbe summoti, fui apud illum [Artemidorus] in suburbano, et quo notabilius (hoc est, periculosius) esset fui praetor (iii.11.2).¹²

¹¹At Ep. vii.33.3, Pliny describes this incident as one "cuius gratia periculo crevit . . ." Since Book VII was composed around 107, Pliny had had some fourteen years in which to embellish his account. Hence the possibility that he has exaggerated his role in the trial cannot be ignored.

¹²Cf. Tac. Agr. 2.2. Professional philosophers were in disrepute under the Flavian dynasty; see the references cited on p.22 n. 36.

To visit Artemidorus required daring and courage, and in the following sentence Pliny expressly states that his activities had rendered him suspect, and exposed him to delation:

Atque haec feci, cum septem amicis meis aut occisis aut relegatis, occisis Senecione Rustico Helvidio, relegatis Maurico Gratilla Arria Fannia, tot circa me iactis fulminibus quasi ambustus mihi quoque impendere idem exitium certis quibusdam notis augurarer (iii.11.3).

The metaphor is repeated in the Panegyricus:

Utrumque nostrum [Pliny and Cornutus Tertullus] ille optimi cuiusque spoliator et carnifex stragibus amicorum et in proximum iacto fulmine adflaverat (Pan. 90.5).

Finally, he asserts that an indictment was ultimately lodged against him by Mettius Carus, and that only Domitian's assassination prevented him from being brought to trial:

Nihil notabile secutum, nisi forte quod non fui reus, futurus, si Domitianus sub quo haec acciderunt diutius vixisset. Nam in scrinio eius datus a Caro de me libellus inventus est . . . (vii.27.14).

In summary, Pliny argues that his association with various members of the Stoic party in the Senate, and his friendship with such discredited individuals as Artemidorus, made him an attractive target for the delators. Finally accused by Mettius Carus, he escaped martyrdom only because of Domitian's assassination. He was thus not merely sympathetic towards the opponents of Domitian's alleged tyranny, but an involved and threatened member of that opposition.

The plausibility of this claim hinges upon whether Pliny was regarded as a member of the Stoic circle by Domitian and his advisers. The possibility seems very unlikely,

given the evidence for Pliny's career; a careful examination of the confrontation between Massa and Senecio induces further doubt. Nothing apparently came of Pliny's dramatic challenge to Massa. He was not indicted either for impietas or praevaricatio, and it is worth noting that Massa's accusation against Senecio also failed. The latter was subsequently prosecuted by Mettius Carus, and condemned on a charge of maiestas arising from his biography of Helvidius Priscus.¹³ Pliny's conduct was, he claims, the subject of immediate praise, an impossible reaction if Domitian's attitude had been unfavorable or ambiguous.¹⁴ Nerva, who¹⁵ was a member of Domitian's inner circle, is specifically named as one who congratulated Pliny for pursuing the correct course of action.¹⁶ Thus despite Pliny's rhetoric,¹⁷ it is

¹³Cf. Ep. 1.5.2-3; Tac. Agr. 2.1. R. Syme, Tacitus, 76, confuses the charges laid against Senecio.

¹⁴Ep. vii.33.8: "Quae vox et statim excepta, et postea multo sermone celebrata est."

¹⁵He was consul ordinarius with Domitian in 90 A.D., the year after the rebellion of L. Antonius Saturninus in Germania Superior; cf. A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 447. A. Garzetti, Nerva (Rome: Angelo Signorelli, 1950) 24-28, is inadequate for Nerva's relationship with Domitian.

¹⁶Ep. vii.33.9: "Divus quidem Nerva . . . missis ad me gravissimis litteris non mihi solum, verum etiam saeculo est gratulatus, cui exemplum (sic enim scripsit) simile antiquis contigisset."

¹⁷Cf. Pan. 62.3: "An parum saepe experti sumus hanc esse rerum condicionem, ut senatus favor apud principem aut prosit aut noceat? Nonne paulo ante nihil magis exitiale erat quam illa principis cogitatio: 'hunc senatus probat, hic senatui carus est'?"

clear that this incident did not damage his relations with the Emperor.

Once Pliny's association with Herennius Senecio and the other members of the Stoic party is viewed in perspective, his visit to Artemidorus loses its impact. If he took notice at all, Domitian will have tolerated this as he tolerated other manifestations of republicanism among his favorites and close associates.¹⁸ Pliny plays down the fact that throughout this period he was in high favor with Domitian, and that, far from being in immediate peril, his career continued to flourish unabated.

With the evidence for his alleged political impropriety removed, Pliny's assertion that a delator's indictment was discovered among Domitian's papers must be viewed with scepticism.¹⁹ However, even if the story was true, it should be noted that Pliny was not prosecuted, and it does not automatically follow that he would have been. To the contrary, Pliny's cursus honorum, fully detailed on a series of inscriptions erected in Comum and its environs,²⁰ provides evidence for his career which sharply contrasts

¹⁸Domitian's ab epistulis, Gn. Octavius Titinius Capito, maintained statues of Cato, Brutus, and Cassius in his home: Ep. i.17.3. Such indiscretion had been dangerous under previous emperors; cf. Tac. Ann. iv.35. Domitian ignored it.

¹⁹R. Syme, Tacitus, 82, offers a just appraisal.

²⁰CIL V.5262 (= ILS 2927), 5263, 5279 (= ILS 6728), and 5667.

with this series of statements.

Pliny was born Gaius or Lucius Caecilius Secundus²¹ in 61 or 62 A.D. Both branches of his family were established members of the municipal aristocracy at Comum.²² The premature death of his father left Pliny under the guardianship of Verginius Rufus, whom Pliny claims to have been a constant support in his pursuit of public office.²³ After studying in Rome under Quintilian and the Greek rhetorician Nicetes Sacerdos (ii.14.9; vi.6.3), Pliny argued his first case in the Centumviral Court at the age of eighteen (in either 79 or 80).²⁴ It was also in 79 that Pliny was adopted in the will of his influential uncle, Pliny the Elder (v.8.5). Henceforth Pliny's nomenclature read C. Plinius L. f. Ouf.²⁵ Caecilius Secundus.

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Embarking upon the senatorial cursus honorum,

²¹Pliny was in his eighteenth year when Vesuvius erupted on August 24, 79: Ep. vi.20.5; cf. A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 379.

²²For Pliny's family background, see Th. Mommsen, Ges. Schr. IV, 394-397; A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 69-70.

²³Ep. ii.1.8: "praeterea quod ille mihi tutor relictus adfectum parentis exhibuit. Sic candidatum me suffragio ornavit . . ."

²⁴Ep. v.8.8; cf. i.18.3; iv.24.1.

²⁵See Th. Mommsen, Ges. Schr. IV, 397-412, for the most comprehensive treatment of Pliny's testamentary adoption.

²⁶A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 71, cites Ep. iv.8.3 and v.1.5 as proof that "the young Pliny was well placed to attempt the senatorial career" because he had the support of the consulars Iulius Frontinus and Corellius

Pliny served his vigintivirate in the capacity of a decimvir stlitibus iudicandis. Reserved for candidates of outstanding potential who were marked for rapid promotion, the post²⁷ augured a promising career. The laticlave military tribunate followed. Pliny was posted to the Syrian legio III Gallica,²⁸ where his duties seem to have been confined to financial matters.²⁹ While the year of his tribunate remains uncertain, a Domitianic date is demanded by the cutting description of relaxed military discipline in epistula viii.³⁰ 14.7.

The precise dates of Pliny's quaestorship, plebeian

Rufus. Nothing in these letters, however, suggests that they supported him at the beginning of his career. Pliny himself cites Verginius Rufus: Ep. 11.1.8.

²⁷Cf. E. Birley, "Senators in the Emperor's Service", PBA, 39 (1953) 201.

²⁸Ep. 1.10.2; ILS 2927; CIL V.5667.

²⁹Ep. vii.31.2: "ego iussus a legato consulari rationes alarum et cohortium excutere . . ."

³⁰"At nos iuvenes fuimus quidem in castris; sed cum suspecta virtus, inertia in pretio, cum ducibus auctoritas nulla, nulla militibus verecundia, nusquam imperium nusquam obsequium, omnia soluta turbata atque etiam in contrarium versa, postremo obliviscenda magis quam tenenda." Mommsen believed that these two preliminary offices could not be precisely dated: Ges. Schr. IV, 412-413. Nevertheless, the military tribunate has often been dated to 81; cf. A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 73. Since Domitian assumed the throne on September 13, 81, Pliny's remark cited above renders 82 more probable. The governor of Syria at this time was T. Atilius Rufus (Tac. Agr. 40; AE 1925, 95). Despite the well-attested laxness of the Syrian army (Tac. Ann. xii.12; xiii.35), it is unlikely that this former governor of Pannonia (CIL XVI.26) will have tolerated poor military discipline.

tribunate, and praetorship have been the subject of continuous debate. No one, however, has denied that he enjoyed the Emperor's support during these stages of his career. Comparing his career with that of Calpurnius Piso, Pliny furnishes the evidence himself:

Simul militavimus, simul quaestores Caesaris fuimus. Ille me in tribunatu liberorum iure praecessit, ego illum in praetura sum consecutus, cum mihi Caesar annum remisisset (vii.16.2).

ILS 2927 confirms that Pliny was quaestor Augusti, hence a candidatus Caesaris. The reduction of the interval between the tribunate and the praetorship by the remission of one year also attests imperial favor. Indeed, it has been argued on the basis of a passage in epistula 11.9.1 that Pliny was a candidatus Caesaris for all three offices.³¹ This, however, presses his language much too far.³² It can only safely be concluded that Pliny was assured of imperial favor, but not necessarily of imperial commendatio, when canvassing for these three offices.

Unfortunately, some discussion of the involved controversy concerning the dating of Pliny's career, and

³¹"Adficior cura et, quam pro me sollicitudinem non adii, quasi pro me altero patior . . ." Cf. A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 73, 157; R. Hanslik, AAWW, 102 (1965) 53.

³²Pliny's conventional solicitude for a friend canvassing for public office cannot be regarded as proof that Pliny had never felt qualms on similar occasions himself because he was blessed with imperial commendatio. While both the letters and the inscriptions outlining his cursus honorum record that he was quaestor Augusti, neither hint at commendation for the tribunate and praetorship.

particularly of his praetorship, cannot be avoided. That issue bears directly on a second statement which he makes about his career under Domitian. In Panegyricus 95.3-4, Pliny asserts that he voluntarily checked his career when Domitian's autocracy degenerated into an open reign of terror, that is, in the period 94-96 A.D.:

si cursu quodam provectus ab illo insidiosissimo principe, ante quam profiteretur odium bonorum, postquam professus est substiti, cum viderem quae ad honores compendia paterent longius iter malui; si malis temporibus inter maestos et paventes, bonis inter securos gaudentesque numeror . . .

If his praetorship, which is part of the official cursus honorum, can be dated to this period, then the assertion is manifestly untrue. The spirit if not the precise language of the passage is further violated if Pliny held any office during this period which was not part of the official cursus honorum.

The evidence in dispute is well-known. In epistula iii.11.2, Pliny states that during his praetorship he visited Artemidorus, one of the philosophers expelled from

³³Both Tacitus (Agr. 2.1; 45.1) and Pliny (Ep. iii. 11.3; Pan. 90.5) seem to focus upon the destruction of the Stoic party as a decisive moment in Domitian's reign. Their consuming interest in this event, and their silence concerning Domitian's other senatorial victims, is a strong indication that it was precisely at this moment that Domitian's increasingly harsh autocracy was deemed to have degenerated into an open reign of terror. The destruction of the Stoics probably shocked Tacitus, Pliny and the rest of the Senate because the Stoics were relatively harmless philosophical opponents of the regime, not active conspirators or men whose ancestry made them a threat to the throne. Cf. my extended remarks on the Senate's relationship with Domitian, and the latter's motives for eliminating various senators, on pp. 298-310 below.

Rome. In the next sentence, he adds that seven of his Stoic friends already had been either executed or exiled—an event which occurred after Agricola's death on August 23, 93 (Agr. 45). Hence Pliny's praetorship must fall in 93 or later. Mommsen, the first to consider the evidence for the problem, concluded that Pliny was praetor from January 1, 93 to January 1, 94, and since his progress from the quaestorship to the praetorship was accelerated by one year, that he must have been tribune of the plebs from December 10, 91 to December 9, 92, and quaestor from June 1, 89 to May 31, 90.³⁴

In a lengthy paper published in 1919, Walter Otto disputed Mommsen's reconstruction, and concluded that Pliny was praetor in 95, tribune of the plebs in 93/94, and quaestor in 91/92.³⁵ His argument rests on three points. First, a passage in epistula 1.23 proves conclusively that Pliny did not accept briefs during his plebeian tribunate.³⁶ Otto interpreted a second passage to mean that he never accepted briefs while holding any office prior to his service

³⁴Ges. Schr. IV, 414-423, especially 420-421. He later admitted that his dating of the quaestorship was erroneous, and corrected the tenure of that office to December 5-December 4: Rom. Staatsr. I, 606 n. 5. Hence he would presumably date Pliny's quaestorship December 5, 88-December 4, 89. For the intervals between offices, cf. Dio Cass. lli.20.1-2, who attests 25 as the minimum age for the quaestorship, 30 for the praetorship.

³⁵"Zur Lebensgeschichte des jüngeren Plinius", SBAW, Abh. 10 (1919) 98.

³⁶Ep. 1.23.2: "Ipse cum tribunus essem, erraverim fortasse qui me esse aliquid putavi, sed tamquam essem abstinui causis agendis . . ."

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as praefectus aerarium Saturni. Pliny therefore could not have been praetor in 93, nor praetor in 94 and tribune in 93. Otto's second point is subjective. He argued that the conclusion of Massa's trial, which is known to have taken place after Agricola's death in August, 93, Massa's counter-accusation against Senecio, the trial and condemnation of the Stoics, the expulsion of the philosophers, and Pliny's visit to Artemidorus, could not possibly be compressed into the last four months of 93—required if Pliny was praetor in that year.³⁸ His third and final point is that the late chronographers, and particularly the Latin version of St. Jerome's Chronicon, date the expulsion of the philosophers to the fifteenth year of Domitian's reign, that is, to 95/96 A.D.³⁹ This is cited as positive evidence that Pliny was praetor in 95.⁴⁰

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W.A. Baehrens came immediately to Mommsen's defence, and a fruitless debate ensued. Initially, Otto's arguments

³⁷Ep. x.3.1: "Ut primum me, domine, indulgentia vestra promovit ad praefecturam aerarii Saturni, omnibus advocationibus; quibus alioqui numquam eram promiscue functus, renuntiavi . . ." Cf. SBAW, Abh. 10 (1919) 44-45.

³⁸SBAW, Abh. 10 (1919) 48.

³⁹"Domitianus rursum philosophos et mathematicos Roma per edictum extrudit". See R. Helm, Eusebius Werke, 192.

⁴⁰SBAW, Abh. 10 (1919) 48-49.

⁴¹W.A. Baehrens, "Zur Praetur des jüngereren Plinius", Hermes, 58 (1923) 109-112; W. Otto, "Zur Prätur des jüngereren Plinius", SBAW, Abh. 4 (1923) 3-13; W. Otto, "Zur Praetur des jüngereren Plinius", Phil. Woch., 46 (1926) 732-735; W.A. Baehrens, "Noch Einmal zur Praetur des jüngereren Plinius", Phil.

were favorably received;⁴² recently, however, they have been firmly rejected. The conclusions which he drew from his analysis of epistula x.3 have been legitimately criticized.⁴³ Pliny does not there say that it was his policy to abstain from pleading whenever he held office. In fact, it can be demonstrated that he did plead cases when holding office: as praefectus aerarium Saturni he prosecuted Caecilius Classicus⁴⁴ and Marius Priscus, and as curator alvei Tiberis he⁴⁵ defended Corellia and Rufus Varenus. A series of special considerations, pertinent only to the tribunate, were

Woch., 47 (1927) 171-174; W. Otto, "Schlusswort", Phil. Woch., 47 (1927) 511-512. Their dispute centered on the translation of Ep. x.3.1, and whether Pliny's claim in Pan. 95.3-4 could be accepted at face value. Otto had much the better of the argument.

⁴²R.H. Harte, "The Praetorship of the Younger Pliny", JRS, 25 (1935) 51-54, accepted Otto's arguments against 93, but ingeniously (and incorrectly) argued that Pliny was quaestor in 86 or 87, tribune in 88 or 89, and praetor in 90 or 91. Contra, A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 769. Otto's proposal was accepted by M.P. Charlesworth, CAH, 11 (1936) 31; F. Oertel, "Zur politischen Haltung des jüngeren Plinius", RhM, 88 (1939) 179-184, who also criticizes Harte's proposal; and by R. Hanslik, "Plinius der Jüngere. Bericht über das Schrifttum der Jahre 1933-1942", Bursians Jahresberichte, 282 (1943) 41.

⁴³M. Schuster, "C. Plinius Caecilius Secundus", RE, 21 (1951) 442-445; R. Syme, Tacitus, 657; A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 765-766.

⁴⁴Ep. i.11.4.2; i.11.11.2. In the former letter, Pliny pleads the pressing nature of his official duties, not principle, as the reason for his decision to abstain: "de communis officii necessitatibus praelocuti, excusare me et eximere temptarunt."

⁴⁵Ep. iv.17.1; v.20.1.

responsible for his abstention during his tenure of that office.⁴⁶ In response to Otto's second point, it has been justly stated that while the prosecution of the principals in the Stoic circle might have continued for several months, it is equally probable that their ruin was swiftly consummated.⁴⁷ Finally, the unreliable dates provided by St. Jerome's Chronicon are a fragile base on which to build a theory.⁴⁸ How fragile is made clear by this particular instance, for Jerome cites the expulsion of 95 as the second of Domitian's reign,⁴⁹ while the contemporary sources⁵⁰ mention only one such expulsion.

Syme further noted that Otto's reconstruction placed Pliny's quaestorship in 92, which is intolerably late, and then took him from quaestorship to consulship in only nine

⁴⁶Ep. 1.23.2: "primum quod deforme arbitrabar, cui adsurgere cui loco cedere omnes oporteret, hunc omnibus sedentibus stare, et qui iubere posset tacere quemcumque, huic silentium clepsydra indici, et quem interfari nefas esset, hunc etiam convicia audire et si inulta pateretur inertem, si ulcisceretur insolentem videri."

⁴⁷R. Syme, Tacitus, 657; A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 766..

⁴⁸R. Syme, Tacitus, 657; A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 764-765.

⁴⁹Year VIII (88) contains the entry "mathematicos et philosophos Romana urbe pepulit"; see R. Helm, Eusebius Werke, 190.

⁵⁰Cf. Suet. Dom. 10.3; Aul. Gell. NA xv.11.4-5. Dio Cass. lxvii.13.3, also refers to two expulsions, but it is unclear whether αὖτις, the key word in the passage, refers to an earlier expulsion under Domitian, or to the expulsion ordered by Vespasian and narrated previously at lxvi.13.1.

years, which would be unparalleled for a novus homo.⁵¹

Sherwin-White also conclusively demonstrated that Pliny must have been out of office and at leisure in 97. Hence if Pliny was praetor in 95, he would have served as praefectus aerarum militaris, a triennial appointment, for only one year (96).⁵² This difficulty does not arise if Pliny's praetorship is dated to 93. Because of the change of regime, however, this last argument is not necessarily as fatal to Otto's reconstruction as it would seem at first glance.⁵³

If the weight of the evidence militates against 95 as the year of Pliny's praetorship, still 93 is not the only viable alternative. There are some indications that point instead to 94, a possibility which has always been rejected on the assumption that Pliny was tribune of the plebs in the year immediately preceding his praetorship. As Otto pointed out, since Pliny prosecuted Baebius Massa in 93, he could not have been tribune in that year without making nonsense of his own assertion to the contrary in epistula 1.23. Syme, however, while preferring 93, did not exclude 94— and justly so.⁵⁴ The year's remission between quaestorship and praetorship does not demand that the tribunate and praetorship be

⁵¹R. Syme, Tacitus, 657.

⁵²A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 767-769.

⁵³Pliny might well have been asked to resign so that Nerva could use political patronage to help support his shaky regime.

⁵⁴R. Syme, Tacitus, 653, 657.

held in successive years. Pliny could have been quaestor from December 5, 89 to December 4, 90, tribune of the plebs from December 10, 91 to December 9, 92, and praetor from January 1, 94 to January 1, 95.

The possibility once admitted, 94 is an attractive choice because it escapes some of the difficulties which arise if Pliny's praetorship is dated to 93. Despite the just criticisms of Syme and Sherwin-White, it is difficult to compress all of the events under consideration into 93, for the various contemporary sources make it clear that they occurred consecutively rather than simultaneously. The sequence begins with the death of Agricola on August 23, 93 (Agr. 44.1). Baebius Massa was on trial (Agr. 45.1), his condemnation still in the future. After his condemnation had been secured, he laid a counter-accusation against Herennius Senecio (Ep. vii.33), and a hearing presumably followed.⁵⁵ The indictment was dismissed, and an interval of indeterminate length ensued before Mettius Carus indicted Senecio for maiestas (Ep. 1.5; Agr. 2.1; 45.1).⁵⁶ Charges were laid against various other members of the Stoic circle at the same time, and a series of trials were conducted in the

⁵⁵It does not follow from Ep. vii.33 that Pliny's intervention resulted in the dismissal of Massa's accusation, as claimed by A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 766.

⁵⁶C.P. Jones, Plutarch and Rome (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1971) 24, does not exclude the possibility that the trials occurred in 94 rather than 93.

Senate (Agr. 45.1). Since the defendants presented no immediate threat to the Emperor's life, the trials need not have been concluded as swiftly as those against the Pisonian conspirators,⁵⁷ and may have taken a considerable period of time. The latter alternative is the more plausible, if it is assumed that Domitian attempted to stifle criticism in advance by presenting every shred of evidence available to the prosecution. The condemnation of the Stoics occasioned⁵⁸ the expulsion of the philosophers, which in turn occasioned Pliny's visit to Artemidorus during his praetorship (Ep. iii. 11.2). Minimal intervals are required if all of these events are to be fitted within the last four months of 93.

Tacitus' career must also be taken into consideration. While he was absent from Rome when Agricola died, his language and pronounced sense of anguish make it clear that he personally witnessed the trials of Helvidius Priscus,⁵⁹ Iunius Mauricus, and Arulenus Rusticus. Tacitus states that at the time of Agricola's death he had been absent from Rome for a quadriennium (Agr. 45.5). Since Tacitus was praetor in 88 (Ann. xi.11.1), he must have left Rome before

⁵⁷They took less than three weeks: Tac. Ann. xv.53, 70. The parallel has been suggested by A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 766.

⁵⁸The causal nexus is supplied by Suet. Dom. 10.3: "cuius criminis occasione philosophos omnis urbe Italiaque summovit." Cf. Dio Cass. lxvii.13.3.

⁵⁹Agr. 45; cf. Ogilvie-Richmond, De Vita Agricolae, 308.

April 13, 89 to hold a legionary legateship, probably⁶⁰ officially assuming his command on July 1, 89. Four years later, he surrendered either this post or a subsequent pro-consular command,⁶¹ and returned to Rome. If his successor had been sent out directly from the capital, Tacitus probably left office on July 1, 93, and returned to Rome as legally required before October 1.⁶² If, however, his successor had been transferred from another province, then Tacitus might have remained in his command until as late as the latter half of August, and his return to Rome could⁶³ commensurately be postponed until the end of November. Thus the prosecution of the Stoics cannot safely be dated

⁶⁰Dio Cass. lvii.14.5 states that Tiberius ruled that governors-elect had to leave Rome by June 1 to take up their commands. This date was advanced to April 1 by Claudius (Dio Cass. lx.11.6), who eventually settled on April 13 (Dio Cass. lx.17.3). Mommsen concluded that governors, legati, and quaestors "wahrscheinlich der 1 Juli angesetzt gewesen zu sein . . .": Röm. Staatsr. II.1, 255-256.

⁶¹Ogilvie-Richmond, De Vita Agricolae, 9; and R. Syme, Tacitus, 68, both theorize that Tacitus was a legionary legate for three years, and proconsul of a minor senatorial province for one year. R. Hanslik, AAWW, 102 (1965) 49, cautiously professes uncertainty concerning Tacitus' official duties during this quadriennium.

⁶²Cf. Dio Cass. liii.15.6, who states that governors were legally required to return to Rome no later than three months after being replaced.

⁶³If Tacitus' replacement himself surrendered a command on July 1, it could easily have taken him six weeks to reach his new command and supplant Tacitus. The specific length of time required would be determined by the distance to be travelled, and the mode of transport. As noted above, Tacitus was not legally compelled to return to Rome until ninety days after his actual replacement.

before the month of October, and could be placed as late as November-December 93. In turn, it becomes increasingly difficult to date the expulsion of the philosophers earlier than the first months of 94. Hence despite the current consensus that dates Pliny's praetorship to 93, the ambiguous nature of the evidence does not preclude 94, and does not allow a definitive choice between the two dates.

If the prosecution of the Stoics occurred late in 93, and Pliny assumed the praetorship in January of 94, then his claim in Panegyricus 95.3-4 to have checked his career during the reign of terror is disproven. While that issue cannot be resolved, there is another office, left unmentioned in Epistulae and Panegyricus alike, which does fall precisely in the period of Domitian's alleged reign of terror, and which brings Pliny's honesty and integrity into question, even if it does not literally conflict with his claim to have abandoned pursuit of the cursus honorum during this period. ILS 2927 and CIL V.5667 both reveal that Pliny was praefectus aerarii militaris in the interval between his praetorship (93 or 94) and his service as praefectus aerarii Saturni (98-⁶⁴100). The three praefecti aerarii militaris were praetorian⁶⁵ in rank, and normally appointed for three years. Pliny

⁶⁴The date of Pliny's service as prefect of the aerarium Saturni remains contentious. Cf. Th. Mommsen, Ges. Schr. IV, 423-425; E.T. Merrill, "On the Date of Pliny's Prefecture of the Treasury of Saturn", AJPh, 23 (1902) 400-412; R. Syme, Tacitus, 658-659; A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 75-78.

⁶⁵Dio Cass. lv.25.2.

proceeded directly to this office from the praetorship, and without any interval between them. Depending upon the date of his praetorship, therefore, Pliny became prefect either in January, 94 or January, 95, and remained in office until sometime after Domitian's assassination.⁶⁶ Since it was unusual for a senator to proceed directly to this office from the praetorship, Pliny's appointment provides further proof of his continued high favor with Domitian and the managers of political patronage.⁶⁷

Pliny's series of rapid promotions thus completely belies his claims to have been out of favor with Domitian, and to have checked his career during the latter's alleged reign of terror. Quaestor Augusti as candidatus Caesaris, an accelerated praetorship, and immediate appointment to the aerarium militare—all three attest Pliny's unquestioned and unquestioning loyalty to the Domitianic regime in the tense years following the revolts of 87 and 89 A.D.

The Epistulae provide two additional insights into Pliny's relationship with Domitian's inner circle throughout this period. Both concern the delator M. Aquillius Regulus.⁶⁸ In epistula 1.5, where Pliny states his intention to prosecute Regulus, he makes a vital admission:

⁶⁶Cf. p. 217 n. 53 above.

⁶⁷R. Syme, Tacitus, 77.

⁶⁸Who may have been one of Pliny's patrons; cf. p. 30 above.

Haec me Regulus dolenter tulisse credebat, ideoque etiam cum recitaret librum non adhibuerat (i.5.4).

It is clear from this passage that Pliny was a regular member of Regulus' salon even during the alleged reign of terror, the very period when he professes himself an intimate member of the Stoic circle!

Confirmation is provided by epistula i.20. Here Pliny reveals himself a professional as well as a literary acquaintance of Regulus:

Dixit aliquando mihi Regulus, cum simul adessemus (i.20.14).⁶⁹

The evidence for Pliny's career under Domitian thus fully examined, it is clear that his association with the Stoics neither endangered him personally, nor impeded his political career. The fundamentally dishonest, but necessary, failure to mention his appointment as praefectus aerarii militaris in both the Epistulae and Panegyricus indicates that Pliny was uneasily conscious of his true standing with Domitian. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that Pliny's self-portrayal as a near-victim of the tyrant and his attacks on Aquillius Regulus and Publicius Certus were designed to deflect criticism of a career which had prospered embarrassingly during the final years of Domitian's reign,

⁶⁹Adessemus in this passage seems to have the sense "appeared for the defence" rather than "appeared in the same case"; cf. Cic. Rosc. Am. 1: "omnes enim hi, quos videtis adesse in hac causa . . ." See also A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 96.

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leaving his Stoic coevals far behind. The heated criticism of Domitian in his published work must also be viewed within this context.

Epistula iv.11

In the ten books of Pliny's correspondence, this letter represents his only attempt to criticize Domitian at length, and for a definite historical act. Its method and tone both echo Agricola 39-45, which may have inspired it.⁷¹

The subject of the letter is Domitian's execution of the Vestal Virgin Cornelia,⁷² but Pliny begins with a description of the current status of one Valerius Licinianus. Once a senator of praetorian standing, he incurred disgrace by indulging in an indiscreet sexual relationship with Cornelia, and was now reduced, Pliny states, to teaching rhetoric in Sicily. He had confessed his crime, and Pliny

⁷⁰Cf. the comments of B. Radice (trans.), Pliny, Letters and Panegyricus (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969) xv; B.W. Henderson, Five Roman Emperors, 13.

⁷¹The book-date is approximately 104-105; cf. A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 32-34.

⁷²The date of her second trial and execution remains uncertain. A definite date is provided only by two late sources. The Chronicon Paschale places the trial in 89, while St. Jerome's Chronicon assigns it to the eleventh year of Domitian's reign, that is, 91/92. A very slight preference may be given to 89 on the basis of testimony by Plutarch. The latter seems to have been in Rome when word was received of the death of Antonius Saturninus (Aem. 25), and was probably also an eyewitness to Cornelia's interment since he describes the ritual in painstaking detail (Numa 10). Cf. A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 283; C.P. Jones, Plutarch, 22.

initially remarks that his exile seemed justified: Dices tristia et miseranda, dignum tamen illum qui haec ipsa studia incesti scelere macularit (11.4). He immediately adds, however, that while Licinianus' crime was self-confessed, incertum utrum quia verum erat, an quia graviora metuebat si negasset (11.5).

This preliminary expression of doubt prefaces Pliny's account of the trial of Cornelia. Pliny at once impugns Domitian's motives, to leave the impression that Domitian cruelly and with premeditation sacrificed Cornelia to feed his own vanity:

Frenebat enim Domitianus aestuabatque in ingenti invidia destitutus. Nam cum Corneliam Vestalium maximam defodere vivam concupisset, ut qui inlustrari saeculum suum eiusmodi exemplis arbitraretur . . . (11.5-6).

Pliny then implies that Cornelia's trial was extra-legal, and that she was condemned without being afforded an opportunity to defend herself—presumably because Domitian feared that she would successfully maintain her innocence:

pontificis maximi iure, seu potius immanitate tyranni licentia domini, reliquos pontifices non in Regiam sed in Albanam villam convocavit. Nec minore scelere quam quod ulcisci videbatur, absentem inauditamque damnavit incesti . . . (11.6).

A scandalous but irrelevant piece of gossip concerning Domitian's alleged incestuous relationship with his niece Julia precedes Pliny's factual narrative of Cornelia's execution:

cum ipse fratris filiam incesto non polluisset solum verum etiam occidisset; nam vidua abortu periit.

Missi statim pontifices qui defodiendam necandamque curarent (11.6-7).

An emotional account of the deaths of Cornelia and her paramour, an eques named Celer, follows (11.7-11). Pliny uses all of his rhetorical skill to portray them as the innocent victims of tyranny.⁷³ His personal opinion, however, is less categorical: nescio an innocens, certe tamquam innocens ducta est (11.9).

Their innocence was widely maintained, and Pliny asserts that as a result, ardebat ergo Domitianus et crudelitatis et iniquitatis infamia (11.11).⁷⁴ At this point, Pliny resumes the original thread of his narrative, and explains why Licinianus may have been innocent of the crime to which he confessed. Domitian, in his discomfiture, was searching for scapegoats. Licinianus was arrested, and ille ab iis quibus erat curae praemonetur, si comitium et virgas pati nollet, ad confessionem confugeret quasi ad

⁷³Cornelia goes to her death crying "Me Caesar incestam putat, qua sacra faciente vicit triumphavit!" To reinforce his point, Pliny details an incident designed to prove her chastity: "Quin etiam cum in illud subterraneum demitteretur, haesissetque descendenti stola, vertit se ac recollegit, cumque ei manum carnifex daret, aversata est et resiliuit foedumque contactum quasi plane a casto puroque corpore novissima sanctitate reiecit omnibusque numeris pudoris Πελλήν πρόβαλον ἔσχεν εὐσεβήρων πεσσεῖν." Celer, while being flogged to death, insistently cries out: "Quid feci? nihil feci."

⁷⁴Cic. Inv. Rhet. 1.102 and Rhet. Her. 11.49 both recommend crudelitas as an effective term of invective. It was widely used to attribute tyrannical cruelty to the individual under attack. Cf. J.R. Dunkle, TAPA, 98 (1967) 160; CW, 65 (1971) 13-14.

veniam (11.11). He promptly complied, to Domitian's intense relief,⁷⁵ and as a result was accorded a lighter sentence: ipsi vero permisit, si qua posset, ex rebus suis raperet, antequam bona publicarentur, exsiliumque molle velut praemium dedit (11.13).

Thus to advertise the moral severitas of his regime, Domitian eagerly resorted to false accusation and judicial murder, thereby inadvertently advertising instead the despotic nature of his rule. That is the impression which Pliny intends to convey to his reader⁷⁶ — an impression conveyed by innuendo, half-truths, and outright lies.

Pliny relies principally upon telepathic insight into Domitian's motives, a technique also frequently employed, for example, by Tacitus in the Agricola. Domitian is enraged (fremebat . . . aestuabatque) because he passionately desires (concupisset) to execute Cornelia more veteri, but can find neither witnesses nor evidence. Self-glorification is his only motive (ut qui . . . arbitraretur), so transparently so that he is condemned by public opinion. This causes a new outburst of rage (ardebat . . . infamia), and precipitates a search for scapegoats. Licinianus is arrested and pleads guilty, and Domitian concludes an already miserable performance with a noisy and indiscreetly public sigh of relief

⁷⁵11.13: "Gratum hoc Domitiano adeo quidem ut gaudio proderetur, diceretque: 'Absolvit nos Licinianus'."

⁷⁶Cf. the synopsis of H.W. Traub, TAPA, 86 (1955) 214.

("absolvit nos Licinianus").

Nor does Pliny hesitate to conceal or distort facts which contradict or weaken his account. He leaves the impression, for example, that Domitian arbitrarily decided to condemn Cornelia, although he possessed no evidence that she was guilty of incest. In fact, this was her second trial. Suetonius informs us that she previously had been acquitted in a trial that resulted in the condemnation of three other vestals.⁷⁷ Her chastity was already, then, in question.

Suetonius does not share Pliny's doubts about her guilt, nor that of Celer and Licinianus. Rather, he cites their trials and condemnations as an example of how Domitian ius diligenter et industrie dixit (Dom. 8.1). His account of the charges brought against Licinianus, and of the reasons for the latter's non-capital sentence, especially conflict with Pliny's account. While Pliny asserts that Licinianus was arrested quod in agris suis occultasset Corneliae libertam (11.11), and received a light sentence because he agreed to be a scapegoat, Suetonius states that

stupratoresque virgis in Comitio ad necem caedi, excepto praetorio viro, cui, dubia etiam tum causa et incertis quaestionibus atque tormentis de semet professo, exsilium indulsit (Dom. 8.4).

⁷⁷Dom. 8.4: "Nam cum Oculatis sororibus, item Varronillae liberum mortis permisisset arbitrium corruptoresque earum relegasset, mox Corneliam maximam virginem absolutam olim, dein longo intervallo repetitam atque convictam defodi imperavit . . ." Cf. A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 282.

Pliny himself carelessly provides confirmation. He mentions in passing that Licinianus clementia divi Nervae translatus est in Siciliam (11.14). If Nerva merely changed his place of exile rather than annul his sentence, then his guilt, and by implication that of all the parties concerned, must have been generally admitted.⁷⁸

This, in turn, sheds light on the curious structure of that portion of the letter devoted to Cornelia's condemnation. Pliny concentrates on Domitian's motives, and on the death-scene itself, to divert his reader's attention from the legal aspects of the case, which must have substantiated the accusations against her and Celer.⁷⁹ He first implies that it was unusual and illegal for the trial to have been conducted in the Alban palace. Roman jurisdiction, however, was not geographically restricted, and Domitian followed correct procedure by convening the pontifical college in his capacity of Pontifex Maximus.⁸⁰

Pliny adds that Cornelia was condemned absentem inauditamque. It does not necessarily follow, however, that she was deprived of a fair trial. Suetonius' remarks concerning Licinianus prove that witnesses were examined, and his account is confirmed by the epitome of Dio Cassius, which adds the significant detail that the witnesses were

⁷⁸Cf. A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 282.

⁷⁹Cf. H.W. Traub, TAPA, 86 (1955) 216.

⁸⁰A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 283.

examined ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ, and not in private (lxvii.3.32).

Pliny's next remark, that Domitian was also guilty of incest, is inaccurate as well as irrelevant. Domitian's relationship with his niece Iulia is well-attested,⁸¹ but according to contemporary Roman law sexual relations between an uncle and niece no longer constituted incest. A senatus consultum had been passed to allow the marriage of Claudius and Agrippina, and at the same time had regularized all such future relations.⁸²

A purely factual paraphrase of Pliny's account might read as follows: Domitian, as Pontifex Maximus, summoned the other members of the college to deliberate whether the vestal Cornelia was guilty of incest. While Cornelia and one co-defendant, Celer, maintained their innocence, another co-defendant, Licinianus, pleaded guilty while the trial was in progress, and received a non-capital sentence. Licinianus' plea convicted Cornelia, and she and Celer were sentenced to die more veteri. The sentence was at once carried out by the college as a whole.

The episode therefore reveals, as Suetonius states, justice administered diligenter et industrie, and not, as Pliny claims, immanitate tyranni licentia domini.

⁸¹Cf. Suet. Dom. 22.

⁸²Gai. Inst. I.62-63; Tac. Ann. xii.7: "decretum postulat quo iustae inter patruos fratrumque filias nuptiae etiam in posterum statuerentur." Fully discussed by M.S. Smith, "Greek Precedents for Claudius' Actions in A.D. 48 and Later", CQ, n.s. 13 (1963) 139-144.

The Panegyricus

Upon entry on the consulship, a senator was required to deliver a speech of thanks to the emperor responsible for his appointment.⁸³ Pliny describes the speech as an officium, and it had occasioned a minor literary genre—the gratiarum actio (panegyricus is a misnomer).⁸⁴ It was a tedious affair for speaker and audience alike, for as Pliny himself admits, in ceteris lectorem novitas ipsa intentum habet, in hac nota vulgata dicta sunt omnia (iii.13.2). The abridged version which Pliny delivered before the Senate must have consisted of a monotonous catalogue of Trajan's virtues. In its expanded and published form, however, his speech amounts to a senatorial *περὶ βασιλευσῶς*. Its purpose is explicitly didactic: sub titulo gratiarum agendarum boni principes quae facerent recognoscerent, mali quae facere deberent (Pan. 4.1).⁸⁵

⁸³Pan. 4.1: "sed parendum est senatus consulto quod ex utilitate publica placuit, ut consulis voce sub titulo gratiarum . . ."

⁸⁴Ep. iii.18.1: "Officium consulatus iniunxit mihi, ut rei publicae nomine principi gratias agerem."

⁸⁵Cf. Ep. iii.18.2: "primum ut imperatori nostro virtutes suae veris laudibus commendarentur, deinde ut futuri principes non quasi a magistro sed tamen sub exemplo praemonerentur, qua potissimum via possent ad eandem gloriam niti." Cf. also T.C. Burgess, Epideictic Literature (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1902) 137-138; M. Durré (ed.), Pline, Panegyrique de Trajan (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres", 1938) 21; R. Syme, Tacitus, 94-95; J.W. Duff, A Literary History of Rome in the Silver Age, rev. A.M. Duff (3rd ed., New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1964) 430-431; B. Radice, "Pliny and the Panegyricus", G&R, s.s. 15 (1968) 168.

The encomiastic genre was well-established in both Greek and Latin literature, and Pliny borrows extensively⁸⁶ from his predecessors. The core of any encomium was a description of the civic and martial virtues of the subject. The four virtues most prized in the tradition were bravery, sagacity, moderation, and human kindness (which includes⁸⁷ justice). Two techniques were commonly employed to illustrate these virtues—the use of specific examples drawn from the subject's life, and a comparison of the subject with other figures. Here the latter technique is particularly relevant, for it was accepted method to stress the virtues of the good prince by contrasting him with his opposite, the⁸⁸ tyrant. Pliny, like Tacitus in the Agricola, relies heavily upon this technique, contrasting the virtues of Trajan with the appropriate vices in his predecessors, particularly Domitian. He achieves the desired effect of simultaneously portraying Trajan as the ideal prince, and Domitian as the personification of tyranny.

⁸⁶Particularly from Xenophon's Agésilaios, Cicero's pro Marcello, Seneca's de Clementia, and Tacitus' Agricola. The fundamental study of topoi in the Panegyricus remains J. Mesk, "Zur Quellenanalyse des Plinianischen Panegyricus", WS, 33 (1911) 71-100. For Pliny's use of the Agricola, cf. N. Terzaghi, "Tre Fonti Secondarie del Panegirico di Plinio", Maia, 2 (1949) 121-122.

⁸⁷J. Mesk, WS, 33 (1911) 73. The vices broadly corresponding to these four virtues are cowardice, arrogance, immoderation (including extravagance and avarice), and cruelty.

⁸⁸J. Mesk, WS, 33 (1911) 76, again cites examples.

Pliny implements this technique in his opening remarks, thereby indicating at the beginning the tactic which he intends to pursue throughout. In chapter 1.6, he prays that libertas fides veritas constet, tantumque a specie adulationis absit gratiarum actio mea quantum abest a necessitate. This implies that all such speeches delivered in Domitian's presence were servile, insincere, and untrue—flattery encouraged by necessity. Pliny elaborates and clarifies in the next chapter: quare abeant ac recedant voces illae quas metus exprimebat. Nihil quale ante dicamus, nihil enim quale antea patimur (2.2).

Domitian preferred to be addressed as dominus et
⁸⁹deus noster. Dominus itself did not have a pejorative
⁹⁰connotation, but the combination dominus et deus must have outraged the sensibilities of many senators who still valued the illusion that the princeps was only primus inter pares. Pliny voices this sense of outrage:

Nusquam ut deo, nusquam ut numini blandiamur; non enim de tyranno sed de cive, non de domino sed de parente loquimur. Unum ille se ex nobis—et hoc magis excellit atque eminet, quod unum ex nobis putat, nec minus hominem se quam hominibus praeesse meminit (2.3-4).

⁸⁹Cf. Suet. Dom. 13.2; Mart. v.8.1; vii.34.8. The title never appears on senatorial or other official edicts, hence was not official, despite its use in correspondence between Domitian and his procurators. Cf. S. Gsell, Domitien, 52; E. Mohr, Der Panegyricus des jüngeren Plinius als Quelle für die Kaisergeschichte bis auf Nerva (Erlangen: Inaug. Diss., 1922) 24.

⁹⁰Pliny consistently addresses Trajan as domine in their correspondence. Cf. the conclusion of M. Hammond, "Pliny the Younger's Views on Government", HSCPh, 49 (1938)

Thus the optimus princeps was a civis—unum ille se ex nobis. Pretensions to divinity constituted one of the trappings of tyranny. The passage is highly rhetorical; ⁹¹ nevertheless, Pliny's reaction to the appellation dominus et deus is probably sincere.

He resumes the theme in chapter 11, disparaging both Titus and Domitian. Titus deified his father, and was deified in turn by Domitian, ille ut dei filius, hic ut ⁹² frater videretur (11.1). In fact, deification was the most convenient method of ratifying the deceased emperor's acta, and was so recognized by the Senate itself. When Domitian's memory was damned, Nerva promulgated a special edict to ⁹³ ratify his acta. Subsequently, Antoninus Pius expressly refused to assume the throne until the Senate deified Hadrian, thereby sanctioning the latter's adoption of Antoninus as ⁹⁴ his heir and successor.

127: "the republicanism of his panegyricus is in fact both a veneer and an exercise in rhetoric."

⁹¹The contrast between tyranny and paternalistic kingship is a philosophic commonplace. Cf. Xen. Ages. 7.3; Arist. Pol. 1315a.41-1315b.1; Sen. Clem. 1.14. F.E. Adcock, "Greek and Macedonian Kingship", PBA, 39 (1953) 165-166, neatly defines the philosophic contrast between tyranny and kingship.

⁹²In Pan. 35.4, on the other hand, Pliny says: "divus Titus securitati nostrae ultionique prospexerat, ideoque numinibus aequatus est . . ." Cf. E. Mohr, Panegyricus als Quelle, 20.

⁹³Pliny Ep. x.58.10.

⁹⁴Dio Cass. lxx.1. Cf. the full discussion of this episode in J. Beaujeu, La religion romaine a l'apogée de

Pliny concludes his introductory remarks with a general criticism of Domitian's character:

Non enim periculum est ne, cum loquar de humanitate, exprobari sibi superbiam credat; cum de frugalitate, luxuriam; cum de clementia, crudelitatem, cum de liberalitate, avaritiam; cum de benignitate, livorem; cum de continentia, libidinem; cum de labore, inertiam; cum de fortitudine, timorem. Ac ne illud quidem vereor, ne gratus ingratusve videar, prout satis aut parum dixerō (3.4-5).

The catalogue of Domitian's faults thus included arrogance, extravagance, cruelty, avarice, capriciousness, profligacy, idleness, and cowardice! In the body of the Panegyricus, Pliny elaborates upon four of these vices in particular:
 95
 arrogance, cruelty, avarice, and cowardice. As noted above, they form an effective counterpoise to the basic virtues ascribed to Trajan.

The most sustained antithesis concerns their respective military achievements. Trajan, brave and competent, is the embodiment of martial virtue, while Domitian is cowardice and incompetence personified. In chapters 11-18, five traditional themes are developed to illustrate his military deficiencies: he is defeated by the enemy (11); purchases peace (12, 16); despoils the provincials to conceal his defeat (17); fears his successful generals

l'empire (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres", 1955) 49.

⁹⁵Arrogance (superbia), avarice (avaritia), and cruelty (crudelitas or saevitia) were three of the five most common epithets used to describe tyrannical behavior (with libido and vis); cf. J.R. Dunkle, CW, 65 (1971) 13-15.

(14, 18); and relaxes military discipline (18).

Pliny begins with a highly rhetorical allusion to Domitian's long and bitter conflict with the Dacians, and to the triumph which he celebrated in 89:

imperator cuius pulsī fugatique non aliud maius habebatur indicium, quam si triumpharet. Ergo sustulerant animos et iugum excusserant, nec iam nobiscum de sua libertate sed de nostra servitute certabant, ac ne indutias quidem nisi aequis condicionibus inibant legesque ut acciperent dabant (11.5).

In the following chapter, he develops a second theme which is a variation on the first. Domitian, he says, had to purchase the settlement which he had been unable to win: accipimus obsides ergo non emimus, nec ingentibus damnis immensisque muneribus paciscimur ut vicerimus (12.2).

In contrast to this display of barbarian arrogance and imperial ineptitude, Trajan's reputation evoked renewed respect for Rome, and a properly servile demeanor on the part of her enemies: an nunc rediit omnibus terror, et metus et votum imperata faciendi (12.1).

The latter statement is a common piece of encomiastic rhetoric, and in Trajan's case not altogether appropriate.⁹⁶ His reputation does not in fact seem to have overawed the Dacians, for they provoked the so-called Second Dacian War.⁹⁷ In addition, the allegation that Domitian's triumph had been

⁹⁶Cf. Xen. Ages. 6.8; Vell. Pat. 11.94.4; Tac. Agr. 22.1; Pan. 14.1.

⁹⁷Dio Cass. lxviii.10.3.

purchased rather than won is also not without precedent. Indeed, Pliny may have been inspired by Tacitus' very similar contrast between Agricola's victory at Mons Graupius and Domitian's sham triumph over the Chatti. Pliny resumes this theme in chapter 16.3, and the parallel with Tacitus suggests itself even more strongly:

Accipiet ergo aliquando Capitolium non mimicos currus nec falsae simulacra victoriae, sed imperatorem veram ac solidam gloriam reportantem, pacem tranquillitatem et tam confessa hostium obsequia, ut vincendus nemo fuerit.⁹⁸

Domitian's indecisive war against the Dacians seems to vindicate Pliny's judgement. However, the same criticisms⁹⁹ apply to his account as to Tacitus'. First, Pliny fails to mention the revolt of Antonius Saturninus, which made a settlement with the Dacians imperative. Second, he conceals the impact of the war on the Dacians themselves. The Dacians, after all, remained quiescent for the remainder of Domitian's reign.

In chapter 14.5, Pliny develops a third theme—the tyrant's fear of his successful generals:

ille qui te inter ipsa Germaniae bella ab Hispania usque ut validissimum praesidium exciverat, iners ipse alienisque virtutibus tunc quoque invidus imperator, cum ope earum indigeret . . .

This theme was also traditional, and recent imperial history

⁹⁸Cf. Agr. 39.1: "inerat conscientia derisui fuisse nuper falsum e Germania triumphum . . . at nunc veram magnamque victoriam tot milibus hostium caesis ingenti fama celebrari."

⁹⁹Cf. Agr. 41.2-3, and pp. 98-103 above.

¹⁰⁰
 offered concrete examples. Tacitus made a similar remark
¹⁰¹
 about Domitian in the Agricola, which again provided
 Pliny with a precedent, and perhaps with inspiration. At
 this point, however, Pliny's use of the comparative technique
 breaks down completely. His statement that Domitian remained
inert when informed of Saturninus' rebellion is an outright
¹⁰²
 lie, and his assertion that Domitian was jealous of
 Trajan is contradicted by his subsequent statement that
 Trajan was entrusted with additional commands: cum aliis
¹⁰³
super alias expeditionibus itinere illo dignus inveniretur.
 This promotion was Trajan's reward for his fidelity during
 the rebellion of Saturninus. Clearly, if Domitian had been
 afraid of Trajan, he certainly would not have afforded him
¹⁰⁴
 additional opportunities to display imperatoria virtus.

In chapter 18, this theme coalesces with another
 rhetorical commonplace—the tyrant's relaxation of military
 discipline:

Quam speciosum est enim quod disciplinam castrorum

¹⁰⁰Cf. Tac. Ann. ii.26.4; xi.19.3; Dio Cass. lxi.17.5-6. Cf. also pp. 64-65 above.

¹⁰¹Agr. 39.2: "cetera utcumque facilius dissimulari, ducis boni imperatoriam virtutem esse."

¹⁰²Plut. Aem. 25; Dio Cass. lxvii.11.5. Cf. G. Walser, Provincialia, 497-507.

¹⁰³And also by the fact that Trajan was subsequently consul ordinarius in 91.

¹⁰⁴Cf. E. Mohr, Panegyricus als Quelle, 18.

lapsam exstinctam refovisti, depulso prioris saeculi malo inertia et contumacia et dedignatione parendi!
Tutum est reverentiam, tutum caritatem mereri, nec ducum quisquam aut non amari a militibus aut amari timet . . .
Quippe non is princeps qui sibi imminere sibi intendi putet, quod in hostes paretur; quae persuasio fuit illorum qui hostilia cum facerent timebant.
Iidem ergo torpere militaria studia nec animos modo sed corpora ipsa languescere, gladios etiam incuria hebetari retundique gaudebant (18.1-3).¹⁰⁵

The virtuous prince shares his soldiers' hardships and training,¹⁰⁶ is solicitous about their personal health and welfare,¹⁰⁷ and leads them into battle, where his own valor provides an example and standard.¹⁰⁸ The tyrant, in contrast, fears even his bodyguard, and to ensure his survival must disarm the entire populace, for every citizen¹⁰⁹ is his natural enemy.

Pliny's rhetoric is moving, but unconvincing. In fact, Domitian seems to have been popular with all segments of the Roman army. The Praetorian Guard, the Emperor's personal bodyguard, was so enraged by his assassination that it rose against Nerva, and compelled him to execute some of

¹⁰⁵Also practiced (it is alleged) by Marius to win popularity with the troops of Metellus: Sall. Iug. lxiv.5.

¹⁰⁶Cf. Xen. Agas. 1.27; Tac. Ann. xiii.35; Pan. 13.1.

¹⁰⁷Cf. Vell. Pat. 114.1-2; Tac. Agr. 20.2; Pan. 13.3.

¹⁰⁸Cf. Xen. Agas. 6.1-2; Tac. Agr. 35.4.

¹⁰⁹The tyrant's fear was well-founded. The Syracusans immediately revolted against Dionysius I when they were armed against the Carthaginians: Diod. Sic. xiv.7.6. In a more philosophic vein, Xen. Hiero 2.9; 6.4; 11; Arist. Pol. 1313b.30-32; Sen. Clem. 1.12.3.

the conspirators.¹¹⁰ Suetonius adds that the entire army was aroused, and would have deified and avenged him, nisi duces defuissent (Dom. 23.1). Domitian was careful to cultivate the army, personally participating in all the wars which erupted during his reign, and increasing the pay of the troops by 33% per annum.¹¹¹ Hence his well-documented popularity with the army is readily understandable.

There is, then, no evidence to warrant the belief that Domitian was either cowardly, indecisive, or unpopular with the army, and a considerable body of evidence to the contrary. Pliny's characterization may therefore justly be regarded as a response to the requirements of the rhetorical tradition, and as an attempt to ingratiate himself with Trajan by denigrating Domitian.

In chapter 17, Pliny adds a new variation to the familiar theme of triumphs purchased rather than won—the tyrant's cruel abuse of his provincial subjects: videor iam oernere non spoliis provinciarum et extorto sociis auro, sed hostilibus armis captorumque regum catenis triumphum gravem¹¹² (17.1). This serves as a transition to Pliny's next general theme, the tyrant's cruel and arrogant abuse of his

¹¹⁰Dio Cass. lxviii.3.3.

¹¹¹Suet. Dom. 7.3; Dio Cass. lxvii.3.5. Their figures, however, conflict.

¹¹²E. Mohr, Panegyricus als Quelle, 44, naively argues that this passage does not refer to Domitian because "Sueton weiss hiervon nichts."

subjects at large. Chapter 20 furnishes an elaborate description:

Quam dissimilis nuper alterius principis transitus! si tamen transitus ille, non populatio fuit, cum abactus hospitium exsereret, omniaque dextera laevaue perusta et attrita, ut si vis aliqua vel ipsi illi barbari quos fugebat inciderent. Persuadendum provinciis erat illud iter Domitiani fuisse, non principis (20.4).

If an historical reference be demanded for this passage, then Domitian's return from his campaign against the Sarmatians in 92 seems the most likely possibility.¹¹³ Pliny undoubtedly intended, however, the passage to be understood as illustrative of Domitian's treatment of the provincials in general. Still, there exists a significant amount of evidence to dispute his allegation. A notable example of Domitian's benevolence is provided by an inscription from Pisidian Antioch. A severe famine was in progress, and Domitian ordered an inventory of all private grain stores. He compelled those who possessed grain to market their surplus at a regulated price, and permitted only a nominal profit.¹¹⁴ Since the famine is dated to either the winter of 91/92 or 92/93 A.D.¹¹⁵ —precisely the period which Suetonius seems to

¹¹³Cf. B. Radice, Letters and Panegyricus II, 367 n. 2.

¹¹⁴For text and commentary, see W.M. Ramsay, "Studies in the Roman Province Galatia", JRS, 14 (1924) 180-183. Cf. also Abbott-Johnson, Municipal Administration, 382; D. Magie, Roman Rule, 581; H.W. Pleket, Mnemosyne, 4th s. 14 (1961) 307-308.

¹¹⁵L. Antistius Rusticus, cited as leg. imp. in the inscription, was governor of Cappadocia-Galatia in 91/92-93/94; cf. W. Eck, Senatoren, 142.

indicate as the time when Domitian was inopia rapax (Dom.
3.2)—it is significant that he did not take advantage of
this opportunity to sell grain from the imperial estates at
an exorbitant price.¹¹⁶

More appropriately, in a letter addressed to the
procurator of Syria, Domitian rebukes government officials
who requisition animals and lodgings¹¹⁷ — precisely the charge
levelled against him by Pliny. The latter's judgement, then,
does not seem as trustworthy in this regard as the Oracula
Sibyllina, which salute Domitian as a benefactor of the
provinces in general, and of the Orient in particular: Ὅν
πάντες στέρξουσιν βροτὸς κατ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν . . . καὶ τούτους
[the Orientals] βασιλεὺς στέρξει μέγας ἢ δ' ἀγαπήσει ἔξχα
τῶν ἄλλων πολιτῶν.¹¹⁸

Malfeasance on the part of emperors and their sub-
ordinates was not unprecedented during the early principate,¹¹⁹
but the criticism is manifestly inappropriate to Domitian's
administration. Once again, Pliny's surrender to the
dictates of rhetoric has resulted in a serious distortion of
the facts.

¹¹⁶An acute point raised by H.W. Pleket, Mnemosyne,
4th s. 14 (1961) 308. The financial crisis may not, however,
have been as severe as Suetonius believed. See the related
discussion of Pan. 42-43 below.

¹¹⁷SEG xvii.755.

¹¹⁸H.W. Pleket, Mnemosyne, 4th s. 14 (1961) 303.

¹¹⁹Cf. Dio. Cass. lix.21; lxiii.11.

Domitian's relations with the army and the provinces having been treated, Pliny next turns his attention to his relations with the inhabitants of Rome itself. In chapters 21-24, a description of Trajan's demeanor on his entry into the city is used as a device to contrast his modesty with Domitian's arrogance and insecurity—traditional traits of the tyrant's character.¹²⁰

Pliny outrageously alleges that in contrast to his predecessors Trajan modestly did not accept the title of Pater Patriae on his dies imperii, but allowed an interval to elapse before incorporating it into his titulature: nomen illud, quod alii primo statim principatus die ut imperatoris et Caesaris receperunt, tu usque eo distulisti . . . (21.2).¹²¹ Amongst the alii Pliny undoubtedly includes Domitian, but¹²² wrongly. The coinage proves that like Trajan he also did not accept the title at once; it first appears on the second¹²³ issue of his reign.

¹²⁰Pliny strikes the theme most clearly in chapter 22.2: "non de patientia nostra quendam triumphum, sed de superbia principum egisti." Again, for superbia as a traditional trait of the tyrant, cf. J.R. Dunkle, TAPA, 98 (1967) 159; CW, 65 (1971) 13.

¹²¹Pertinax was the first emperor to accept the title on his dies imperii: S.H.A. Pert. 5.

¹²²F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 38, drew this conclusion, but incautiously failed to examine the numismatic evidence.

¹²³Cf. RIC II, 154.1-6; E. Mohr, Panegyricus als Quelle, 24; M. Durr, Pline, 118.

Accessibility is a trait of the modest ruler, inaccessibility of the tyrant. Regarding himself as only primus inter pares, the former is assured of the affection of his subjects, and particularly that of the aristocracy. The latter, however, mistrustful and insecure because of his crimes, regards the citizenry in general and the aristocracy in particular as an enemy, and hence of necessity remains in¹²⁴ seclusion. This is the theme of chapter 23:

quod primo statim die latus tuum crederes omnibus.
Neque enim stipatus satellitum manu sed circumfusus
undique nunc senatus, nunc equestris ordinis flore,
prout alterutrum frequentiae genus invaluisset,
silentes quietosque lictores tuos subsequere (23.2-3).

Hence, Pliny implies, it was out of fear rather than choice that Domitian never appeared in public without an escort,¹²⁵ and remained secluded within his Alban palace.

When he did emerge, his displays of despotic arrogance were in sharp contrast to Trajan's self-effacement. Pliny offers three examples:

Non tu civium amplexus ad pedes tuos deprimis, nec
osculum manu reddis; manet imperatori quae prior oris
humanitas, dexterarum verecundia (24.2).

Pliny's malice seems to have been inspired by an episode, related only by Suetonius, concerning Domitian's attitude to Caenis, his father's concubine (Dom. 12.3). The Agricola,

¹²⁴Again, Dionysius I offers an historical parallel: Diod. Sic. xiv.7. Cf. Pl. Resp. 567d; Xen. Hiero 6.3; Arist. Pol. 1314a.10-12; Livy xxiv.5.3-6 (Hieronymus of Syracuse).

¹²⁵Pliny returns to this theme in chapters 47-49.

however, provides a small detail which indicates that he did not so receive members of the senatorial order. In chapter 40.3, Tacitus states that Domitian received Agricola brevi osculo.

Pliny's second example concerns Domitian's fondness for being transported in a litter:

Ante te principes fastidio nostri et quodam aequalitatis metu usum pedum amiserant. Illos ergo umeri cervices-que servorum super ora nostra . . . (24.5).

This receives some confirmation from Suetonius.¹²⁶ However, in Suetonius' account vanity rather than arrogance, and perhaps a physical impairment, emerge as the cause of Domitian's reliance upon lecticae.¹²⁷

His third example occurs much later in the text, but also concerns Domitian's attitude toward the senatorial order. He charges that the tyrant deliberately insulted and mocked his dinner-guests:

Non enim ante medium diem distentus solitaria cena, spectator adnotatorque convivis tuis immines, nec ieiunis et inanibus plenus ipse <et> eructans non tam adponis quam obicis cibos quos dedigneris attingere, aegreque perpressus superbam illam convictus simulationem, rursus te ad clandestinam ganeam occultumque luxum refers (49.6).

Like the first example cited above, this passage may also

¹²⁶Dom. 19.

¹²⁷Dom. 18: "postea calvitio quoque deformis et obesitate ventris et crurum gracilitate, quae tamen ei valitudine longa remacruerant." Surprisingly, Pliny does not cite this as an example of Domitian's idleness, a vice referred to in chapter 3.

refer to a specific occasion—the macabre dinner-party which is described in detail by Dio Cassius (lxvii.9.1-5). The affair was certainly in poor taste, and probably betrays tinges of cruelty, but the absence of corroborative evidence suggests that this incident was a notorious exception rather than the norm. Suetonius, as was his custom, discusses Domitian's dining habits in some detail.¹²⁸ His account refutes Pliny's assertion that Domitian regularly insulted his guests. Similarly, while he testifies that Domitian was accustomed to take his main meal during the day, he does not corroborate Pliny's allegation that the Emperor was a¹²⁹ glutton.

Thus the four examples of despotic arrogance which Pliny cites to illustrate why Domitian was hated by the aristocracy, and accordingly was insecure and withdrawn, prove in three instances to be historically inaccurate or susceptible of a more innocent explanation, and in one instance to betray poor taste and possibly a cruel sense of humor. Certainly, however, all four examples reflect the acute sensitivity of the senatorial order to infringements of its dignitas, and eloquently attest the degree of tact which any emperor would need to show in order to avoid

¹²⁸Dom. 21: "convivabatur frequenter ac large, sed paene raptim."

¹²⁹Dom. 21: "ac lavabat de die prandebatque ad satietatem, ut non temere super cenam praeter Matianum malum et modicam in ampulla potiunculam sumeret."

creating ill-feeling. Therefore, these passages, even if factually untrustworthy, do exemplify the kind of pitfalls which awaited any emperor. Against this background, and given Domitian's particular failings, especially his tactless fondness for public display of the trappings of monarchy,¹³⁰ it is not difficult to envisage how his behavior might have created ill-will in the Senate, the thin end of the wedge which destroyed his always fragile relationship with the Senate and ultimately caused his assassination and damnation. His fondness for being addressed as dominus et deus, previously discussed, is pertinent in this respect.

Addressing himself to the congiaria distributed by Trajan, Pliny transitions to Domitian's attitude toward the Roman masses. Since Domitian had subsidized them as generously as Trajan, Pliny wisely chose to contrast their motives rather than the amounts of their benevolence. Domitian is first maligned as a murderer: *nemo iam parens filio nisi fragilitatis humanae vices horret, nec inter insanabiles morbos principis ira numeratur* (27.1). Then in the following chapter, Pliny cleverly argues that a resultant bad conscience motivated his various distributions.

quasi vero iam satis veneratus miratusque sim quod tantam pecuniam profudisti, non ut flagitii tibi conscius ab insectatione eius averteres famam, nec ut tristes hominum maestosque sermones laetiore materia detineres. Nullam congiario culpam, nullam alimentis

¹³⁰Reasons of state, however, also persuaded Domitian to pursue this course; cf. the extended discussion on pp. 286-297 below.

crudelitatem redemisti, nec tibi bene faciendi fuit
causa ut quae male feceras impune fecisses (28.2).¹³¹

Suetonius confirms the wide variety of games and contests which Domitian staged to entertain the Roman plebs, as well as his lavish gifts and formal congiaria (Dom. 4). He also catalogues a variety of measures which further demonstrated Domitian's liberality, among them the cancellation of debts outstanding to the aerarium Saturni for more than five years,¹³² and the confirmation of their possession of subsiciva to those squatting on them (Dom. 9).¹³³ Suetonius did not, however, regard these acts of generosity as the products of a guilty conscience, but as proofs non abstinentiae modo sed etiam liberalitatis (Dom. 9.1). His account is confirmed by Dio Cassius, who also cites instances of Domitian's liberality to the plebs without suggesting that he had an ulterior motive (lxvii.4.4-5).

Pliny attempted to buttress his argument by citing one historical example of Domitian's contempt for the masses:

Nemini impietas ut solebat obiecta, quod odisset gladiatorem; nemo e spectatore spectaculum factus miseris voluptates unco et ignibus explavit. Demens ille verique honoris ignarus, qui crimina maiestatis in harena colligebat, ac se despici et contemni, nisi etiam gladiatores eius veneraremur (33.3-4).

¹³¹Cf. Pan. 28.3: "quodque antea principes ad odium sui leniendum tumentibus plebis animis obiectabant . . ."

¹³²This conflicts with a passage in Pan. 40.5, probably aimed at Domitian: "alius ut contumacibus irasceretur, tarditatemque solvendi dupli vel etiam quadrupli irrogatione multaret . . ."

¹³³Confirmed by CIL IX. 5420.

A very similar story appears in Suetonius, who relates that Domitian threw a spectator to the dogs in the arena (Dom. 10). This indicates that some such episode occurred, but also suggests that it was unique rather than indicative of a bitter rift between Domitian and the plebs.¹³⁴ Suetonius confirms this suspicion in his summary remarks, recording that occisum eum populus indifferenter . . . tulit (Dom. 23.1). This implies that the masses did not share the senatorial order's hatred of Domitian, and that Pliny's account is a gross exaggeration.

Cowardice, cruelty, and arrogance were signal traits of the tyrant's character. Similarly, avarice. In chapter 50.5, Pliny condemns Domitian's widespread confiscation of property as a manifestation of his greed:

Circumfertur sub nomine Caesaris tabula ingens rerum venalium, quo fit detestanda avaritia illius, qui tam multa concupiscebat, cum haberet supervacua tam multa. Tum exitialis erat apud principem huic laxior domus, illi amoenior villa . . .

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No political motive is suggested by Pliny; rather, like Juvenal,¹³⁶ he expects the tyrant to be jealous of the possessions of others, and to regard the entire world as his private estate: nec unius oculis flumina montes maria deserviunt. Est quod Caesar non suum videat . . . (50.1-2).

¹³⁴E. Mohr, Panegyricus als Quelle, 42, unsatisfactorily attempts to explain away this episode.

¹³⁵In contrast to Suet. Dom. 12.1-2 and Dio Cass. lxvii.4.5.

¹³⁶Juv. iv.53-55.

Avaritia is a standard charge in Roman political
¹³⁷invective, and it would be surprising if Pliny did not
 accuse Domitian of it. The available evidence, however,
 suggests that the confiscations of property which occurred
 during his reign were the direct result of delation rather
 than avarice.

In the imperial administration there was no official
 charged with the duty of prosecuting persons suspected of
 serious crimes, and particularly of maiestas. Delation
 evolved as a substitute, but was prone to abuse because a
 successful prosecutor was usually awarded a large percentage
 (and in some cases, all) of the property of the condemned.
 Hence delation could be a financial or political weapon as
 well as a strictly judicial proceeding.

As the wealthiest order in the State, and as the
 order traditionally most deeply involved in conspiracy
 against the Princeps, the senatorial order was doubly
 vulnerable. During the first half of his reign, Domitian
 vigorously suppressed delation designed to enrich the fiscus
 (Dom. 9.3). In the aftermath of the conspiracies of 87 and
 89, however, the delators were unleashed, and an undetermined
¹³⁸number of senators prosecuted and condemned. As a result,

¹³⁷Cf. J.R. Dunkle, CW, 65 (1971) 15.

¹³⁸Neither the date on which the delators resumed
 their activities, nor the number of their victims, can be
 pinpointed. The Stoics alone are specified in the sources.
 Cf. pp. 121-122 above and p. 297 n. 75 below.

the atmosphere of reciprocal suspicion which already clouded Domitian's relations with the Senate deteriorated into an atmosphere of deep and ill-concealed hostility. Chapters 34-35 and 42-43 mirror the Senate's bitterness; it remains to examine these remarks, and to determine for what purpose the Emperor renewed delation.

Pliny sounds two themes in chapter 34: the corruption of wills, and the insecurity of those in high position. He presents Domitian's alleged motives, and concludes with a rhetorical parallel between Trajan's restoration of military discipline and domestic tranquillity:

Vidimus delatorum agmen inductum . . . nulla iam testamenta secura, nullius status certus; non orbitas, non liberi proderant. auxerat hoc malum partim [. . . partim] avaritia. advertisti oculos atque ut ante castris, ita postea pacem foro reddidisti (34.1-2).

The remainder of chapters 34-35 is devoted to a highly colored description of Trajan's relegation of the delators. Several chapters on his tax reform follow, then a detailed account of the earlier delatorial activity. Pliny stresses Domitian's avarice, and employs the comparative technique to develop a moral: while Trajan's unlimited generosity produced inexhaustible abundance, Domitian's unquenchable greed only resulted in continued penury (41.1-2).

The insecurity of men in high position—one of the two themes touched upon in chapter 34—is the subject of chapter 42. The tyrant's avarice exposed the possessors of great wealth to false accusation, unjust condemnation, and confiscation of property: locupletabant et fiscum et aerarium

non tam Voconiae et Iuliae leges, quam maiestatis singulare et unicum crimen, eorum qui crimine vacarent. Huius tu metum penitus sustulisti . . . (42.1). Pliny emphasizes that accusations were lodged by disloyal slaves permitted access to the tyrant: non enim iam servi nostri principis amici sed nos sumus, nec pater patriae alienis se mancipiis cariorem quam civibus suis credit. Omnes accusatore domestico¹³⁹
liberasti . . . (42.3).

Chapter 43 takes up the remaining theme, the corruption of wills. The tyrant eagerly connived, if he was named part heir to the estate in question: in eodem genere ponendum est, quod testamenta nostra secura sunt, nec unus omnium nunc quia scriptus, nunc quia non scriptus heres. Non tu falsis non to iniquis tabulis advocaris (43.1).

Domitian was neither the first emperor to be accused of unjustly condemning senators to death as a pretext for confiscating their property, nor the first to be accused of tampering with wills.¹⁴⁰ Pliny's allegations, however, find some support in other sources. Suetonius states that Domitian's building program, shows, and increase in the pay of the soldiers provoked a serious financial crisis, and that ultimately, bona vivorum ac mortuorum usquequaque

¹³⁹Cf. Pan. 42.4: "grata sunt tamen recordantibus principem illum in capita dominorum servos subornantem, monstrantemque crimina quae tamquam delata puniret . . ."

¹⁴⁰Cf. Suet. Nero 32.

quolibet et accusatore et crimine corripiebantur (Dom. 12).

It is of particular relevance to Pliny's remarks about disloyal slaves that Dio adds that while Domitian consistently destroyed his agents when they were no longer of use to him, he was especially careful to eliminate slaves who had provided evidence against their masters (lxvii.1.4). In the Agricola, Tacitus asserts that his father-in-law bequeathed a portion of his estate to the tyrant to safeguard the whole from confiscation (43.4).

Tacitus, however, carefully refrains from categorically stating that Domitian actually accepted the inheritance. To the contrary, his ambiguity is a very strong indication that the Emperor declined it.¹⁴¹ Agricola's death and the famine in Antioch-in-Pisidia both occur precisely in the period when Suetonius seems to depict Domitian as inopia rapax. If Domitian did not take advantage of either opportunity, then the financial crisis may not have been as desperate as Suetonius believed.¹⁴² Hence it is distinctly possible that in his assessment of Domitian's confiscations, Suetonius has confused cause and effect. Confiscation of the bona damnatorum was a regular penalty

¹⁴¹Cf. p. 119 above.

¹⁴²The accuracy of Suetonius' account has long been in dispute. Cf. in particular R. Syme, "The Imperial Finances under Domitian, Nerva and Trajan", JRS, 20 (1930) 55-70; and C.H.V. Sutherland, "The State of the Imperial Treasury at the Death of Domitian", JRS, 25 (1935) 150-162.

for capital crimes,¹⁴³ and would normally result from condemnation for maiestas. Since, however, the Senate understandably found it distasteful to admit that any senator executed by Domitian for maiestas merited the penalty, a tradition naturally developed which ascribed more odious motives to him. Therefore the allegation that the penalty inspired the prosecution must be approached with caution, and proven, not assumed.

Pliny's remarks concerning delation harbor a significant deception, the claim in chapter 42 that slaves and freedmen were the principal delators. The powerful senatorial delators who appear in Tacitus, Suetonius, Juvenal, and even in his own Epistulae, are never mentioned. Why did Pliny so construct his account? The famous dinner which he describes, at which Nerva and the infamous Fabricius Veiento reclined and conversed together,¹⁴⁴ may provide the answer. The most highly placed delators, those of consular rank, apparently remained on good terms with both Nerva and Trajan. It would have been imprudent for Pliny to rebuke them openly. Hence the vague rhetoric of chapters 34-35, and the misleading diatribe against slaves and freedmen in chapter

¹⁴³Cf. P. Garnsey, Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1970) 112-113; and A.H.M. Jones, The Criminal Courts of the Roman Republic and Principate (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972) 110.

¹⁴⁴Ep. iv.22.

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42. Pliny made his point, but without naming names.

In addition to cowardice, arrogance, cruelty, and avarice, hostility to virtue is another frequently encountered aspect of tyrannical behavior. Tacitus describes Domitian's reign as saeva et infesta virtutibus tempora in the preface of the Agricola. Pliny supplies three rhetorical examples: the suppression of virtue, and of those who display it (44-45); the promotion of vice to ensure the eradication of virtue (45); and suppression of the liberal arts, which stimulate virtue in their adherents (47).

Pliny begins by applauding Trajan's reign as reminiscent of the halcyon days of the Republic: eadem quippe sub principe virtutibus praemia quae in libertate . . . (44.6). This passage recalls the preface of the Agricola, where Nerva is praised for fusing two previously irreconcilable elements, liberty and the Principate (3.1). Pliny appends a Stoic concept found in both Seneca and Tacitus (nec bene¹⁴⁶factis tantum ex conscientia merces) before introducing his general theme, the tyrant's hostility to virtue, in the following sentence: amas constantiam civium, rectosque ac vivos animos non ut alii contundis ac deprimis, sed foves et attollis (44.6). The theme is sounded more clearly, however, in chapter 45.2: bonos autem otio aut situ abstrusos et quasi sepultos non nisi delationibus et periculis in lucem

¹⁴⁵Cf. P. Garnsey, Social Status, 50.

¹⁴⁶Cf. Sen. Ep. ad Luc. 81; Tac. Agr. 1.2.

ac diem proferebant.

While Pliny may have drawn immediate inspiration for this passage from the Agricola (39.2), the suppression of virtue under tyranny was originally formulated as an abstract concept by Plato,¹⁴⁷ and recurred in political theorists and historians alike.¹⁴⁸ As a corollary, Plato and Aristotle further believed that the tyrant would¹⁴⁹ associate with men of similar character. Such men could never represent a threat to his position, for since they were devoid of virtue, their well-being depended upon his own. The virtuous man, on the other hand, had to be suppressed at all costs. This is the genesis of the following passage:

Et priores quidem principes . . . vitiis potius civium quam virtutibus laetabantur, primum quod in alio sua quemque natura delectabat, deinde quod patientiores servitutis arbitrabantur, quos non deceret esse nisi servos, horum in sinum omnia congerebant . . . (45.1-2).¹⁵⁰

Trajan, in contrast, chose his friends ex optimis (45.3),¹⁵¹ a sign of his innate virtue.

To all of this, there is a short answer. The

¹⁴⁷Pl. Resp. 567c.

¹⁴⁸Arist. Pol. 1284a.26-33; Xen. Hiero 5.1-2.

¹⁴⁹Pl. Grg. 510; Arist. Pol. 1314a.1-10.

¹⁵⁰And of Pan. 68.3: "a malo principe tamquam successor timeatur quisquis est dignior, cum sit nemo non dignior, omnes timentur."

¹⁵¹Ironically, this is considered by Arist. Pol. 1315a.4-7 as a safeguard of tyranny.

virtuous Nerva and Trajan were associates of the tyrant who benefited from his tyranny. Similarly, two senators of lower standing, Tacitus and Pliny himself. Domitian's reign was therefore presumably not quite as hostile to virtue as they pretend.

The third example cited, the tyrant's suppression of the liberal arts, again seems to reflect Pliny's use of the Agricola. His praise of Trajan's encouragement of the arts—quem honorem dicendi magistris, quam dignationem sapientiae doctoribus habes—(47.1)—was probably prompted by the inverse remarks addressed to Domitian in Agricola 2.2: expulsis insuper sapientiae professoribus atque omni bona arte in exilium acta . . . ¹⁵² Pliny develops the antithesis at length, again sounding the fundamental theme, that the tyrant must suppress all manifestations of virtue in order to secure his own position:

ut sub te spiritum et sanguinem et patriam receperunt studia! quae priorum temporum immanitas exsiliis puniebat, cum sibi vitiorum omnium conscius princeps inimicas vitiis artes non odio magis quam reverentia relegaret (47.1).

While this particular variant also has precedents, ¹⁵³ more importantly, it is the only example based upon a known historical event: the expulsion of the philosophers in 93 or 94 A.D.

¹⁵²Cf. N. Terzaghi, Maia, 2 (1949) 121-122.

¹⁵³Cf. Arist. Pol. 1313b.1, as well as Agr. 2.2.

Like Tacitus, Pliny conceals both the scope and cause of the expulsion. In fact, it was not universal, but directed against those philosophers known to be engaged in or provoking seditious activity. The most notorious critics of the principate thus removed were the philosophical advisers of the Stoic party in the Senate, previously banished by Nero and Vespasian. To many people their removal appeared completely justified, and there is no evidence that Domitian's "suppression" of the liberal arts extended any farther.¹⁵⁴ This allegation may also, therefore, be regarded as conventional rhetoric.

Having considered five of the cardinal vices of tyrants in general and Domitian in particular (cowardice, arrogance, cruelty, avarice, and hostility to virtue), Pliny returns to a theme previously considered in another context, Domitian's inaccessibility. This prefaces the most sustained flow of emotionally-charged rhetoric in the entire Panegyricus, the climax of Pliny's contrast between the tyrant and the virtuous prince. The subject is Domitian's futile attempt to avoid retribution, and his eventual murder by those who despised and feared him the most—his own servants.

A description of Domitian's seclusion inaugurates the theme: nullae obices nulli contumeliarum gradus superatis-que iam mille liminibus ultra semper aliqua dura et obstantia

¹⁵⁴Cf. pp. 27-28 nn. 50-52 above.

(47.5). The virtuous Trajan, confident of his subjects' devotion and respect, is accessible to all—ipse autem ut excipis omnes, ut exspectas (48.1)—but does not compel anyone to remain in constant attendance:

Et admittente principe interdum est aliquid quod nos domi quasi magis necessarium teneat: excusati semper tibi nec umquam excusandi sumus (48.2).

With attendance at court voluntary rather than mandatory, and with access to the imperial presence easy rather than difficult, itaque non albi et attoniti, nec ut periculum capitis adituri tarditate, sed securi et hilares cum commodum est convenimus (48.1). Under these circumstances, those who formerly had dreaded Domitian's presence, and hastened to leave after their audience, now lingered to enjoy the company of a virtuous prince: nec salutationes tuas fuga et vastitas sequitur: remoramur resistimus ut in communi domo . . . (48.3).

Pliny switches in mid-sentence to a related theme. Domitian, like all tyrants, relies upon terror to suppress hatred for his regime. This, however, only inspires further hatred, and necessitates more intensive and widespread violence:

quam nuper illa immanissima belua plurimo terrore munierat, cum velut quodam specu inclusa nunc propinquorum sanguinem lamberet, nunc se ad clarissimorum civium strages caedesque proferret. obversabantur foribus horror et minae et par metus admissis et exclusis; ad hoc ipse occursu quoque visuque terribilis: superbia in fronte, ira in oculis, femineus pallor in corpore, in ore impudentia multo rubore suffusa.. non adire quisquam non adloqui audebat, tenebras semper secretumque captantem, nec umquam ex solitudine sua prodeuntem, nisi ut

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solitudinem faceret (48.3-5).

Thus like all tyrants Domitian is trapped in a vicious circle, compelled to commit additional atrocities to avoid retribution for those already committed. As the number of his victims expands, however, the hatred and fear aroused in his own instruments rises in direct proportion. Ultimately, to save their own lives they conspire against him, and he falls victim to a plot formed within his own household:

ille tamen, quibus sibi parietibus et muris salutem suam tueri videbatur, dolum secum et insidias et ultorem scelerum deum inclusit. dimovit perfregitque custodias Poena, angustosque per aditus et obstructos non secus ac per apertas fores et invitantia limina irrupit: longe tunc illi divinitas sua, longe arcana illa cubilia saevique secessus, in quos timore et superbia et odio hominum agebatur (49.1).

Pliny's moral is clear. Arms and fortifications do not afford the unjust ruler security against the hatred of his subjects. Virtue is the only shield upon which a ruler can rely, for the virtuous prince is revered and protected by all his subjects, and does not require a bodyguard.

Pliny makes the point himself:

Discimus experimento fidissimam esse custodiam principis innocentiam ipsius. haec arx inaccessa, hoc inexpugnabile munimentum, munimento non egere (49.3).

155The tyrant was often likened to a savage beast (*immanis belua*) in Roman literature; cf. Cic. *Off.* iii.32; *Rep.* ii.48; iii.45; Livy xxix.17.11-12; Sen. *Clem.* i.25.1; i.26.4. Similarly, there is a well-defined description of the tyrant's face to which Pliny adheres; cf. *Rhet. Her.* iv.68; Cic. *Verr.* ii.5.161; Sen. *Controv.* ii.5.4; Tac. *Agr.* 45.2. Both points are fully discussed by J.R. Dunkle, *CW*, 65 (1971) 14, 18-19.

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The moral is traditional. Similarly, Pliny's themes—the tyrant's inaccessibility, the fear and hatred which his regime arouses among the aristocracy, his use of terror to suppress their discontent, and the ultimate act of retribution—are all rhetorical commonplaces. Nevertheless, for once Pliny's rhetoric is in accord with the historical evidence provided by other sources.

Inaccessibility was regarded by Greek political theorists as a precondition for the perpetuation of tyranny. Plato dwelled at length on this state of affairs,¹⁵⁷ and discussion recurs in Xenophon and Aristotle.¹⁵⁸ As Domitian¹⁵⁹ displayed reclusive tendencies throughout his reign, he was naturally vulnerable to this criticism. However, Pliny's remarks do contain an element of truth. If in the first half of his reign Domitian's aloofness was a matter of temperament, after the revolts of 87 and 89 fear of assassination also encouraged him to isolate himself from potential

¹⁵⁶Pliny seems to be drawing directly upon Sen. Clem. 1.19.6: "Unum est inexpugnabile munimentum amor civium." Cf. Clem. 1.13.4-5; Xen. Ages. 1; and more pragmatically, Arist. Pol. 1315b.7-8.

¹⁵⁷Resp. 567d.

¹⁵⁸Xen. Hiero 6.3; Arist. Pol. 1314a.10-12. It is also a characteristic of tyrants in Roman rhetorical models; cf. Livy xxiv.5.3-6 (Hieronymus of Syracuse).

¹⁵⁹Cf. Suet. Dom. 3.1, where Domitian's withdrawal is self-imposed.

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conspirators. In this instance, therefore, the rhetorical characteristic accurately depicts Domitian's state of mind during the latter half of his reign.

Pliny's description of the fear evoked by a summons to attend Domitian is supported by Juvenal, who twice refers to the terror under which Domitian's consilium labored.¹⁶¹ Pliny then cites two examples—Domitian's murder of his own relatives,¹⁶² and his broader attack on the senatorial order as a whole¹⁶³ —to illustrate his attitude toward the Senate, and to show how he coped with overt opposition and discontent. While Pliny does not furnish specific evidence, Suetonius and the epitome of Dio Cassius do provide details which substantiate his general outline. Dio cites a dinner-party, an early example of "black comedy", which suggests that Domitian's sense of humor bordered on the macabre¹⁶⁴ (lxvii.9.1-5). In his adolescence, Domitian's personality¹⁶⁵ was tinged with cruelty, and according to Suetonius during his reign this unfortunate trait of character mani-

¹⁶⁰In contrast to 3.1, Dom. 14.4 suggests that his isolation is now designed to secure him from assassination.

¹⁶¹Iuv. iv.73-75, 144-146.

¹⁶²The executions of Flavius Sabinus (Dom. 10.4) and Flavius Clemens (Dom. 15.1) are meant.

¹⁶³Cf. Suet. Dom. 10.2-4; Tac. Agr. 45; Dio Cass. lxvii.12-14.3.

¹⁶⁴Cf. pp. 245-246 above.

¹⁶⁵Cf. Suet. Dom. 3.1.

fested itself in his relations with the Senate in a manner consonant with the mood of fear and uncertainty which Pliny describes.¹⁶⁶ Hence despite the traditional nature of Pliny's themes,¹⁶⁷ and allowing for the fact that his sinister description is certainly exaggerated, there is sufficient corroborative evidence to permit the conclusion that his rhetoric had some basis in fact. Domitian's relations with the Senate were poisoned in large part by his personality, and the actions arising therefrom.

The assassination of Domitian, the climax of Pliny's treatment of his tyranny, is another rhetorical model which coincides neatly with historical fact. Suetonius carefully points out that Domitian's household did not conspire against him until he became a threat to his freedmen and relatives.¹⁶⁸ Epaphroditus, who occupied the high position of a libellis, is the first attested victim, and Suetonius and Dio Cassius agree that he was put to death as an object-lesson because he had assisted Nero to commit suicide.¹⁶⁹ In

¹⁶⁶Cf. the fall of Arrecinus Clemens (Dom. 11.1), and the manner in which Domitian toyed with the Senate when demanding a capital penalty (Dom. 11.2-3).

¹⁶⁷The tension which exists between the tyrant and the aristocracy is noted by Pl. Resp. 567c; and Xen. Hiero 3.8; 5.1; 6.2-3; 7.7. Arist. Pol. 1313b.6-7 explicitly states that the tyrant should keep the residents of the city in attendance at his gates so that he can keep an eye on them. Cf. Iuv. iv.64.

¹⁶⁸Dio Cass. lxvii.15.1-4 supports Suetonius' account, and provides additional details.

¹⁶⁹Suet. Dom. 14.4; Dio Cass. lxvii.14.4.

the spring of 95, Domitian next executed his only remaining adult male relative, Flavius Clemens. This especially, ¹⁷⁰ Suetonius states, hastened his own destruction. In the end, Domitian was murdered by Stephanus, a procurator of Flavia Domitilla (the wife of Flavius Clemens, relegated to Pandateria after her husband's execution), ¹⁷¹ himself under indictment for embezzlement. ¹⁷² The conspiracy allegedly ¹⁷³ included Domitian's wife and both praetorian prefects, as well as the freedmen Parthenius, Satur, Entellus, and Clodianus. Thus Domitian perished, in the best rhetorical tradition, at the hands of his own intimates.

Structurally, chapter 49 concludes Pliny's account of Domitian's abuse of his various subjects. One central aspect of his tyranny, however, remains: his relationship with the gods. Aristotle wrote that the tyrant who wished to be popular with his subjects should be pious and zealous ¹⁷⁴ in his support of the various cults. Pliny alleges, however, that Domitian impiously erected his own images in the

¹⁷⁰Dom. 15.1: "quo maxime facto maturavit sibi exitium."

¹⁷¹Dio Cass. lxvii.14.2. Revenge, as well as the threat to his own person, may have motivated Stephanus.

¹⁷²Suet. Dom. 17.1: "Stephanus, Domitillae procurator et tunc interceptarum pecuniarum reus, consilium operamque obtulit."

¹⁷³Dio's *ὡς γὰρ καὶ λέγεται* raises doubts: lxvii.15.2.

¹⁷⁴Pol. 1314b.38-1315a.3.

temples:

At paulo ante aditus omnes gradus totaque area hinc auro hinc argento relucebat, seu potius polluebatur, cum incesti principis statu is permixta deorum simulacra sorderent (52.3).

He then compounded this crime by offering sacrifices to his images:

Ante quidem ingentes hostiarum greges per Capitolinum iter magna sui parte velut intercepti devertere via cogeantur, cum saevissimi domini atrocissima effigies tanto victimarum cruore coleretur, quantum ipse humani sanguinis profundeat (52.7).

Profanity, so Pliny concludes, is thus to be added to his list of vices.

Impiety, however, is yet another attribute normally
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attributed to the tyrant in Roman political rhetoric.

Hence the charge must be carefully weighed. Suetonius and a host of other sources provide abundant evidence of Domitian's piety. He maintained a special relationship with the goddess Minerva, in whose honor he annually celebrated the Quin-
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quatria, and to whom he dedicated two temples. He also
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restored the Capitolium, lavishly celebrated the Quin-
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quennial Games in honor of Jupiter Capitolinus, and
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¹⁷⁵It is characteristic of the tyrant of the contro-
versia; cf. Sen. Con. Ex. v.8; ix.4; J.R. Dunkle, CW, 65
(1971) 15.

¹⁷⁶Dom. 4.4.

¹⁷⁷Mart. i.2; iv.53.1-2; Chron. a. 354, p. 146;
Hieron. ab Abr. 2105.

¹⁷⁸Dom. 5; Mart. vi.10; ix.1.5, 3.7; xiii.74.2;
Stat. Silv. i.6.102; iii.4.105; iv.3.16, 3.161; v.1.191.

¹⁷⁹Dom. 4.4.

dedicated a new temple to Jupiter Custos.¹⁸⁰ A number of
 other cult figures also benefited. Domitian restored the
 temple of Augustus,¹⁸¹ the temple of Castor and Pollux,¹⁸²
 and the Iseum and Serapeum,¹⁸³ and dedicated new temples to
 Iuno,¹⁸⁴ Ianus Quadrifons,¹⁸⁵ Hercules,¹⁸⁶ and Fortuna
 Redux.¹⁸⁷ Hence his piety, as his stern morality, is well
 documented.¹⁸⁸

Although a few scattered references remain,¹⁸⁹
 Pliny concludes his account of Domitian's tyranny with
 chapter 52.4-5, which rhetorically describes the Senate's
 vengeful reaction to his death. Reaffirming the dual purpose
 of the Panegyricus, Pliny then justifies his reliance upon
 the comparative technique:

futuros sub exemplo praemonere nullum locum nullum esse
 tempus, quo funestorum principum manes a posterorum

¹⁸⁰Dom. 5; Tac. Hist. iii.74; Mart. vi.10.3.

¹⁸¹Mart. iv.53.1.

¹⁸²Mart. ix.3.11.

¹⁸³Mart. ii.14.7; Eutropius 7.23.

¹⁸⁴Mart. ix.3.9.

¹⁸⁵Stat. Silv. iv.1.13, 3.9.

¹⁸⁶Mart. ix.3.11, 64, 65, 101.

¹⁸⁷Mart. viii.65.

¹⁸⁸Domitian's religiosity has been studied at length
 by K. Scott, The Imperial Cult under the Flavians (Stuttgart/
 Berlin: W. Kohlhammer, 1936).

¹⁸⁹Particularly Pan. 54.3-4, 58.3-4, and 76.3-5,
 which will be discussed in the following chapter.

exsecrationibus conquiescant . . . sic maxime laudari incolumem imperatorem, si priores secus meriti reprehendantur (53.5-6).

It should now be clear that while this technique is ideally suited for Pliny's purpose, its black and white contrast of personalities produces in the Panegyricus the same kind of distortion found in the Agricola. Clearly, the more rigorously the technique is applied, the more distorted the resulting portrait is likely to be. Pliny never deviates from this technique, and applies it blindly to a traditional catalogue of vices. The resulting portrait of Domitian, as has been shown, and as would be expected, is very far from the truth. The only sustained antithesis which finds some corroboration in the historical sources is the collection of four rhetorical themes which culminate in Domitian's assassination by his own household.

The moulds into which Domitian and Trajan are forced do not fit either ruler. Historically, then, their characterizations in the Panegyricus are of little value. Apart from concrete details concerning electoral procedure, the most important insight to be gained from the Panegyricus is that provided by the numerous illustrations of extreme senatorial sensitivity to slights real and imagined against the order's dignitas. Even if historically inaccurate, the various examples of imperial arrogance which Pliny cites show how delicately the imperial system was balanced, and how easily it could collapse. They also provide an insight into what

may have been the single most important cause of the ill-feeling which arose between Domitian and the Senate—the Emperor's tactless, autocratic, and at times cruel personality.

IV

DOMITIAN AND THE SENATE

Tacitus and Pliny, spokesmen for the senatorial tradition, stand convicted of repeated and deliberate distortion. Their accounts of Domitian's personality and administration are highly rhetorical, and almost always devoid of historical accuracy. Written to serve their authors' purposes, they may properly be defined as propaganda (in the modern sense of the term). Nevertheless, their lurid descriptions of Domitian's allegedly brutal tyranny satisfied the emotional and political needs of a broader audience, the senatorial order as a whole. Damnatio memoriae constituted belated vengeance for crimes real and imagined against the institutions and members of the Senate. The severe and unrelenting judgements of the historian and panegyrist are in the same tradition, a more elaborate and polished form of damnatio memoriae. To the senatorial audience which listened to or read the Agricola, Historiae, and Panegyricus, it was of little consequence that their rhetorical content was not historically accurate. They were well received because they mirrored the order's subjective judgement of Domitian's reign. Since their rhetorical content renders these three primary sources historically untrustworthy, however, the modern scholar must sift through the lamentable wreckage of

the other extant ancient sources in an attempt to uncover the real reasons for the condemnation of Domitian's memory.

No human personality remains static for long periods of time. If a monarch is detested for his wickedness at the end of his reign, it does not follow that he was bad from the beginning. The impact of people and events upon his personality must be taken into consideration. It was true of Tiberius, and of Domitian as well.¹

Initially, Domitian seems to have made an earnest effort to establish amicable relations with the Senate. His vigorous suppression of delation was undoubtedly popular. Suetonius says that calumnia merited severe penalties, and quotes Domitian's own words: "princeps qui delatores non castigat, irritat" (Dom. 9.3). This policy guaranteed the order's safety, but Domitian went a step further and used his moral authority to protect the order's dignitas. In particular, he suppressed libellous attacks on the men and women of the senatorial order by punishing convicted libellors with ignominia.² There are hints that he was also careful to display respect for the Senate in public. When he revived the quaestorian games, for example, he honored the newly-

¹Tiberius: R. Syme, Tacitus, 420-422; B. Walker, The Annals of Tacitus, 235-239; R. Seager, Tiberius (London: Eyre Methuen, 1972) 260-262.

²Suet. Dom. 8.3: "scripta famosa vulgoque edita, quibus primores viri ac feminae notabantur, abolevit non sine auctorum ignominia . . ."

elected senators with his personal attendance (Dom. 4.1).

Throughout his reign, even after his relationship with the Senate had reached its nadir, Domitian catered to senatorial prejudice. He recognized the deep-seated hostility which senators of Italian and western provenance harbored against their oriental counterparts, but wisely made no attempt to overcome this hostility.³ Instead, he permitted senators of eastern origin to govern Greek-speaking provinces only. This policy allowed them to advance through the cursus honorum, but without arousing discontent in the Latin-speaking western provinces.⁴

The senatorial order benefited economically as well as politically. At the outset, Domitian refused inheritances when the testator was survived by children (Dom. 9.2), a policy which spared the testator from the obligation of bequeathing at least a part of his estate to the princeps.⁵

³Fully discussed by C.S. Walton, "Oriental Senators in the Service of Rome: A Study of Imperial Policy down to the Death of Marcus Aurelius", JRS, 19 (1929) 38-66. Cf. M. Hammond, "Composition of the Senate, A.D. 68-235", JRS, 47 (1957) 74-81.

⁴Cf. my article forthcoming in Hermes. The exempla include Tib. Iulius Celsus Polemaeanus (Ephesus): Pontus-Bithynia (84/85), Cilicia (89/90-90/91), and Asia (105/106); C. Antius A. Iulius Quadratus (Pergamum): Crete-Cyrene (84/85), Lycia-Pamphylia (92/93), Syria (100/101-104/105), and Asia (109/110); and L. Iulius Marinus Caecilius Simplex (Tlos?): quaestor in Macedonia, legate in Cyprus and Pontus-Bithynia, Lycia-Pamphylia (96/97), and Achaia (99/100).

⁵Cf. F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 40.

At a later date (92 A.D.), Domitian issued an edict which prohibited the planting of new vines in Italy, and decreed the destruction of half the existing vineyards in the Empire (Dom. 7.2). If this measure had been scrupulously enforced, it would have given existing Italian vineyards a virtual monopoly on wine production. Although the edict was undoubtedly designed not to fatten senatorial purses but to guarantee adequate supplies of grain by preventing further conversion of grain fields into more lucrative forms of agriculture, certainly the resulting monopoly would have given Italian wine-growers an enormous economic windfall. The senatorial order dominated the Italian wine industry, and would have realized most of the profit.⁶

Domitian's friendly attitude will have easily overcome whatever tension resulted from the indiscretions committed by both sides on his dies imperii. Dio Cassius states that Domitian hastened from Titus' deathbed directly to the Praetorian Camp, where he ensured his accession with a donative equal to that distributed by his brother (lxvi. 26.3). Despite Dio's malice, the core of the story is undoubtedly true.⁷ Certainly, it was imprudent for Domitian

⁶Rostovtzeff believes that the measure was "enforced in Africa, to a certain extent in the Danube provinces, in Northern and Central Gaul, and in part of Spain": M. Rostovtzeff, The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire, rev. P.M. Fraser (2nd ed., Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1957) 202. Cf. SEHRE, 628 n. 12.

⁷Cf. M. Hammond, MAAR, 24 (1956) 84.

thus to violate the constitutional framework of the principate. In his excitement, Domitian apparently did not bother to consult his brother's consilium, which certainly would have advised him to make an appearance in the Senate before proceeding to the Camp.

The Senate, on its part, was equally indiscreet, and with far less justification. If the rumors of fraternal discord during Vespasian's lifetime are without foundation,⁸ still the relationship between Titus and Domitian does seem to have deteriorated once Titus assumed the throne. Domitian believed that Titus had tampered with Vespasian's will, and the story may be true (Dom. 2.3).⁹ Titus was reputed to be an excellent forger (Titus 3.2), which qualified him for the task, and there is no appreciable change in Domitian's status after his father's death, which seems inconsistent with Vespasian's well-publicized plans to secure the succession to both of his sons (Vesp. 25).¹⁰ When, therefore, the senators proceeded unsummoned to the curia, and spontaneously voted honors for Titus (Titus 11), it¹¹ amounted to a public insult to Domitian.

⁸Cf. pp. 183-185 above.

⁹Cf. F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 13; S. Gsell, Domitien, 26-29, especially 27 n. 2; P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2549.

¹⁰Domitian under Titus: S. Gsell, Domitien, 27; G. Corradi, DE, 2 (1910) 1969-1970; M. Hammond, MAAR, 24 (1956) 84.

¹¹Cf. P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2551; M. Hammond, MAAR,

More serious than either of these two gaffes was Domitian's refusal to pledge not to execute members of the senatorial order. If the epitome of Dio Cassius may be believed (lxvii.2.4), the request was made and refused on several occasions. While there are difficulties in the account,¹² there is in fact no reason to doubt that some such request was actually made. It may have inspired Domitian's well-known remark that an emperor who did not have to resort to execution was merely lucky, not good.¹³

Modern historians have placed undue stress on this episode, which must be kept in perspective.¹⁴ Titus did not take an oath, but Suetonius states that his reign was free of executions (Titus 9). In contrast, solemn promises made at the beginning of his reign had not prevented Nero from indulging in subsequent bloodletting.¹⁵ The members of the

24 (1956) 84: "The hostility thus underlined at the inception of the new reign continued throughout." The word "hostility" is too strong.

¹²The epitome states that the Senate passed decrees to this effect which Domitian ignored. It seems unlikely that the Senate would act thus without the Emperor's permission; if the account is accurate, however, it indicates that Domitian initially allowed the Senate considerable independence.

¹³Dio Cass. lxvii.2.3.

¹⁴Cf. F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 40, 86; S. Gsell, Domitien, 59; B. Walker, The Annals of Tacitus, 168.

¹⁵Cf. Tac. Ann. xiii.4. Nero does not, however, seem to have taken a formal oath not to execute senators. A.R. Birley, "The Oath Not to Put Senators to Death", CR, 12 (1962) 197-199, argues that Vespasian was the first emperor

Senate undoubtedly appreciated the lessons to be extracted from recent imperial history; Domitian would be judged by his actions, not his promises.

Viewed in perspective, these three indiscretions may be considered as minor and passing irritants, smoothed over by Domitian's carefully cultivated attitude of respect. His demeanor should also have stifled whatever disquiet was aroused by his transfer of all important state business from the Senate to the consilium principis. Pliny, it is true, does bitterly criticize him for thus neglecting and humiliating the Senate. In epistula viii.14 he remarks:

Quid tunc disci potuit, quid didicisse iuuit, cum senatus aut ad otium summum aut ad summum nefas vocaretur, et modo ludibrio modo dolori retentus numquam seria, tristia saepe censeret?

In the Panegyricus, he provides a more detailed account of the kind of business which Domitian allegedly allowed the Senate to transact:

Nihil ante tam vulgare tam parvum in senatu agebatur, ut non laudibus principum immorarentur, quibuscumque censendi necessitas accidisset. De ampliando numero gladiatorum aut de instituendo collegio fabrorum consulebamus, et quasi prolatis imperii finibus nunc ingentes arcus excessurosque templorum fastigium titulos, nunc menses etiam nec hos singulos nomini Caesarum dicabamus (54.3-4).

On the basis of these remarks, every modern scholar who has addressed himself to the problem has concluded that this policy caused considerable upset in the ranks of the

to swear such a formal oath. Contra, P. Garnsey, Social Status, 44-45.

Senate.¹⁶ That conclusion is hasty and unwarranted. As the testimony of Pliny's letters reveals, the Senate was not perturbed by Trajan's repeated encroachments upon its prerogatives. In epistula iv.22, for example, Pliny relates that he was invited to attend Trajan's consilium when it was debating a legal point concerning the gymnastic games held at Vienna. As Sherwin-White has remarked, this was a minor problem (in the same vein as those outlined in Panegyricus 54.3-4) emanating from a senatorial province, and it is noteworthy that Trajan decided to attend to the problem himself rather than refer it back to the Senate.¹⁷ The Epistulae provide abundant evidence that Trajan, like Domitian, left only the most trifling business to the Senate.¹⁸ Both emperors seem to have regarded it (correctly) as a body only one stage removed from complete ineptitude.

Trajan's neglect of the Senate did not arouse discontent within that body because it was concerned with form, not substance. It was humiliation rather than neglect which would anger the Senate. As long as the senators were allowed to preserve their collective dignitas, as a group they cared little what portion of the state's business was delegated to them. With the lessons of Domitian's reign

¹⁶Cf., for example, F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 40, 87; S. Gsell, Domitien, 56.

¹⁷A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 299.

¹⁸Cf. Ep. iv.12; v.4.

before him, Trajan was extremely careful to cultivate an image of modest self-effacement, and to act as primus inter pares. He correctly judged that if he surrendered the trappings of absolute power, he could still exercise his position as autocratically as Domitian, but without arousing the discontent which overwhelmed his predecessor.

Similarly, Domitian's neglect of the Senate will not have aroused opposition or bitterness within that body as long as he pursued a policy of outward respect for its dignitas. A remarkable passage in the Panegyricus indicates that this is precisely the attitude which Domitian maintained: fortasse imperator in senatu ad reverentiam eius componebatur . . . (76.5). This is consistent with the overtures to the Senate outlined above. When, however, Domitian did adopt policies which threatened its dignitas, and his relationship with the Senate collapsed, that body understandably became more sensitive to infringements upon its traditional functions which it had previously overlooked. Thus Domitian's neglect of the Senate only became a source of resentment after other factors had caused its relations with him to break down.

It is also usually assumed that Domitian's increasing reliance upon the equestrian order to cope with the details of imperial administration exacerbated the Senate's hostility. It is alleged in particular that the Senate would have resented the inclusion of equestrians on the emperor's

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consilium. Both assumptions, the general and the particular, seem mistaken. Suetonius indeed confirms that Domitian reserved some of the most important offices in his administration for equestrians, offices hitherto occupied by freedmen (Dom. 7.2). It seems obvious, however, that any senator would prefer to associate with equestrians rather than freedmen, and equally obvious that any policy which suppressed the influence of imperial freedmen would be popular with the Senate. Pliny's Epistulae sustain the inference. Included among his correspondents is Gn. Octavius Titinius Capito, the equestrian ab epistulis who served under Domitian, Nerva, and Trajan.²⁰ Pliny speaks of him with obvious admiration in epistulae i.17 and viii.12. More importantly, the fact that Pliny corresponded on such familiar terms with a large number of equestrians is a good indication that at this time there was little if any prejudice against the equestrian order within the Senate.²¹

Equestrians, it is true, do appear on Domitian's consilium. They are attested epigraphically as early as 82 A.D. (CIL IX.5420), and two equestrians play a large role in

¹⁹Cf. F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 40; B. Walker, The Annals of Tacitus, 169; K.H. Waters, Phoenix, 18 (1964) 67.

²⁰For his career, cf. ILS 1448; A. Stein, "Gn. Octavius Titinius Capito", RE, 17 (1937) 1856.

²¹The status of Pliny's correspondents is fully discussed by A.N. Sherwin-White, Letters of Pliny, 65-69.

the fictitious council depicted in the fourth satire of Juvenal. The consilium tried cases involving senators as defendants, and if equestrians indeed sat on the panel when a member of the Senate was on trial, the senatorial order might be expected to resent this as an affront to its dignitas. The composition of the consilium, however, was fluid.²² Pliny, for example, attended it on three occasions when points of law were under debate, but was apparently excluded from all foreign policy discussions.²³ Thus it does not follow that equestrians attended every session of the consilium, and sat in judgement of senators on trial before it, merely because they were present when other questions were on the agenda. Their presence at such trials must be proven, not assumed. Since there is in fact no evidence that Domitian allowed equestrians to try cases involving senators, that inference should be set aside.

In the course of his administration of the Empire, Domitian actually seems to have pursued only one policy which would actively antagonize a sizeable segment of the Senate—his insistence on honest and impartial provincial administration. The bulk of the provinces were governed by members of the senatorial order. Corruption was alarmingly wide-

²²Cf. J.A. Crook, Consilium Principis: Imperial Councils and Counsellors from Augustus to Diocletian (Cambridge: the University Press, 1955) 26.

²³Cf. Ep. iv.22; vi.22; vi.31.

spread, a condition attested by the depressing regularity with which repetundae trials occur during the early principate.²⁴ Simple economics lay at the core of the problem. The pursuit of the senatorial cursus honorum, and the maintenance of a life-style appropriate to a member of the senatorial class, were both expensive propositions. Too many senators still maintained the attitude that it was neither dishonest nor unethical to recoup some of the expenses attendant upon pursuit of a public career by exploiting the provinces when the opportunity presented itself.

The problem was aggravated by the attitude taken by the Senate as a body. It was notoriously "soft" when it came to punishing senators convicted of provincial maladministration.²⁵ This posture encouraged further abuse, and must have exasperated those emperors who, like Domitian, were genuinely interested in promoting the well-being of their subjects. At the same time, however, the emperor had to tread warily when he chose to suppress these abuses because the Senate was also notoriously sensitive concerning the trial and punishment of its members. In fact, no emperor could arbitrarily punish a senator guilty of even flagrantly cruel or venal

²⁴The extent of provincial maladministration has been catalogued by P.A. Brunt, "Charges of Provincial Maladministration under the Early Principate", Historia, 10 (1961) 224-227.

²⁵For the Senate's attitude, cf. Pliny Ep. ix.13.21, and again P.A. Brunt, Historia, 10 (1961) 219-220.

misconduct, or stage-manage his trial and punishment within the Senate, without arousing deep bitterness and hostility. Thus the emperor was confronted with a cruel dilemma. To conciliate the Senate, it was necessary for him to allow that body to conduct trials without interference. That course of action, however, invited a light penalty, or no penalty at all, even when convictions were obtained.

The evidence for the option which Domitian chose is decidedly contradictory. The details of only one repetundae trial are still extant, Pliny's account of the prosecution²⁶ of Baebius Massa by the province of Baetica in 93 A.D. As Garnsey has pointed out, Pliny's account does not offer even a hint of imperial interference in Massa's trial, despite the²⁷ light punishment which he received after his conviction. This would seem to indicate that Domitian chose to conciliate the Senate even at the cost of continued abuse of the provinces. However, this isolated instance conflicts with Suetonius' general statement that the provinces were never more honestly or justly administered than during Domitian's²⁸ reign. Obviously, Domitian could not have achieved and

²⁶Cf. Ep. vii.33.

²⁷P. Garnsey, Social Status, 58. Note that when Massa was condemned, the Senate resolved that his property should be kept in official custody. When Massa appealed to the consuls, however, they were quite amenable to hearing his claims for restitution.

²⁸Dom. 8.2: "magistratibus quoque urbicis provinci-
arumque praesidibus coercendis tantum curae adhibuit, ut neque

maintained this high standard by allowing the Senate to mete out light penalties. As a rule, he must have severely punished peculation on the part of provincial governors.

In the absence of more detailed evidence concerning the repetundae trials, only one piece of additional evidence can be cited to throw light on this conflict. Proceedings similar to those involving Massa may be surmised from a brief passage in the Panegyricus in which Pliny says to Trajan: nec poenis malorum sed bonorum praemiis bonos facias (70.2)! Pliny's casuistry thus supports Suetonius' statement that Domitian closely supervised the activities of public officials, and punished malfeasance. His non-interference in Massa's trial may have been due to special circumstances. Massa was²⁹ a delator, and Domitian may have allowed the Senate a free hand in the expectation that it would hand down a severe penalty. Its failure to do so must have strengthened his belief that the Senate was incapable of chastising its own membership, and that the emperor must assume the task himself.

Certainly, then, while Domitian's insistence on honest provincial administration will not have aroused universal resentment, his insistence that senators convicted of peculation be severely punished will have seemed to many senators an arbitrary infringement on the Senate's prerogatives

modestiores umquam neque iustiores exstiterint . . ."

²⁹Cf. Tac. Hist. iv.50.

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and dignitas.

Still, the economic and political benefits derived by the Senate from the range of imperial policies outlined above should have more than compensated for the occasional ill-feeling created by this one particular administrative policy. Although the latter cannot be dismissed as a factor contributing to the breakdown of relations between Domitian and the Senate, it was hardly the sole or even the principal cause of that breakdown. A pronounced autocratic strain in Domitian's personality, combined with his lack of tact and an inglorious record which made him politically vulnerable at his accession, were three factors which encouraged him to adopt policies extremely unpopular with the Senate.

Domitian was twenty-nine years old when he assumed
³¹the throne. He acquired it by inheritance, and there must have been many members of the senatorial aristocracy who considered him unworthy of the position. His ancestry was undistinguished, and he had none of the achievements to his credit that gave Vespasian and Titus some claim to the throne on grounds of merit. Vespasian's career prior to his accession had been long and, on the whole, commendable. He had advanced through the cursus honorum to the consulship

³⁰Cf. S. Gsell, Domitien, 57; H.W. Pleket, Mnemosyne, 4th s. 14 (1961) 310; K.H. Waters, Phoenix, 18 (1964) 66.

³¹Domitian was born on October 24, 51 (Dom. 1), and assumed the throne on September 13, 81 (Titus 11).

(51 A.D.) after being awarded the ornamenta triumphalia and membership in two priesthoods for outstanding service during his legionary legateship in Britain.³² He held the coveted proconsulship of Africa, and was acclaimed for his honest and sober administration of that province.³³ In Iudaea he demonstrated anew that military competence which he had first displayed in Britain. Given his experience and ability, in 69 A.D. there was in fact no one in the Senate with a better claim to the throne than Vespasian.

Similarly, Titus had been carefully groomed to fill positions of great responsibility. Educated at court as a companion of Britannicus,³⁴ he displayed military promise during tribunates in Germany and Britain,³⁵ and rhetorical skill as a pleader in the Roman lawcourts.³⁶ He demonstrated initiative as a legionary legate under his father's command in Iudaea,³⁷ and was credited with suppressing the Jewish rebellion by storming Jerusalem.³⁸ During his father's principate, Titus was a virtual co-regent. He held seven

³²Suet. Vesp. 4.1-2.

³³Vesp. 4.3.

³⁴Titus 2.

³⁵Titus 4.1.

³⁶Titus 4.2.

³⁷Titus 4.3.

³⁸Titus 5.2.

ordinary consulships as Vespasian's colleague, and shared the tribunician power.³⁹ He also received the censorship,⁴⁰ and even served as praetorian prefect. When he assumed the throne in 79, there was once again no one in the Senate with a better claim.

In contrast, Domitian was placed in a false position by his lack of personal auctoritas. He possessed titles enough—the praetorship at the age of eighteen,⁴¹ and seven consulships under Vespasian and Titus, two as ordinarius⁴² — but no real power or meaningful experience. When Titus assumed the throne, he did not elevate Domitian to the same position which he himself had shared with Vespasian. Inscriptions reveal that Domitian continued in the humiliating position of princeps iuventutis, and was not accorded the tribunician power.⁴³ During the eleven years following Vespasian's return to Rome, Domitian's only attested exposure to civil administration was an occasional appearance before the Senate to deliver his father's messages.⁴⁴ On the

³⁹Titus 6.1.

⁴⁰Titus 6.1.

⁴¹Dom. 1.3; Tac. Hist. iv.3. For a discussion of his activities during the praetorship, cf. pp. 37-41 and 168-187 above.

⁴²73 and 80 A.D.

⁴³Cf. ILS 263; CIL II.4803; VI.2059.

⁴⁴Dio Cass. lxvi.10.6.

military side, he was not allowed even to become familiar to the troops, much less to prosecute a campaign, despite his ardent desire to achieve at least this minimal preparation for rule.⁴⁵ He thus came to the throne under the dual handicap of having neither civil nor military experience.⁴⁶

To make good his deficiencies, Domitian pursued a set of policies designed to strengthen his political base by improving both his personal dignitas and his auctoritas. In an attempt to acquire greater prestige, he continued his father's policy of virtually monopolizing the ordinary consulship. He held this office for the first seven years of his reign (82-88 A.D.), and again in 90, 92, and 95 A.D.⁴⁷ In 84, after his return from the Rhine, he even allowed himself to be elected consul for the next ten years in succession.⁴⁸ Thus in the period 70-89 A.D. inclusive-- the period between Vespasian's accession and the rebellion of L. Antonius Saturninus--Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian held twenty-five

⁴⁵Suet. Dom. 2.2; cf. the remarks on this passage by G.W. Bowersock, "Syria under Vespasian", JRS, 63 (1973) 135.

⁴⁶Cf. M.P.O. Morford, Phoenix, 22 (1968) 57-72. Contra, B.W. Jones, "Preparation for the Principate", PP, 26 (1971) 264-270, who argues that Domitian was well-trained to assume the throne. Jones, however, confuses honors and experience; Domitian had little of the latter.

⁴⁷Cf. A. Degrassi, Fasti Consolari, 24-28.

⁴⁸Dio Cass. lxvii.4.3. Dio's testimony is questioned without sound reason by B.W. Jones, "Designation to the Consulship under the Flavians", Latomus, 31 (1972) 849-853. Cf. p. 45 n. 98 above.

of the forty ordinary consulships, and assigned two others
⁴⁹
 to close relatives.

This policy excluded almost an entire generation of senators from the opportunity to attain the office which they most esteemed, the eponymous consulship. It caused deep bitterness, accurately reflected by a passage in Pliny's Panegyricus: contigit ergo privatis aperire annum fastosque reserare, et hoc quoque redditae libertatis indicium fuit quod consul alius quam Caesar esset (58.3).

Domitian inherited the resentment which must have
⁵⁰
 been welling up even before his accession. His tactlessness, however, further aggravated the situation. The consulships which he held, he treated contemptuously. Suetonius says that he was consul in name only: gessit nec quemquam ultra Kal. Mai., plerosque ad Idus usque Ianuarias (Dom. 13. 3). The senatorial order, which held the eponymous consulship in such high esteem, must have regarded Domitian's demeaning
⁵¹
 of its importance as an act of sheer caprice. Suetonius' bald statement, at any rate, is seconded by a series of emotional passages in the Panegyricus, of which the following

⁴⁹T. Flavius Sabinus in 82, and Q. Petillius Rufus in 83. Cf. A. Degrassi, Fasti Consolari, 24-25.

⁵⁰Cf. F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 87; S. Gsell, Domitien, 42-43; B. Walker, The Annals of Tacitus, 168; K.H. Waters, Phoenix, 18 (1964) 65-66.

⁵¹Cf. P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2582; G. Corradi, DE, 2 (1910) 2032-2033.

is the most notable:

miseros ambitionis, qui ita consules semper, ut semper principes erant! Quamquam non ambitio quam livor et malignitas videri potest, omnes annos possidere, summumque illud purpurae decus non nisi praecceptum praecloratumque transmittere (58.4).⁵²

After the conspiracy of 87 A.D., Domitian seems to have inventoried the causes of senatorial discontent, and to have taken steps to remedy their complaints when he could do so without compromising his personal security and rule. At any rate, he abruptly abandoned his policy of monopolizing the consulship. He was consul in 88 after the conspiracy of 87, and again in 90 after the more serious rebellion of Saturninus. Subsequently, in the last six years of his reign⁵³ he held only two consulships.

Trajan's policy towards the consulship also confirms the bitterness which Domitian's policy aroused in the Senate. Trajan prudently held only four ordinary consulships in the⁵⁴ nineteen years of his reign, and, if Pliny may be believed,

⁵²Cf. Pan. 65.3 and 76.5.

⁵³B.W. Jones, "Domitian's Attitude to the Senate", AJPh, 94 (1973) 79-91, argues that Domitian abandoned his father's monopolistic policy in 84. It must be pointed out, however, that unlike Vespasian Domitian had no children with whom to share the consulship, and that he was still young enough (29 at his accession) that he did not have to adopt a concerted policy of promoting his adult male relatives in order to guarantee a Flavian successor to himself. At the same time, however, Domitian did hold one of the ordinary consulships annually from 82 to 88, which is certainly consistent with his father's policy.

⁵⁴In 100, 101, 103, and 112; cf. A. Deggrassi, Fasti Consolari, 30-33.

consistently displayed respect for the dignity of the office.⁵⁵

In 73 A.D., Vespasian and Titus assumed the censoria potestas in order to fill the gaps created in the Senate by the recent Civil War, to create new patricians, and presumably to weed out some of the senators newly-enrolled by Otho and

Vitellius.⁵⁶ Early in 85 A.D. Domitian also assumed the

censorship,⁵⁷ but he went a step further and in November of 85 became censor perpetuus—censor for life.⁵⁸ This act,

which was also designed to increase his prestige and

authority,⁵⁹ was without precedent, and certain to cause anger and suspicion in the Senate. The censorial power gave the emperor absolute control over the Senate's membership.

When Domitian assumed this power in perpetuity, it meant that he could adlect new members into the Senate, and more importantly, remove senators from the order, at will.

Placed in a political context, it raised the alarming possi-

⁵⁵Cf. Pan. 63-65.

⁵⁶Suet. Vesp. 9.2; Titus 6.1. Cf. BMC II, 16.86 ff. for Vespasian (IMP CAES VESP AUG PM COS IIII CEN), and II, 18.92 ff. for Titus (T CAES IMP VESP P TR P CENS).

⁵⁷The coinage allows his censorship to be closely dated. Reverses of the second issue of 85 bear legends such as IMP VIIII COS XI CENS POT PP; cf. BMC II, 315.78 ff. These issues also prove that Dio Cass. lxvii.4.3 has misdated his censorship.

⁵⁸The third issue of 85 (November-December) bears such legends on the obverse as IMP CAES. DOMIT AUG GERM COS. XI CENS PER PP; cf. BMC II, 376.360 ff.

⁵⁹Dio Cass. lxvii.4.3.

bility of an emperor arbitrarily removing senators from the curia who were hostile to him, and filling the Senate with his own sycophants.

Even if this power was never exercised, the constant threat which it represented must have had a terribly repressive effect on the Senate. Thus, although to date Domitian is known to have used his power of adlection only ⁶⁰ once, and the ancient sources also mention only one ⁶¹ expulsion, it is certain that Domitian's adoption of the censoria potestas for life contributed heavily to the Senate's ⁶² growing hostility.

When Domitian assumed the throne, he lacked military experience. More importantly, since he had never been permitted even to tour the legionary camps, to the army he

⁶⁰Tib. Claudius Alpinus Augustanus L. Bellicius Sollers, adlected in[ter] quaestorio[s et] inter tri[buni]cio[s] pra[e]tori urbano The lacuna, where the name of the emperor responsible should appear, is a characteristic erasure of Domitian's name. Cf. PIR² B 103. Although it may be argued that all epigraphic evidence for adlection by Domitian would have been erased after his damnatio memoriae, the fact that Suetonius does not even mention his censorship suggests that he did not abuse it. Cf. S. Gsell, Domitien, 71.

⁶¹Suet. Dom. 8.3, and Dio Cass. lxvii.13.1, both refer to the expulsion of one Caecilius Rufus (Dio alone provides the name, however) from the Senate because he was a mime.

⁶²Cf. F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 87; S. Gsell, Domitien, 54-56; B. Walker, The Annals of Tacitus, 168; K.H. Waters, Phoenix, 18 (1964) 66. As B.W. Jones points out, Domitian's formal adoption of the censoria potestas for life was an extension of the policy of Vespasian and Titus, but not as discreet. Cf. "A Note on the Flavians' Attitude to the Censorship", Historia, 21 (1972) 128.

was an unknown quantity. Domitian, however, had learned the two cardinal lessons of the Civil War. He recognized that the army was the only real power-broker in the Empire, and that the Senate would rubber-stamp any candidate imposed upon it by the legions. He also realized that Nero had lost his throne because he failed to cultivate the army, and was determined not to repeat his mistake. Accordingly, the third policy which Domitian adopted to strengthen his hold upon the throne was to court the army, and particularly to expose himself to the troops.

In the spring of 83 A.D., the Chattic war provided him with an opportunity to take personal command of the Rhine legions,⁶³ and a year later it provided him with a pretext for granting the army a substantial increase in pay.⁶⁴ Subsequently, Domitian campaigned in person on the Danube on three occasions—in 86 against the Dacians and in 89 and 92 against the Sarmatians⁶⁵—thereby cementing the loyalty of the Danubian garrison. This policy proved its worth in 89. When he was informed that L. Antonius Saturninus had induced two of the

⁶³For the Chattic campaign, cf. pp. 50-61 above.

⁶⁴Suet. Dom. 7.3 and Dio Cass. lxvii.3.5 (they do not agree on the amount). The latter closely links this measure with Domitian's return from the Rhine, and the coinage confirms that the increase occurred early in 84. Cf. C.M. Kraay, "Two New Sestertii of Domitian", ANSMusN, 9 (1960) 114-116; and my article forthcoming in Historia.

⁶⁵Cf. pp. 87-92 and 97-99 above.

legions of Germania Superior (XXI Rapax and XIV Gemina Martia Victrix) to revolt, Domitian hastened north from Rome to suppress the rebellion. Within a few days of his departure, he was notified that the rebellion had already been crushed by the legions of Germania Inferior, which had remained loyal.⁶⁶ Further proof of the army's loyalty was provided after his assassination, when the Praetorian Guard compelled Nerva to punish the assassins (Dio Cass. lxxviii.3.3), and when the army as a whole attempted to deify him, and sought, unsuccessfully at that time, to avenge him (Dom. 23).

Domitian's cultivation of the army thus reaped impressive dividends, but only at the cost of further eroding his relationship with the Senate. That body preferred the arcana imperii to remain secret, and resented Domitian's flaunting of the fact that his imperium derived ultimately from the soldiers. Domitian's policy publicly reduced the Senate to a position of secondary importance, and constituted yet another insult to its collective dignitas. The Senate was accustomed to being courted by the reigning emperor regardless of political reality, and was not yet prepared to tolerate an undisguised military autocracy. Hence Trajan was able to conduct all important state business outside of the Senate because he shrewdly nourished its inflated sense of self-importance. Domitian, however, did not possess sufficient

⁶⁶Cf. pp. 92-97 above.

tact to court the army and conciliate the Senate. To the contrary, he completely neglected the Senate. His judgement of its capacity and power was correct, but his characteristic bluntness in this regard is a third factor which materially contributed to the Senate's increasing hostility.⁶⁷

Domitian's tactless fondness for the trappings of monarchy exacerbated the ill-will aroused in the Senate by his impolitic monopolization of the consulship and censorship, and by his wooing of the army. When he returned to Rome from the war against the Chatti, he began increasingly to play the military autocrat. Some of the more ingenious or malicious flatterers in the Senate proposed that he should be attended by twenty-four lictors and be allowed to wear triumphal dress, even in the curia.⁶⁸ Since Domitian did not protest, the Senate had no choice but to pass the proposals as senatus consulta.⁶⁹

These were not the trappings of an emperor who was only primus inter pares—the Senate's cherished ideal. Nor was an emperor primus inter pares who preferred to be

⁶⁷Cf. F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 87; B. Walker, The Annals of Tacitus, 169.

⁶⁸Dio Cass. lxxvii.4.3; cf. S. Gsell, Domitien, 45; B. Walker, The Annals of Tacitus, 169.

⁶⁹Domitian should have been warned by the fact that Vitellius was deterred from wearing triumphal dress in Rome because of the bad impression it would make; cf. Tac. Hist. ii.89.

addressed as dominus et deus noster. Although the appellation does not appear in the headings of senatorial or other official edicts,⁷⁰ Domitian undoubtedly relished it, and the more obsequious members of the Senate will not have hesitated so to address him. Their abject behavior must have infuriated the Senate as much as the title itself; this sense of outrage has been accurately communicated by Pliny in the Panegyricus.⁷¹

Finally, a variety of sources testify that Domitian renamed the months of September and October "Germanicus" and "Domitianus" respectively.⁷² Suetonius states specifically that he did so quod altero suscepisset imperium, altero natus esset (Dom. 13.3). This recalled Nero's behavior, and was⁷³ regarded as equally arrogant.

It is not difficult to surmise how the majority of the Senate must have felt as they rose to welcome Domitian when he marched into the curia in triumphal dress attended by twenty-four lictors, and was greeted by the more shameless flatterers as dominus et deus noster. This was the behavior

⁷⁰Cf. pp. 233-234 above.

⁷¹Pan. 2.3-4; cf. S. Gsell, Domitien, 49-54; B. Walker, The Annals of Tacitus, 169.

⁷²Cf. Mart. ix.1; Stat. Silv. iv.1.42; Suet. Dom. 13.3; Dio Cass. lxvii.4.4.

⁷³Nero renamed April "Neroneus" (Tac. Ann. xv.74.1), and May and June "Claudius" and "Germanicus" respectively (Ann. xvi.12.2). Cf. S. Gsell, Domitien, 45; B. Walker, The Annals of Tacitus, 169.

not of a civis but of an autocrat. Thus Domitian outraged the Senate's dignitas not only by his policies but also by his personal conduct. The latter is especially reprehensible because it was unnecessary and politically foolhardy. The Senate was not yet prepared silently to acquiesce in its own degradation. An emperor who was not satisfied with the exercise of absolute power, but who insisted on having the trappings of absolutism as well, would proceed at the risk of arousing discontent, and fomenting conspiracies.⁷⁴

Thus from the Senate's point of view, the decisive years of Domitian's reign were 84-85 A.D., not the period after the rebellion of Saturninus. In 84 Domitian accepted the consulship for the next ten years, increased the pay of the army by one-third, and began to parade in the curia in military garb. In 85 he completed his transition from princeps to autocrat by assuming the censorship in perpetuity. His attitude encouraged intrigue in the Senate, but at the same time it must also have left most senators with few illusions about the treatment they would receive if they conspired unsuccessfully. Domitian had already revealed his disdain for the Senate; he would not hesitate ruthlessly to destroy senators who conspired against him. Once a pattern of conspiracy was established, the reaction of both Domitian

⁷⁴Cf. S. Gsell, Domitien, 334; B. Walker, The Annals of Tacitus, 168-169; H.W. Pleket, Mnemosyne, 4th s. 14 (1961) 299-300, especially 299 n. 1; K.H. Waters, Phoenix, 18 (1964) 69.

and the Senate was predictable.

Nevertheless, Domitian's policies and personal conduct did produce a series of conspiracies both within and without Rome. Domitian reacted first by summarily executing conspirators and potential rivals, and finally by unleashing the delators attempted to suppress every manifestation of overt or covert opposition.⁷⁵ This course of action could no doubt be justified, but its wisdom may still be questioned. Domitian's severity threatened the very lives of a group whose dignitas had already been frequently insulted, and destroyed once and for all the possibility of co-operation⁷⁶ between him and a large proportion of the Senate.

Two conspiracies are attested by trustworthy sources during the first half of Domitian's reign, and a third by later and more dubious sources. The epitome of Dio Cassius states that before Domitian set out for Gaul (in the Spring of 83), πολλοὺς δὲ τῶν πρώτων ἡγετῶν κατὰ πολλὰς προφάσεις φόβου τε καὶ ὑπερορίας ἐκπρόδων ποσούμενος (lxvii.3.31).

This vague passage is supported by St. Jerome's Chronicon, which records under the year 2099 (October 1, 82-September

⁷⁵Domitian may have unleashed the delators as early as 87, or as late as 93. In Agr. 45.1 Tacitus makes it clear that the Stoics who perished in 93 were victims of delation, but he also specifies only one previous victim of delation (the vestal Cornelia?). Cf. pp. 121-122 and 250-255 above.

⁷⁶Cf. H.W. Pleket, Mnemosyne, 4th s. 14 (1961) 299; K.H. Waters, Phoenix, 18 (1964) 68.

30, 83): plurimos senatorum Domitianus in exilium mittit.

In the absence of contemporary evidence, however, the claims of sources as late as Eusebius and Xiphilinus must be approached with caution.

The first certain conspiracy is securely dated to 87. The Arval Brethren record in their acta that on September 22 of that year they offered sacrifices ob detecta scelera nefariorum.⁷⁷ C. Vettulenus Civica Cerialis, proconsul of Asia in 87/88,⁷⁸ was almost certainly involved in this conspiracy. Suetonius states that he was executed ipso Asiae proconsulatu, one of three consulars executed during Domitian's reign quasi molitores rerum novarum (Dom. 10.2).⁷⁹

The absence of dates in Suetonius' list of Domitian's victims (Dom. 10) precludes positive identification of any other conspirators, but one piece of conjecture may be profitable. Suetonius states that Domitian executed his first cousin, T. Flavius Sabinus, quod eum comitiorum consularium die destinatum perperam praeco non consulem ad populum, sed imperatorem pronuntiasset (Dom. 10.4). This passage cannot refer to Sabinus' election in 81 as consul

⁷⁷Cf. M-W 14, l. 63.

⁷⁸Cf. W. Eck, Senatoren, 138.

⁷⁹Regarded as a serious conspirator by D. Magie, Roman Rule, 578. Cf. S. Gsell, Domitien, 248; P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2584; G. Corradi, DE, 2 (1910) 2019; M.P. Charlesworth, CAH, 11 (1936) 27; K.H. Waters, Phoenix, 18 (1964) 76 n. 62a.

ordinarius for 82 because Sabinus was allowed to hold that consulship, and his name was not erased from the fasti.

Therefore, it must refer to a subsequent designation for an
⁸⁰iterated consulship. For two reasons, the terminus ante

quem for this designated consulship must be the comitia in 87 at which the consules ordinarii for 88 were announced.

First, Sabinus' execution cannot have occurred later than 89 because Suetonius states that after his death Domitian

openly made love to his widow Iulia (Dom. 22). However,
⁸¹Iulia herself died of an abortion late in 89 (Dom. 22).

Second, since Sabinus was Domitian's eldest male relative, and a candidate for an iterated consulship, he could hardly have shared the fascēs with anyone other than Domitian himself. Since Domitian was consul in 88, but not in 89, the possibility must be considered that the conspiracy recorded in 87 centered on Flavius Sabinus.

Since Domitian and Iulia had been engaged in adultery as early as Titus' reign (Dom. 22), Sabinus did not lack a pretext for conspiring, if indeed a pretender to the throne needed any pretext other than ambition. The herald's slip

⁸⁰Cf. S. Gsell, Domitien, 248 n. 6; P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2572-2573; A. Stein, "T. Flavius Sabinus", RE, 6 (1909) 2615; PIR² F 355.

⁸¹Iulia was still alive when Statius listed the Flavian divi in Silv. i.1, composed after Domitian's dual triumph in 89. She must have died, however, before January 3, 90, because on that date she is not mentioned in the prayers of the Arval Brethren; cf. M-W 16, ll. 7-8.

of the tongue was hardly accidental; Domitian would not have summarily executed his closest male relative unless he had good reason to suspect him. Certainly, if the plot recorded by the Arval Brethren involved not only Cerialis and other unnamed senators but Sabinus as well, then it was a conspiracy of alarming proportions. In 87 both court and military morale must have been at a low ebb, and Domitian's position especially vulnerable, for this year fell in the gloomy interval between the destruction of Cornelius Fuscus' army in Dacia late in 86, and the decisive victory of Tettius Iulianus at Tapae in the summer of 88. Under these circumstances, and much to the Senate's dismay, any conspiracy detected in 87 was bound to be dealt with quickly and violently.⁸²

The conspiracy of 87, followed so closely by that of 89, completely unnerved Domitian. In the aftermath of one of these two conspiracies (which one is uncertain), he apparently decided to get rid of other potential rivals upon whom conspiracies might logically center, whether they were involved in the plots or not. This explanation, first⁸³ advanced by Pichlmayr, is still the most satisfactory

⁸²Fuscus' defeat conceivably may have triggered the conspiracy, with the conspirators acting on the premise that the army would readily accept Domitian's overthrow after two crushing defeats on the Danube.

⁸³F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 88.

interpretation of Suetonius' account of the destruction of L. Aelius Plautius Lamia Aelianus, L. Salvius Otho Cocceianus, and Mettius Pompusianus (Dom. 10.2-3).

The execution of L. Salvius Otho Cocceianus is the most readily understandable of the three. He was a nephew of the emperor Otho, and would have been adopted as his uncle's heir if Otho had prevailed over Vitellius.⁸⁴ On his deathbed, Otho's sage advice to his nephew was neither to forget nor remember too well that he was the kinsman of a former Caesar.⁸⁵ Suetonius says that he was executed because he celebrated his uncle's birthday; whether he was actually so indiscreet, or the story is a fabrication, is immaterial. His removal would have naturally suggested itself to an Emperor who had decided to eliminate in advance anyone who possessed a viable claim to the throne.⁸⁶

Similarly, Mettius Pompusianus had been regarded as a potential claimant to the throne as early as the reign of Vespasian. The latter, with the humor and presence of mind of an emperor with two fully grown sons to succeed him, scoffed, and promoted Mettius to the consulship.⁸⁷ Domitian

⁸⁴Plut. Otho 16.

⁸⁵Plut. Otho 16.

⁸⁶K.H. Waters, Phoenix, 18 (1964) 75-76, accepts the story, and argues that his indiscretion provoked a charge of maiestas. Cf. S. Gsell, Domitien, 318; P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2584; G. Corradi, DE, 2 (1910) 2019.

⁸⁷Suet. Vesp. 14; Dio Cass. lxvii.14.2-3.

was not in a position to be so generous, and exiled him to
 Corsica, probably for maiestas.⁸⁸ Mettius died while in
 exile, and his death was naturally laid at Domitian's door-
 step, although he must have been in his mid-fifties when he
 passed away.⁸⁹

L. Aelius Plautius Lamia Aelianus seems to have
 labored under two handicaps. Consul suffectus in 80 A.D.,
 it was his misfortune to be the former husband of the Empress
 Domitia, whom Domitian had abducted (it is uncertain whether
 forcibly or with her consent) and married in 70 A.D.⁹⁰ He
 also seems to have been remarkably indiscreet, not hesitating
 publicly to joke about how he had lost his wife. While
 these remarks may have provided the pretext for his execution,
 in fact it was almost certainly his former connection with
 the reigning Empress which caused his downfall.⁹¹

Whether these three senators were removed after the
 conspiracy of 87, or that of 89, is not nearly as important
 as the reason for their removal. If they were not actually

⁸⁸Dio Cass. lxvii.14.4; Suet. Dom. 10.3 (which does
 not mention his exile). Cf. F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius
 Domitianus, 88; S. Gsell, Domitien, 318; P. Weyand, RE, 6
 (1909) 2584-2585; G. Corradi, DE, 2 (1910) 2019; K.H. Waters,
Phoenix, 18 (1964) 76 n. 62a.

⁸⁹Mettius was consul between 70 and 75; cf. A.
 Degraasi, Fasti Consolari, 20. If he was consul at age 42 in
 75 A.D., and was exiled, for example, in 87 A.D., then he
 would have been approximately 54 years old when exiled.

⁹⁰Cf. Suet. Dom. 1.3; 10.2; Dio Cass. lxv.3.4.

⁹¹Cf. F. Pichlmayr, T. Flavius Domitianus, 88; S.

involved in either of the conspiracies (and the sources, while admittedly hostile to Domitian, do not provide the slightest hint that they were), their destruction must have shocked and unsettled the Senate. Once an emperor began to remove potential as well as proven rivals, he was embarked on a course which could degenerate into an open reign of terror. The difference between an obscure senator related to a former emperor and a consular of distinguished ancestry was, after all, one of degree rather than kind.

In fairness, however, after the rebellion of L. Antonius Saturninus, Domitian could hardly be blamed for becoming excessively suspicious. It was the second serious conspiracy against his life in three years. More importantly, since A. Lappius Maximus had been so alarmed by the extent of the conspiracy that he courageously burned Saturninus' papers rather than allow them to fall into Domitian's hands (Dio Cass. lxxvii.11.2), the Emperor must have been convinced that some of the conspirators still remained in the Senate, awaiting another opportunity.

Contrary to the opinion of most modern scholars, however, the rebellion of Saturninus in 89 does not seem to have been as decisive a turning-point in Domitian's relations with the Senate as the events of 84-85. The orgy of blood-

Gsell, Domitien, 319; P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2584; G. Corradi, DE, 2 (1910) 2019; K.H. Waters, Phoenix, 18 (1964) 76 n. 62a.

letting decried by Tacitus and Pliny never really materialized. In the last seven years of the reign, apart from the Stoics only five senators were exiled or put to death, and three of these were almost certainly guilty of either conspiracy or maiestas. Rather, after Saturninus' rebellion the already tense atmosphere became still more tense, and the mistrust which Domitian and the Senate harbored of one another acquired a sharper focus. Their hardened attitudes were a predictable sequel to the conspiracies against Domitian, and the latter's ruthless suppression of his proven and potential rivals. If there was a reign of terror at all, it was only ushered in with the destruction of the Stoic party in 93, not in 89.

The steps which Domitian took to safeguard his life after the rebellion of Saturninus were a natural extension of his reaction to the conspiracy of 87. Domitian was determined to prevent a third conspiracy; henceforth he would accept nothing less than absolute obedience and loyalty from the Senate. Thus not only sedition but opposition in any form was now to be checked. Delation, suppressed at the beginning of the reign, was revived sometime between 87 and 93 as the most reliable means of enforcing obedience.

The slender evidence available indicates that Domitian pursued this policy rigorously. Suetonius states that Sallustius Lucullus was executed while serving as governor of Britain because he named a new lance after himself. (Dom. 10.3). Since Lucullus' governorship cannot be

pinpointed more closely than the period 86-96 A.D., it is possible that this is a piece of gossip, and that Lucullus was really executed as an accomplice of Saturninus. If, however, as Syme has suggested,⁹² Lucullus is identical with P. Sallustius Blaesus, consul suffectus in 89, then he could not have been governor of Britain in 89, and the connection with Saturninus collapses. The Arval acta prove that Sallustius Blaesus was present in Rome on May 20, 91, but out of the city on November 5.⁹³ Accordingly Eck, who accepts Syme's suggestion, assigns his governorship to 92/⁹⁴ 93. In fact, there is no reason to doubt the story as Suetonius gives it. After the events of 89, Domitian would be quick to destroy any legatus who seemed to be courting⁹⁵ the army, and Lucullus' behavior could be so construed.

Two other consulars, M. Acilius Glabrio and Ser. Cornelius Salvidienus Orfitus, were executed for sedition.⁹⁶ Suetonius states that Glabrio, consul ordinarius with Trajan in 91, died in exile (Dom. 10.2). Dio supplements his account,

⁹²R. Syme, Tacitus, 648.

⁹³Cf. M-W 17, ll. 18 and 34-37.

⁹⁴W. Eck, Senatoren, 143.

⁹⁵Cf. S. Gsell, Domitien, 318; P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2585; G. Corradi, DE, 2 (1910) 2019; E. Groag, "Sallustius Lucullus", RE, 1A (1920) 1956-1957; M.P. Charlesworth, CAH, 11 (1936) 27; K.H. Waters, Phoenix, 18 (1964) 76 n. 62a.

⁹⁶Glabrio and Orfitus were, like Civica Cerialis, executed as molitores rerum novarum.

and links Glabrio's murder with that of Flavius Clemens in 95 A.D. (lxvii.14.3). This provides a provisional date for his death, but the cause of his disgrace and eventual demise remains a mystery. The reasons alleged by Dio are spurious; the latter has apparently distorted a hunting expedition on which Glabrio was a guest of the Emperor into an attempt to murder him.⁹⁷ Thus Suetonius' account, vague as it is, cannot be improved upon. Glabrio was exiled between 91 and 95⁹⁸ A.D. for sedition.

Ser. Cornelius Salvidienus Orfitus was also exiled,⁹⁹ and eventually put to death, for plotting res novae. It has been argued that he was connected with the Stoic party,¹⁰⁰ and hence must have perished in 93. Both Suetonius (Nero 37) and Dio (lxii.27.1) connect the execution of his father in 65 A.D. with that of Thrasea Paetus, the leader of the Stoic opposition under Nero. It must be pointed out, however, that in 93 the Stoics were charged with maiestas, not

⁹⁷Domitian was an avid huntsman, and Suetonius specifically states that he often hunted on his Alban estate; cf. Dom. 19.

⁹⁸Cf. P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2584; G. Corradi, DE, 2 (1910) 2019; PIR² A 67; K.H. Waters, Phoenix, 18 (1964) 74.

⁹⁹Suetonius' ambiguous account is supplemented by Philostr. VA vii.18, who records that Orfitus was relegated to an island.

¹⁰⁰Cf. E. Groag, "Ser. Cornelius Salvidienus Orfitus", RE, 4 (1901) 1507; PIR² C 1445; K.H. Waters, Phoenix, 18 (1964) 76 n. 62a.

res novae, which further weakens an already insubstantial¹⁰¹ argument. In fact, since Orfitus was consul before 87, and no subsequent honors are known, he could have been involved in the conspiracy of 87 or that of 89, or like Glabrio, in some subsequent conspiracy unattested by our meagre sources. No conclusions may therefore be drawn from his exile and death, except that he also was found guilty of sedition.

Similarly, nothing much can be made of the execution of M. Arrecinus Clemens, Domitian's brother-in-law, and twice consul. His condemnation must have come after the rebellion of 87, and probably after the fall of the Stoics, because Suetonius states that he was a victim of delation (Dom. 11). The lack of urgency implied by Suetonius' account further suggests that he was condemned for maiestas rather than sedition, but the specific charges remain completely unknown, and it is not beyond the realm of possibility that he too was removed because he was regarded as a potential claimant¹⁰² to the throne.

Domitian's destruction of the Stoic party in 93 provides the clearest sign of his determination to stifle

¹⁰¹Cf. A. Degrassi, Fasti Consolari, 26.

¹⁰²B.W. Jones, "La Chute de M. Arrecinus Clemens", PP, 25 (1972) 320-321, argues that Clemens was removed because he objected to Domitian's relations with Iulia, hence before or during 89.

covert as well as overt opposition to his regime. The promotion of Arulenus Rusticus to the consulship in September of 92 proves that at that date Domitian was still attempting to appease this clique. They responded with a coordinated series of ill-concealed insults. Simultaneously, Arulenus Rusticus released a panegyric on Thrasea Paetus, the diehard republican executed by Nero;¹⁰³ Herennius Senecio a similar panegyric on Helvidius Priscus the Elder, the anarchist put to death by Vespasian;¹⁰⁴ and Helvidius Priscus the Younger a skit on Paris and Oenone widely regarded as a satire on Domitian's marriage.¹⁰⁵ Domitian responded to the challenge with maiestas proceedings. The three authors were put to death and their accomplices sent into exile.¹⁰⁶

There is no evidence that the members of this circle were ever actively engaged in plots against Domitian's life.¹⁰⁷ In fact, they seem to have been tried and executed precisely for the reason indicated by the sources—their public display

¹⁰³Cf. Tac. Agr. 2.1; Suet. Dom. 10.3; Dio Cass. lxvii.13.2. Suetonius also mistakenly attributes the encomium of Helvidius Priscus the Elder to Rusticus. Cf. the following note.

¹⁰⁴Cf. Tac. Agr. 2.1; Dio Cass. lxvii.13.2.

¹⁰⁵Suet. Dom. 10.4.

¹⁰⁶Cf. pp. 23-26 above.

¹⁰⁷R.S. Rogers, CPh, 55 (1960) 19-23, argues unconvincingly that the crimes alleged by the sources were mere pretexts, and that the Stoics were in fact guilty of more serious acts of treason.

of an openly anti-imperial attitude. Certainly, the lesson to be learned from their fate was not lost on the rest of the Senate. In the last three years of the reign, there is no evidence of senatorial intrigue, and the only senator definitely known to have been put to death during this period was Domitian's last surviving adult male relative, hence a special case. The conspiracy which resulted in Domitian's assassination was formulated and carried out not by the Senate but by members of the imperial household.

Suetonius states positively that this conspiracy was inspired by the last known execution of the reign, the murder in 95 A.D. of Domitian's cousin, Flavius Clemens. Although Suetonius also says that Clemens was a man of contemptissimae inertiae, and was executed ex tenuissima suspicione (Dom. 15.1), in fact Clemens seems to have acquired a position of some prominence in the final years of the reign. Consul ordinarius with Domitian in 95, his two sons had been adopted as heirs-apparent by the Emperor, and renamed Vespasianus and Domitianus (Dom. 15.1). A late source indicates that he also interceded on Quintilian's behalf, and obtained the ornamenta consularia for him.¹⁰⁸ This implies a certain degree of influence with the Emperor.

Did Clemens and his wife, Flavia Domitilla, become

¹⁰⁸Auson. Grat. Act. vii.31; cf. M. Sordi, "La Persecuzione di Domitiano", RSCI, 14 (1960) 18.

impatient, and attempt to hasten the succession of their own children by conspiring against Domitian? The hypothesis is attractive, given the meagre evidence outlined above, and the context of Suetonius' remarks. The latter relates the execution of Clemens immediately after recounting Domitian's fear of assassination (Dom. 14), clearly suggesting that it was the Emperor's fears that caused his cousin's fall from power. Dio's flat statement that he was condemned on a charge of "atheism" may be viewed as either a pretext or one of several charges brought against him.¹⁰⁹ It is improbable that it was the sole reason for his disgrace.

Thus of the fourteen senators known to have been executed during Domitian's reign, six seem to have been pronounced guilty of conspiracy,¹¹⁰ one of tampering with the army,¹¹¹ and three of maiestas.¹¹² Three more apparently were removed because they were regarded as potential rivals

¹⁰⁹In much the same fashion that adultery charges were appended to a maiestas accusation under Tiberius; cf. P. Garnsey, Social Status, 21. Cf. also S. Gsell, Domitien, 302-303; G. Corradi, DE, 2 (1910) 2020; E.T. Merrill, Essays in Early Christian History (London: Macmillan & Co., 1924) 149-150, 157; J. Speigl, Der römische Staat und die Christen (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1970) 23-26.

¹¹⁰Civica Cerialis, Flavius Sabinus, Antonius Saturninus, Salvidienus Orfitus, Acilius Glabrio, Flavius Clemens.

¹¹¹Sallustius Lucullus.

¹¹²Arulenus Rusticus, Herennius Senecio, and Helvidius Priscus the Younger.

for the throne,¹¹³ and one for reasons unknown.¹¹⁴ This is a modest tally for a reign of fifteen years which featured at least two conspiracies, but the Senate could not be expected to accept all of the condemnations with equanimity. The murders of Mettius Pompusianus, L. Aelius Plautius Lamia Aelianus, and L. Salvius Otho Cocceianus were particularly inexcusable. The suppression of the Stoic party, and particularly the dramatic condemnation and execution of its three leading spokesmen, also reflects poor judgement. The Senate properly interpreted their destruction as an act designed to silence criticism in any form, and reacted accordingly. In the last three years of the reign, those senators who were implacably hostile to Domitian chafed under this restraint, which was released only with his assassination. The damnatio memoriae gave full measure to their bitterness, and provided a lead for the other members of the Senate to follow.

The condemnation of Domitian's memory was thus the final act of a play which had opened in 84-85, and climaxed in 87. All that took place after the conspiracy of 87 was a predictable sequel.

¹¹³Mettius Pompusianus, L. Salvius Otho Cocceianus, and L. Aelius Plautius Lamia Aelianus.

¹¹⁴M. Arrecinus Clemens.



CONCLUSION

The assassination of Domitian in 96 A.D. provided the Senate with an opportunity to vent its wrath against the deceased Emperor by condemning his memory. It also spawned three works whose references to Domitian are so consistently hostile that they may be deemed a kind of literary damnatio memoriae—the Agricola and Historiae of Tacitus, and the Panegyricus of Pliny the Younger.

Point by point analysis has revealed that the overwhelming majority of these passages are historically inaccurate, and warrants the general conclusion that the senatorial portrait of Domitian as depicted by Tacitus and Pliny is far from the truth. Domitian was not the incompetent coward whom they make him out to be, but a forthright defender of the Empire.¹ Nor was he a savage and bloodthirsty tyrant. His treatment of his subjects in the provinces was humane, and earned for him a reputation as a beneficent ruler.² He also seems to have been on good terms with the masses of Rome itself, despite Pliny's highly emotional rhetoric to the contrary,³ while his popularity with the army is unquestion-

¹Cf. pp. 50-61, 87-108, and 235-240 above.

²Cf. pp. 240-242 above.

³Cf. pp. 243-249 above.

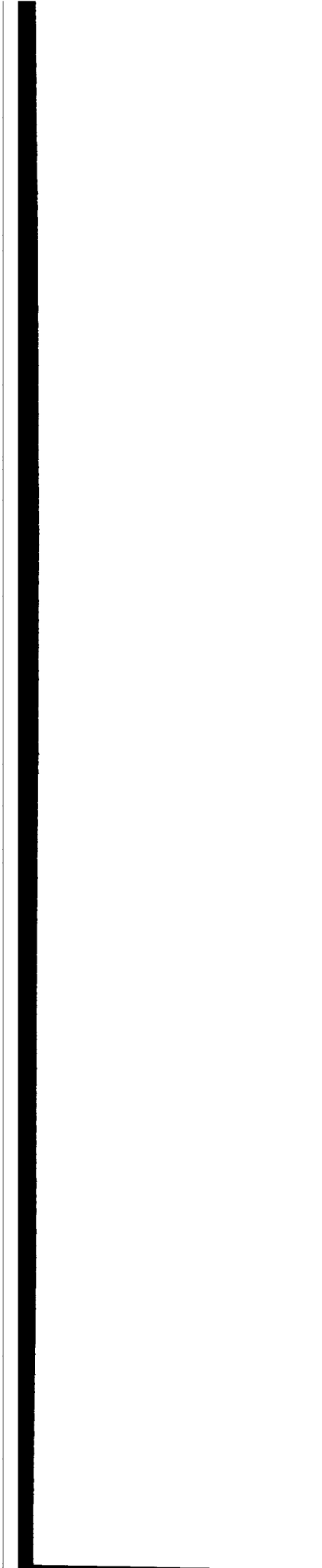
⁴able. In fact, Domitian's alleged tyranny was directed only against the Senate.

Here in particular the narratives of Tacitus and Pliny are grossly exaggerated. A reign of terror did not set in on Domitian's dies imperii and remain operative for the next fifteen years. This study has argued that despite certain tensions which clouded Domitian's relations with the Senate at his accession, on the whole their relationship was amicable during the early years of the reign. During this period, however, Domitian was impelled by his lack of auctoritas—and particularly by his lack of military experience—to pursue three policies meant to strengthen his hold on the throne. Ironically, it was the pursuit of these three policies which caused a rift with the Senate. His monopoly of the eponymous consulship—a continuation of his father's policy—deprived most of the senators of the political prize which they valued most. His assumption of the censorial power for life represented a constant threat to their position, and an insult to their dignitas. Finally, his transparent courtship of the army, combined with his neglect of the Senate, was distasteful to that body, and another source of disquiet. At the same time, in his personal conduct Domitian revealed himself an autocrat. Although this was essentially harmless, it was politically

⁴Cf. again pp. 239-240 above.

foolish because apart from matters of policy in itself it was almost certain to arouse senatorial resentment. All of this did in fact sour Domitian's relations with the Senate in 84-85, and create an atmosphere of sufficient resentment to spawn conspiracies.

Domitian's reaction to the first proven conspiracy—that of 87 A.D.—seems to have been justifiably severe, and the conspiracy of 89 only hardened his attitude. The elimination of both active conspirators and potential but unproven rivals in the aftermath of these two conspiracies, however, did not constitute a reign of terror. It was not until the destruction of the Stoic party in 93 that Domitian revealed an inflexible determination to stifle even the most harmless forms of senatorial opposition. Thereafter, although the last three years of the reign witnessed the execution of only one senator, the atmosphere of repression which existed within the Senate was sufficiently severe for most senators to believe that they were exposed to a reign of terror. The damnatio memoriae which followed Domitian's assassination was a reaction to the severe repression of this three year period.



APPENDIX I

The Dating of Domitian's War Against the Chatti¹

In a recent contribution to Historia, Brian Jones has stated that the Chatti war "was undertaken early in 82, virtually won by the summer of 83 when Domitian became Germanicus, and then followed by a period of reorganisation and final pacification" (p. 80).² The argument is impressively documented; the incautious reader may accede. It is, however, open to serious objections.

As Jones correctly affirms, the outbreak of the war is usually dated to 83 on the basis of a passage in Dio Cassius (lxvii.3.5) and a military diploma (ILS 1995). As they sustain each other, of necessity Jones must decisively disprove them both.

He begins with Dio. "Now Dio's account of the Flavian era, surviving only in epitome, is of undoubted value, but one of its major faults is its chronological inaccuracy" (p. 80). Jones attempts to set aside the testimony of Dio on this ground. He cites the Usipi episode. Tacitus dates it to the sixth year of Agricola's tenure in Britain, that is, 82 or 83 (Agr. 25). Dio, how-

¹Forthcoming in Historia under the title "The Dating of Domitian's War Against the Chatti Again".

²B.W. Jones, Historia, 22 (1973) 79-90.

ever, dates it to the reign of Titus, specifically to the latter half of 79 (lxvi.20). Jones concludes that given Tacitus' "reliability in matters of fact, it is obvious that, as far as chronology is concerned, the evidence of Dio (i. e. Xiphilinus and Zonaras) must be treated with extreme caution" (p. 80).

The example is unfortunate, the method arbitrary. The enigmatic Agricola is not particularly accurate or reliable.³ Indeed, after careful study one historian has recently concluded that Tacitus consciously distorted the chronology of events in Britain,⁴ and that Dio's account of the Usipi episode is to be preferred.⁵ The proposal, plausible and persuasive,⁶ dispels Jones' criticism of Dio's

³Tacitus commits at least two lies in the Agricola: tot exercitus in Moesia Daciaque et Germania et Pannonia temeritate aut per ignaviam ducum amissi (41.2). In fact, only two legions were lost, V Alaudae in Dacia in 86, and XXI Rapax in Pannonia in 92. See R. Syme, JRS, 18 (1928) 45-46. Nam sicut ei <non licuit> durare in hanc beatissimi saeculi lucem ac principem Traianum videre, quod augurio votisque apud nostras aures ominabatur (44.5). Patently, this is flattery post eventum. Tacitus was absent from Rome for the four years previous to Agricola's death in August 93. Tacitus and Agricola therefore did not verbally communicate after 89—almost a full decade before Trajan's accession.

⁴R. Urban, Domitianbild, 34-35.

⁵R. Urban, Domitianbild, 21-43, 69 n. 4, especially 22: "Dio's Bericht ist völlig rational und in sich geschlossen und macht keineswegs den Eindruck einer durch Kürzung oder durch Missverständnis entstellten Version, so dass er, da er auch keinerlei Übertreibung oder Pathos erkennen lässt, für sich genommen nicht den geringsten Anlass zu Kritik und Zweifeln bietet."

⁶Both points are accepted by K.H. Waters in his review of Urban, JRS, 62 (1972) 225-226.

accuracy, and raises grave misgivings about the trustworthiness of Tacitus' account of Agricola's campaigns.

"What little Dio has to say of the war itself and of its causes is inaccurate" (p. 81). This is equally disputable. Apart from Frontinus' comment that the Chatti were in armis,⁷ and Suetonius' statement that the campaign was sponte (Dom. 6), we know nothing of the causes of the war. Dio cannot, therefore, be convicted of inaccuracy on this point. As for the details of the campaign, Dio's account⁸ does conflict with the fragmented testimony of Frontinus, but the question at issue is really Dio's source.

Ἐκστρατεύσας δὲ ἐς τὴν Γερμανίαν καὶ μῆδ' ἑορκῶς πρὸς πόλεμον ἐπαυγῆκε (lxvii.4.1) reflects the senatorial tradition hostile to Domitian—and probably a contemporary senatorial⁹ historian.

Jones' concluding comment, "one cannot find in his [Dio's] account any satisfactory evidence for 83 as the date of the war" (p. 81), is therefore inadequately substantiated.

Inadequate criticism of Dio also militates against

⁷Str. 1.1.8. Note, however, that they were also inopinato bello.

⁸Particularly with Str. 11.3.23.

⁹Cf. Suet. Dom. 19: in expeditione et agmine equo rarius, lectica assidue vectus est, which also reflects senatorial malice. The source is quite possibly Tacitus' Historiae. That Dio used the Historiae for his account of Domitian's reign is almost certain. See, for example, the death-scene of Titus (lxvi.26.2-4), with its Tacitean use of a rumor for which the historian disclaims all responsibility. Cf. pp. 191-193 above.

Jones' new dating of ILS 1995. This diploma is provided with both a tribunician and a consular date. The former, Tribunic. Potestat. II . . . Cos. VIII Design. VIIII, secures¹⁰ it to the period September 19-December 31, 82. Jones, however, seizes upon the consular date, A. d. XII k. Octobr. M. Larcio Magno Pompeio Silone, T. Aurelio Quieto cos. (September 20). Citing Degrassi,¹¹ Jones notes a discrepancy between the tribunician and consular dating which, he asserts, proves that "the diploma was not issued in 82 but in the September of the following year" (p. 83).

According to Jones, "neither of the consuls will fit the remaining letters in the fragment which he [Degrassi] assigns to 82" (p. 84). Surely, it is dubious method to reject the firm tribunician date in favor of the insecure consular date unless conclusive evidence can be cited to assign the two consuls to 83. In point of fact, Jones has apparently misunderstood Degrassi. The latter was confronted with a fragment of the Fasti Ostienses which obviously contained the final letters of the names of a consul ordinarius and three successive suffecti for the year 82. The consuls attested in ILS 1995 could not be matched with these truncated names. Degrassi therefore proposed two alternative

¹⁰Trib. Pot. II: September 14, 82-September 13, 83; Cos. VIII: January 1, 82; Cos. VIIII: January 1, 83. See P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2551; 2553-2554.

¹¹A. Degrassi, Inscriptiones Italiae, 13 fasc. 1: Fasti Consulares et Triumphales (Roma, 1947) 220-221, and Tab. LXX.

solutions: either the fasti for 82 must have contained additional suffecti, or the tribunician date of ILS 1995 must be in error. Jones favors the latter alternative; Degrassi, who posed it, thought it "minus probabile".¹² With good reason. Since no less than eleven suffecti may¹³ have to be added to the extant fasti for 82-83, five pairs of suffecti must be allotted to each year. If the fragment is in chronological order, then it breaks off with August 31, 82. September-October is available, and in consonance with ILS 1995, should be consigned to Larcius and Aurelius.

The diploma was, therefore, issued on September 20, 82. The argument based upon it—that the war could not have started in 82 because troops would not be discharged while a campaign was in progress—is sound. As Jones accepts the

¹²A. Degrassi, Inscript. Ital., 220-221: "Difficultatem quidem facit cognomen, quod supplevit Dessau, Modest. (v.8), quod alienum esse videtur a M. Larcio Magno Pompeio Silone et a T. Aurelio Quieto, quos diploma diei 20 Sept. 82 consules exhibet (CIL XVI.28). Sed fieri potest ut aliqua de causa a. 82 plures consules fuerint quam Domitiani aetate solerent, nisi forte existimes, id quod minus probabile puto, numeros tribuniciae potestatis et consulatuum illius diplomatis falso esse et diploma ipsum ad a. 83 referendum."

¹³See A. Degrassi, Fasti Consolari, 24-25: Peregrinus; A. Didius Gallus Fabricius Veiento III, Vibius Crispus; S[ex. Carminius] Vetus, M. Co_____ (in October: CIL XIV.4725); M. Larcius Magnus Pompeius Silo, T. Aurelius Quietus; P. Valerius Patruinus, L. Antonius Saturninus; Cn. Pedanius Fuscus Salinator; Marius Priscus. Here, Degrassi says of the consulships of Larcius and Aurelius, "non sembra escluso che i consoli possano appartenere all'83." 83 has not received universal acceptance. See, for example, W. Eck, Senatoren, 126 n. 64: "82 oder 83"; 222 n. 457: "82 (?)". M. Co_____ is now known to be M. Cornelius Nigrinus Curiatius Maternus; see G. Alföldy and H. Halfmann, Chiron, 3 (1973) 331-373.

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argument in principle, it provides definitive evidence against his dating of the war.

Having disposed of the evidence against his dating, Jones next seeks evidence to confirm it. He immediately cites Domitian's adoption of the title Germanicus in the summer of 83, which "presumably indicates the successful conclusion of the campaign . . ." (p. 85). His principal argument is that "it is inconceivable that he [Domitian] would have risked entitling himself Germanicus if there was any danger of the war continuing" (p. 85).

The evidence supporting the incorporation of the title Germanicus into Domitian's titulary in 83 is variously numismatic, papyrological, and epigraphic. It must, however, be used with caution. As Domitian was later to be addressed as Dacicus and Sarmaticus although he never officially accepted the titles, it is clear that only official government materials may be safely cited for the

¹⁴"I would argue, then, that if this diploma has any value as evidence for the dating of this campaign, it is to demonstrate that by September 83 Domitian had conquered the Chatti" (p. 85). To his list of scholars who have accepted the argument, add J. Janssen, Vita Domitiani, 30-31; and P. Arias, Domiziano, 89.

¹⁵RIC II, 158.39; BMC II, 307.44; P. Flor. III, 361, Z 12; P. Oxy. II.331; IGR I.1138.

¹⁶Mart. viii praef.

¹⁷Mart. ix.93.7; cf. S. Gsell, Domitien, 229.

¹⁸P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2572, 2576.

title Germanicus as well. Despite doubts voiced about their authenticity,¹⁹ two coins in this category, RIC II, 158.39 and BMC II, 307.44, seem to confirm the adoption of the title by September 13, 83. This does not, however, support Jones' twin conclusions that the war began in 82 and was virtually over in the summer of 83. There is considerable evidence that the war continued until 85. Germania Capta first appears on the coinage for that year,²⁰ which infers continuance of the war until shortly before that date.²¹ Confirmation is to be found in the fact that the detachments drawn from Agricola's command continued to serve in Germany until 86,²² the year in which legio I Adiutrix also was transferred to the Danubian front.²³ The title Germanicus, then, apparently signals nothing more than the end of Domitian's personal participation in the war.²⁴

Similarly, the adoption of that title in the summer of 83 does not presuppose a campaign in 82. Braunert's

¹⁹Most recently by C.M. Kraay, ANSMusN, 9 (1960) 112.

²⁰BMC II, lxxxvi; xcii; 362.294; 369.325.

²¹H. Braunert, BJ, 153 (1953) 100-101. Cf. H. Schönberger, JRS, 59 (1969) 158, who seems to accept Braunert's views on the length of the war.

²²If ILS 9200 indeed refers to the Chatti war; cf. p. 46 n. 101 above.

²³Cf. p. 48 n. 108 above.

²⁴H. Braunert, BJ, 153 (1953) 100.

supposition that Domitian set out in the spring and returned²⁵ in the late summer of 83 is equally admissible —indeed, fits the facts far better. As Jones states, "it was Domitian's practice to receive salutations for minor victories" (p. 85). It is precisely the striking absence of imperial salutations during the period Jones proposes which deters acceptance of his dating of the war. Imperator II on²⁶ September 19, 82, Domitian is still only Imperator III on²⁷ June 9, 83. Then there is a flurry of salutations—IV and²⁸ V before the end of 83, VI and VII by September 3, 84.²⁹ One might reasonably suppose that III celebrates a personal³⁰ success of Domitian's in the early stages of the campaign, IV and V victories in Caledonia and on the Rhine,³¹ VI the

²⁵H. Braunert, BJ, 153 (1953) 98-99.

²⁶ILS 1995. Domitian was saluted as imperator for the first time by the Praetorian Guard on his dies imperii: P. Weynand, RE, 6 (1909) 2551. The second acclamation should commemorate a victory won in Britain during Agricola's fourth campaign: Agr. 23.

²⁷ILS 1996.

²⁸Domitian is Imperator III on the last issues of 83, and V on the initial issues of 84. No coins seem to have been minted for the period Trib. Pot. III Cos. VIIII Design. X, that is, September 14-December 31, 83. Cf. BMC II, 480.

²⁹ILS 1997.

³⁰Certainty is precluded, but possibly the initial success attested by Frontin. Str. 1.1.8, or the construction of the limes: Str. 1.3.10.

³¹Agr. 24: Quinto expeditionum anno nave prima transgressus ignotas ad id tempus gentes crebris simul ac prosperis proeliis domuit. Imperator V against the Chatti:

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victory at Mons Graupius,³³ and VII a further victory on the Rhine. Whatever the distribution, certainly the timing of salutations IV-VII completely contradicts Jones' dating of the war.

There is one additional piece of evidence which also suggests that the decisive moment in the campaign must be placed later than the summer of 83. Dio closely links the increase in salary for the legions with the campaign in Germany.³⁴ A coin bearing the legend STIP. IMP. AUG. DOMITIAN now definitely dates the former event to 84.³⁵

A final point. Jones believes that a campaign in the spring of 82 presumes a crisis on the Rhine at the end of 81. He finds the occasion for a Chattic incursion with the accession of Domitian: the Chatti "always seem to have attacked the Romans only when the latter's resources were strained or weakened With the deaths of Vespasian and Titus, only Domitian was left and he was known to lack military experience" (p. 90). This will not do. Suetonius characterizes Domitian's wars as either necessario or sponte;

C.M. Kraay, ANSMusN, 9 (1960) 112; BMC II, lxxxii n. 6.

³²C.M. Kraay, ANSMusN, 9 (1960) 112-114.

³³Not for the eradication of the Nasamones, dated by Dio Cass. lxvii.4.6 to 85, and commemorated by VIII.

³⁴The victory in Germany and increase in salary are both discussed in lxvii.3.5.

³⁵Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 1496. See C.M. Kraay, ANSMusN, 9 (1960) 114-116.

that against the Chatti was sponte (Dom. 6).

Jones has not, then, superseded earlier views on the date of the war. We still know nothing of its cause, and very little of its development. The coin legend Germania Capta, not the title Germanicus, provides a terminal date. The outbreak of the war cannot be dated closely, but the timing of salutations IV-VII certainly points to 83-84, not 82-83, as the decisive moment. Braunert's reconstruction still remains the most attractive: Domitian set out for the Rhine in the spring of 83, and returned to Rome in the late summer. The war, however, continued in his absence until 85, when the Taunus-Wetterau region was finally secured, and coins were struck to herald the occasion.

APPENDIX II

The Appointment of Viri Militares under Vespasian and Domitian

During the reign of Vespasian, military activity occurred over a period of several years in two distant theatres: Britain, and the eastern frontier.¹ In Britain, the Roman advance had lapsed with the rebellion of Boudicca, and the hiatus had continued during the Civil Wars. The arrival of Q. Petillius Cerialis in 71 signalled a new advance, which was continued by his immediate successors, Sex. Iulius Frontinus and Gn. Iulius Agricola.

In the east, the Empire's political divisions and military defences were extensively reshuffled. Iudaea was reorganized as an imperial province of praetorian rank,² and its first three governors concerned themselves with crushing the remnants of the Jewish rebellion.³ In eastern Asia Minor,⁴ a new imperial province garrisoned by two legions was

¹There are several good modern narratives of this activity; cf. p. 79 n. 179 for a listing.

²W. Eck, Senatoren, 5-6, is the most recent discussion.

³Sex. Vettulenus Cerialis (70-71/72); Sex. Lucilius Bassus (71/72-72/73); L. Flavius Silva Nonius Bassus (73/74-79/80). The war ended with the capture of Masada by Bassus; cf. Joseph. BJ vii.163-407.

⁴Legio XII Fulminata at Melitene, and XVI Flavia Firma, presumably at Satala: E. Ritterling, RE, 12 (1925) 1271, 1707 (XII Fulminata), 1765 (XVI Flavia Firma); H.M.D. Parker, The Roman Legions (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1928) 148-149; R. Syme, CAH, 11 (1936) 141; L. Homo, Vespasien, 319.

forged from the unification of Cappadocia and Galatia, and⁵ the assimilation of the client-kingdom of Armenia Minor. A complete reorientation of Roman defences in the upper Euphrates valley resulted.⁶ In 72 the client-kingdom of Commagene was absorbed into the province of Syria.⁷ As a result, that province's eastern defences were also revamped, with two legions being transferred to occupy the most important fords of the middle Euphrates.⁸ They saw active service: Vespasian's failure to send aid against the Alani occasioned a Parthian reprisal, repulsed by the governor of Syria, M. Ulpius Traianus (76 A.D.).⁹

Something is known of the earlier careers of all of the governors of Britain, Cappadocia-Galatia, and Syria who

⁵Suet. Vesp. 8; CIL III.306=M-W 86. See especially F. Cumont, "L'annexion du Pont Polémoniaque et de la Petite Arménia", Anatolian Studies Presented to Sir William Mitchell Ramsay (Manchester: the University Press, 1923) 109-119, who clearly demonstrates the strategic role which the new province was designed to play.

⁶Still physically attested by the remains of the massive road-building program undertaken along and behind the new frontier. See again B.W. Henderson, Five Roman Emperors, 64-71. Epigraphic evidence for this program is conveniently listed in F.C. Bourne, Public Works, 58-59.

⁷Joseph. BJ vii.219-243.

⁸Zeugma and Samosata. They seem to have been garrisoned respectively by legio IV Scythica and VI Ferrata; the evidence, however, is still subject to dispute. Cf. E. Ritterling, RE, 12 (1925) 1560 (IV Scythica), 1590 (VI Ferrata); H.M.D. Parker, Legions, 149; R. Syme, CAH, 11 (1936) 140.

⁹Suet. Dom. 2; Dio Cass. lxxv.15.3; cf. L. Homo, Vespasien, 336-337.

were involved in this activity. Vespasian's policy of specialization in the appointment of viri militares to active military theatres is clearly demonstrated by the evidence for their careers.

Britain:

Q. PETILLIUS Cerialis (71-73/74 A.D.)

E. Swoboda, RE, 19 (1938) 1138-1150; Birley 9;¹⁰ A.R. Birley, Britannia, 4 (1973) 179-190.

Cerialis made a concerted effort to subdue and incorporate the Brigantes: multa proelia, et aliquando non incruenta; magnamque Brigantum partem aut victoria amplexus est aut bello (Agr. 17.1). He had previously seen active duty in Britain as legatus legionis IX Hispana during the rebellion of Boudicca in 61.¹¹ After the death of Vitellius, he was dispatched with Annius Gallus to check the rebellion along the lower Rhine.¹² He defeated the Treveri at Rigodulum (Hist. iv.71.4-5), a combined Gallo-Germanic force under Civilis, Classicus, and Tutor in the territory of the Treveri (Hist. iv.77-78), and the Batavi in the Rhine delta (Hist. v.14-24).

His prior service in Britain, and extended tribal

¹⁰References are to the sequence of governors in A.R. Birley, "The Roman Governors of Britain", Ep. Stud., 4 (1967) 63-102.

¹¹His experience was unfortunate; cf. Ann. xiv.32.

¹²By Mucianus: Hist. iv.68.1. Joseph. BJ vii.82-83, however, states that Cerialis defeated the Germans by chance while proceeding to Britain from a command in Germany. Cf. A. Briessmann, Flavische Geschichtsbild, 97-103.

warfare in Gaul and Germany, doubly qualified him for the
¹³
 projected advance against the Brigantes.

SEX. IULIUS FRONTINUS (74-77/78 A.D.)

A. Kappelmacher, RE, 10 (1919) 591-606; J.B. Ward-Perkins, CQ, 31 (1937) 102-105; PIR² J 322; Birley 10.

Frontinus' major accomplishment in Britain was the defeat of the Silures, which was decisive for the reduction of Wales: Iulius Frontinus, vir magnus quantum licebat, validamque et pugnacem Silurum gentem armis subegit, super virtutem hostium locorum quoque difficultates eluctatus (Agr. 17.2). Nothing is known of his career prior to the praetorship, which he served in Rome as urbanus in January, 70 (Hist. iv.39.1). He also participated in the suppression of the Gallic revolt, receiving the surrender of the
¹⁴
 Lingones (Str. iv.3.14). Like Cerialis, the knowledge of tribal warfare acquired in this campaign will have been a factor in his appointment to Britain. The suggestion of Ward-Perkins that Frontinus accompanied Cerialis to Britain in 70/71 as legatus legionis II Adiutrix is possible, but
¹⁵
 totally hypothetical.

¹³This would seem a more important reason for his appointment to Britain than the familial relationship with Vespasian attested by Hist. iii.59.2 and Dio Cass. lxiv.18.1. Cerialis was probably Vespasian's son-in-law; see G. Townend, JRS, 51 (1961) 54-62.

¹⁴Cf. p. 85 n. 211 for a discussion of his role in this campaign.

¹⁵CQ, 31 (1937) 104.

GN. IULIUS AGRICOLA (78-84/85 A.D.)

A. Gaheis, RE, 10 (1919) 125-143; PIR² J 126; R. Syme, Tacitus, 19-29; Birley 11; Ogilvie-Richmond, De Vita Agricolae, 317-320.

The much discussed career of Agricola requires little comment. He served his laticlave military tribunate in Britain under Suetonius Paullinus during the rebellion of Boudicca (Agr. 5). His support of Vespasian during the Civil War was rewarded by Mucianus with a legionary legateship, that of Britain's XX Valeria Victrix (Agr. 7.3). In this capacity he was an active participant in Cerialis' campaign against the Brigantes (Agr. 8).

The governorship of Aquitania followed ¹⁶—and with it a clear promise of the consulship (Agr. 9.1). Tacitus states that comitante opinione Britanniam ei provinciam dari (Agr. 9.5). If Vespasian is conceded a long-range policy, then Agricola's appointment to Aquitania is perhaps no longer fortuitous. Vespasian might have wished to expose Agricola to the problems of civil administration which he would later face while ruling the settled portions of Britain: hence a praetorian command in a province with a political infrastructure similar to Britain's. This argues that Agricola was destined for the governorship of Britain as early as 73; his military experience made him the logical candidate to succeed Frontinus if the forward advance was to continue.

¹⁶Dated 73/74-76/77 by W. Eck, Senatoren, 119-123. 74-76 A.D. is likely; cf. Agr. 9.5: "minus triennium in ea legatione detentus . . ."

Cappadocia-Galatia:

? M. ULPIUS TRAIANUS (70/71-72/73 A.D.)

R. Hanslik, RE, supp. 10 (1965) 1032-1035.

Despite lack of evidence, the theory that Traianus, father of the emperor Trajan, was the first governor of the newly-formed province of Cappadocia-Galatia has gained wide acceptance.¹⁷ He certainly was well-qualified. He had ably served in the bellum Iudaicum as legate of X Fretensis,¹⁸ which gave him sufficient eastern experience to attempt the task of organizing the new province's defences. If, as has been persuasively argued,¹⁹ Traianus returned from Egypt to Rome to hold the consulship in the spring or summer of 70, then his immediate appointment to Cappadocia-Galatia before the end of that year would present no difficulty.

CN. POMPEIUS COLLEGA (73/74-76/77 A.D.)

M. Lambertz, RE, 21 (1951) 2269-2270; Sherk, p. 42.²⁰

Both inscriptions and coins attest his governorship.²¹

¹⁷Cf. R. Syme, Tacitus, 31 n. 1; R. Hanslik, RE, supp. 10 (1965) 1033; W. Eck, Senatoren, 115-118; G.W. Bowersock, JRS, 63 (1973) 134-135. Not, however, by R.K. Sherk, The Legates of Galatia from Augustus to Diocletian (Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins Press, 1951).

¹⁸Joseph. BJ iii.289-306, 458, 485; iv.450.

¹⁹Cf. J. Morris, "The Consulate of the Elder Trajan", JRS, 43 (1953) 79-80; and R. Syme in his review of A. Degraffi's I Fasti Consolari dell'Impero Romano, JRS, 43 (1953) 154.

²⁰References are to R.K. Sherk, Legates of Galatia.

²¹Cf. ILS 8904; T.E. Minonnet, Description de médailles antiques, grecques et romaines (Paris, 1809) IV, 277.17; 374.2.

It was during this period that the Alani were restive on the province's northeastern frontier, which was reinforced,²² and when war with Parthia seemed a possibility, and military demonstrations were required to restore order.²³ Having previously seen both civil and military duty in the East, Pompeius was well-qualified to cope with the situation. In 70 he served in Syria as legatus legionis IV Scythica,²⁴ in which capacity he administered the province of Syria in the absence of its governor, L. Caesennius Paetus, and suppressed²⁵ the Jewish revolt in Antioch.

M. HIRRIUS FRONTO NERATIUS PANSA (77/78-79/80)

E. Groag, RE, 16 (1935) 2545-2546; Sherk, pp. 42-43; M. Torelli, "The Cursus Honorum of M. Hirrius Fronto Neratius Pansa", JRS, 58 (1968) 170-175.

The details of Neratius' career have only recently been elaborated in the article cited above by M. Torelli; previous scholars knew merely of his consulship and of this governorship. The inscription which Torelli has reconstructed reveals that Neratius received dona militaria and adlectio inter patricios; he is undoubtedly correct in arguing that this was a reward for Neratius' fidelity to Vespasian during the Civil War.²⁶ Neratius apparently was legatus legionis

²²Cf. ILS 8795=M-W 237.

²³L. Homo, Vespasien, 336-337. Trajan was awarded the ornamenta triumphalia; cf. ILS 8970=M-W 263.

²⁴Joseph. BJ vii.59.

²⁵Joseph. BJ vii.54-62.

²⁶JRS, 58 (1968) 174.

VI Ferrata during the Civil Wars, and as such accompanied²⁷ Mucianus from Syria to Italy. At the conclusion of the Civil War he was sent back to the East as governor of Lycia-Pamphylia, a province of praetorian standing (ca. 70/71-71/72).²⁸ Circa 75 he seems to have been entrusted with an extraordinary²⁹ command against the Alani, and presumably used Cappadocia-Galatia as his base of operations. His composite eastern experience provided him with excellent credentials for the governorship of that province.

Syria:

L. CAESENNIUS PAETUS (70/71-72/73)

E. Groag, RE, 3 (1899) 1307-1309; PIR² C 173; A. Garzetti, "L. Cesennio Peto e la rivalutazione flaviana di personaggi neroniani", Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire offerts à Andre Piganiol (Paris: Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, 1966) 777-790.

Formerly governor of Cappadocia and commander of the ill-fated Armenian expedition of 62 A.D. (Ann. xv.6-16), he lapses into obscurity after his recall to Rome. He was probably given the critical Syrian command despite his mediocre record because he was related by marriage to³⁰ Vespasian, although it must be conceded that he was³¹ familiar with the East and its problems.

²⁷JRS, 58 (1968) 174.

²⁸Cf. W. Eck, "Die Legaten von Lykien und Pamphylien unter Vespasian", ZPE, 6 (1970) 65-75.

²⁹M. Torelli, JRS, 58 (1968) 172-173.

³⁰E. Groag, RE, 3 (1899) 1309.

³¹Stressed by A. Garzetti, Mélanges Piganiol, 788.

P. MARIUS CELSUS (72/73)

F. Miltner, RE, 14 (1930) 1823-1824; 1824.

His governorship rests upon only one inscription, ILS 8903, and it is uncertain whether he was the consul of 62 or 69 A.D. Dessau, in his remarks on this inscription, identified him with the consul of 62, and Miltner followed suit.³² The consul of 62, however, seems to have pursued a non-military career,³³ which makes him an implausible candidate for the Syrian command. The consul of 69, in contrast, had previously served in the East as legatus legionis XV Apollinaris during Corbulo's Armenian campaign of 63 A.D. (Ann. xv.25), and during the Civil Wars was a partisan of Galba, Otho and Vitellius in turn, serving as one of Otho's principal generals.³⁴ His military experience, and his previous command in the East, make it probable that he was the governor of Syria attested by ILS 8903.³⁵

M. ULPIUS TRAIANUS (73/74-77/78)

As mentioned above, Traianus was legate of the legio X Fretensis during the bellum Iudaicum, and possibly the first

³²RE, 14 (1930) 1824.

³³After his consulship he was, for example, curator aquarum (Frontin. de aq. 102) rather than governor of an imperial province.

³⁴Galba: Hist. i.31; Otho: Hist. i.71, 87, 90; ii.33, 40; Vitellius: since he was consul in June-August, 69, prima facie he succeeded in winning Vitellius' trust.

³⁵He is so identified, however, only by an admittedly circular argument; hence the identification cannot be pressed.

governor of Cappadocia-Galatia. This background made him an ideal candidate for the governorship of Syria, which was the cornerstone of the Empire's eastern defences. He governed the province for at least four years, and during this period must have supervised most of the reorganization of its defences. In 76 he made a military demonstration against the Parthians, which averted a threatening war,³⁶ and for which he was awarded the ornamenta triumphalia.

Conclusion:

Of the eight governors in question, at least seven and possibly all had been exposed to the tactical and strategic problems presented by their provinces at an earlier point in their careers. Hence they were fully competent to cope with the ongoing military activity which each encountered or initiated when he entered upon his office.

The various campaigns waged during the Civil Wars and the reign of Nero provided combat training and seasoning for many of the generals whom Vespasian selected to govern Britain and the East. Domitian was not so fortunate. There had been no sustained campaigns on the Danube to create a pool of experienced commanders upon whom he could draw in his wars against the Dacians and Sarmatians. Instead, he had to rely on officers who either had seen no active service

³⁶Cf. p. 333 n. 23 above.

while stationed in the area, or who at most had had a part in repulsing one of the occasional Sarmatian raids. Hence while the principle of specialization can still be observed in Domitian's appointments to Moesia Superior, Moesia Inferior, and Pannonia, the evidence is not as dramatic as that provided by Vespasian's reign.

Moesia Superior:

L. FUNISULANUS VETTONIANUS (86/87-87/88)

E. Groag, RE, 7 (1912) 301-305; PIR² F 570; A. Stein, pp. 35-37.³⁷

Funisulanus Vettonianus had the longest and most checkered career of any member of the Flavian senate. He served his laticlave military tribunate with legio VI Victrix in Spain around 50 A.D.,³⁸ and his quaestorship in Sicily.³⁹ He then routinely advanced through the plebeian tribunate and praetorship, and in 62 A.D. became legatus legionis IV Scythica, which he led into Armenia under the command of Caesennius Paetus.⁴⁰ Nero must have held him partly responsible for Paetus' disgraceful capitulation, for his career was brought to an abrupt halt after his return to Rome. He did not hold another post until the reign of Vespasian, by whom he was appointed praefectus Aerarium Saturni, a clear

³⁷References are to A. Stein, Legaten von Moesien.

³⁸Cf. G. Alföldy, Fasti Hispanienses (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1969) 127.

³⁹Cf. ILS 1005; AE 1946, 205.

⁴⁰Cf. Tac. Ann. xv.7; ILS 1005.

signal of an impending consulship.⁴¹ Two offices, however, intervened. One inscription (AE 1946, 205) records that he served as curator aquarum. Since, however, Acilius Aviola is known to have been curator from 74-97,⁴² this must mean that he was the highest praetorian aide to the consular curator.⁴³ Both inscriptions next record that he was curator viae Aemiliae, then consul (78?). Subsequent to the consulship he was received into the priesthood of the VII viri epulones, and dispatched to Dalmatia (79/80-81/82).⁴⁴

His appointment to Dalmatia seems incongruous. He must have been almost fifty years old, and it had been seventeen years since he had last held a military command. Domitian, or a very influential patron, must have had great faith in his loyalty and military ability, for the appointment was certainly not a token gesture offered to make up for the slights which he had suffered under Nero. He was instead duly promoted to Pannonia, one of the most senior commands in the Empire, where he served in the period 82/83-85/86.⁴⁵ With the outbreak of the Dacian war in the fall or winter of 85, Domitian divided Moesia into two provinces, and transferred Vettonianus to Moesia Superior, his third

⁴¹ILS 1005; AE 1946, 205.

⁴²Frontin. de aq. 102.

⁴³E. Groag, RE, 7 (1912) 302.

⁴⁴ILS 1005; AE 1946, 205.

⁴⁵CIL XVI. 30, 31; ILS 1005; AE 1946, 205.

Danubian command (86/87-87/88).⁴⁶ He served actively against the Dacians, for which he was awarded the dona militaria,⁴⁷ and on his return to Rome enrolment in a second priesthood, the sodales Augustales.⁴⁸ Finally, in 91/92, he⁴⁹ was honored with the proconsulship of Africa.

Vettonianus' career after the consulship is a classic example of the policy of specialization at work. Moesia bore the brunt of the Dacian invasions; given his advanced age, Vettonianus' experience on the Danube must have been the sole reason for his appointment to Moesia Superior.

L. TETTIUS IULIANUS (88/89-89/90)

E. Groag, RE, 5A (1934) 1107-1110; A. Stein, pp. 38-39.

After the catastrophic defeat of Cornelius Fuscus in Dacia in 86, Domitian entrusted Tettius Iulianus with command of the second invasion force. Dio records that he was a sober disciplinarian (lxvii.10.1) who forged his army into a unit which in 88 annihilated the hitherto victorious Dacians at Tapae (lxvii.10.2).

His background also included active service on the Danube: as legatus legionis VII Claudia, he was one of the officers responsible for repulsing a Sarmatian raid in 69.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ILS 1005; AE 1946, 205.

⁴⁷ILS 1005.

⁴⁸AE 1946, 205.

⁴⁹AE 1946, 205.

⁵⁰Tac. Hist. 1.79.5.

There is then an unexplained interlude in his career, after which he held a second legionary command, that of III Augusta, while governor of Numidia (80/81-81/82).⁵¹ A consular command may be postulated for the period between his consulship in 83 and his dispatch to Moesia Superior in 88, or conceivably a staff appointment under Funisulanus Vettonianus, to whom he was related by marriage.⁵²

This evidence suggests that his experience on the Danube in 69, and possibly his marital connection with Vettonianus, were important factors in his selection by Domitian to command the second Dacian invasion force.

Moesia Inferior:

M. CORNELIUS NIGRINUS CURIATIUS MATERNUS (86-89/90)

G. Alföldy and H. Halfmann, Chiron, 3 (1973) 331-373.

Maternus' career recently has been brilliantly reconstructed by Geza Alföldy. He was serving his laticlave military tribunate with legio XIV Gemina Martia Victrix when Nero transferred it from Britain to the Danube in 67 A.D.⁵³ His experience on the Danube, however, must have been brief, for the legion marched to Italy in support of Otho in 69, and was sent back to Britain by Vitellius after the battle of Bedriacum.⁵⁴ After the Civil War he was adlected inter

⁵¹AE 1954, 137.

⁵²Iulianus' brother, C. Tettius Africanus, was married to Vettonianus' daughter, Funisulana Vettulla. Cf. R. Syme, Tacitus, 24 n. 2.

⁵³Tac. Hist. 11.66.

⁵⁴Hist. 11.66.

praetorios, presumably for playing an instrumental role in⁵⁵ persuading the legion to swear allegiance to Vespasian.

Maternus' next military command was as legate of⁵⁶ VIII Augusta in Germania Superior around 75-78, and in that capacity he may have participated in the campaign against the⁵⁷ Bructeri. Since he was next promoted to the governorship of Aquitania (79-82?), he seems to have been destined for a career on the Rhine. With the outbreak of war on the Danube, however, because of his previous although brief experience on that frontier he was dispatched to Moesia Inferior (86-89/90). There he must have served under both Fuscus and Iulianus, for⁵⁸ he received double the usual number of dona militaria. In addition, his service must have been of especial value, for⁵⁹ in 94/95 he was promoted to Syria, which Domitian reserved for those whom he highly esteemed.

Maternus' experience on the Danube was so negligible, however, that it is difficult to see how it could have been a decisive factor in his appointment to Moesia Inferior. Rather, he was probably dispatched to the Danube because he was judged a sound officer on the basis of his performance in

⁵⁵Cf. G. Alföldy and H. Halfmann, Chiron, 3 (1973) 331-373, especially 348. Given the mood of the legion, this should not have been a difficult task; cf. again Hist. 11.66.

⁵⁶G. Alföldy and H. Halfmann, Chiron, 3 (1973) 353.

⁵⁷Once again, the interpretation of ILS 9200 is critical; cf. p. 46 n. 101 above.

⁵⁸G. Alföldy and H. Halfmann, Chiron, 3 (1973) 356.

⁵⁹G. Alföldy and H. Halfmann, Chiron, 3 (1973) 362.

Germania Superior, and had some experience on the Danube.

Pannonia:

CN. PINARIUS AEMILIUS CICATRICULA POMPEIUS LONGINUS
(95/96-97/98)

M. Lambertz, RE, 21 (1951) 2274-2275; Dobó⁶⁰ 24.

The Dacians scrupulously adhered to the treaty of 89, and the lower Danube remained at peace for the last seven years of Domitian's reign. During that same period, however, the Pannonian frontier was in a state of constant turmoil. Campaigns are recorded against the Sarmatians in 89, 92, and 97, with one legion lost (XXI Rapax).⁶¹ A governor with previous Danubian experience was demanded.

The career of Pompeius Longinus, like that of Tettius Iulianus, reflects the importance which Domitian attached to Iudaea and Numidia, the only two praetorian provinces whose governors combined the civil and military functions, as a breeding-ground for viri militares to be posted to the senior commands after their consulships. Longinus governed Iudaea in 85/86-88/89,⁶² After his consulship (90) he was posted to Moesia Superior (92/93-94/95).⁶³ Despite his apparent lack of Danubian experience, this was a safe appointment because it was clear that the Dacians

⁶⁰The reference is to the sequence of governors in A. Dobó, Pannonien.

⁶¹Cf. pp. 97 and 104-105 above.

⁶²CIL XVI.33; cf. W. Eck, Senatoren, 136-139.

⁶³CIL XVI.39; cf. W. Eck, Senatoren, 143-145.

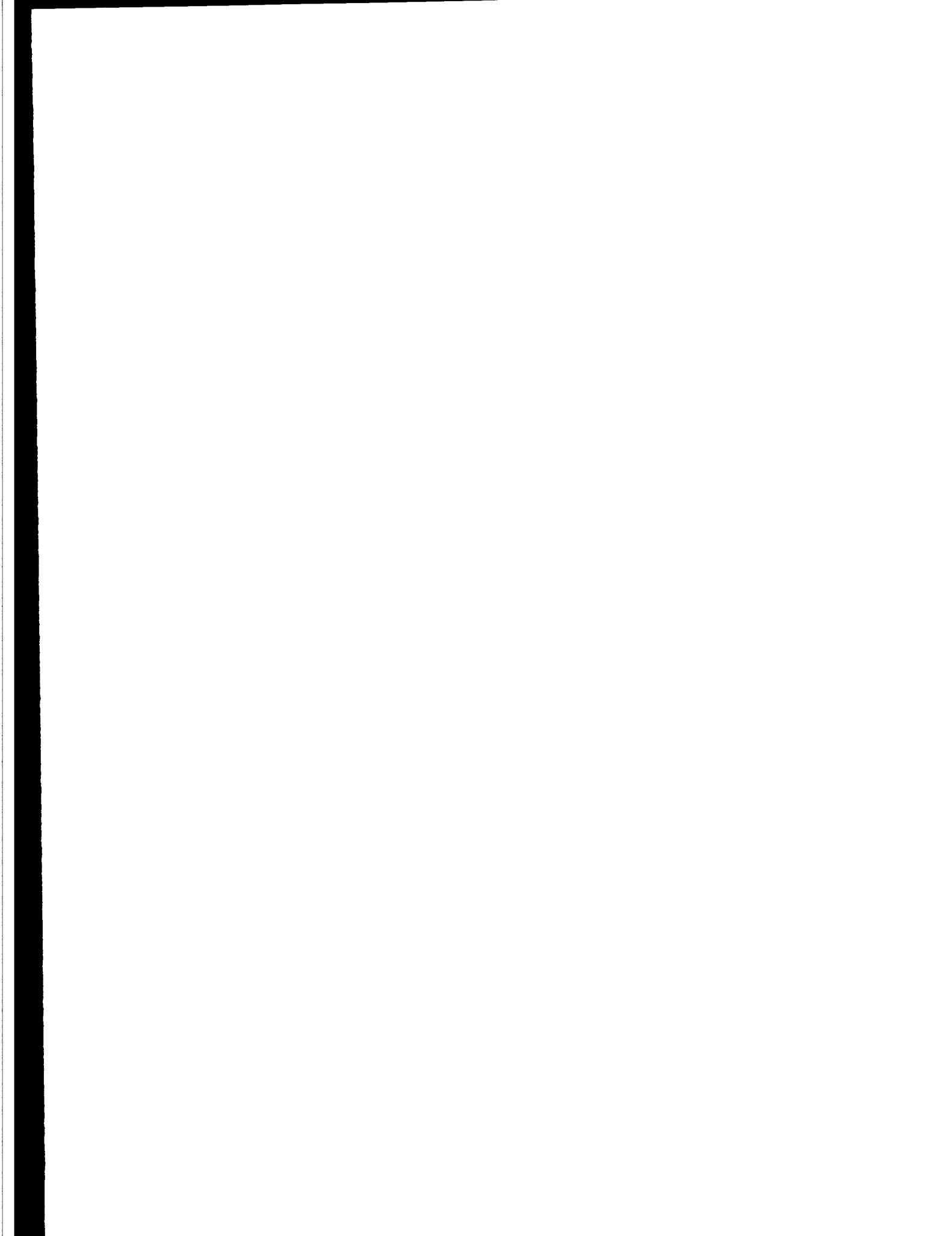
intended to respect the treaty of 89. After three years of exposure to the problems of command on the Danube, he was duly promoted to Pannonia, which he continued to govern after the Emperor's assassination.⁶⁴ Domitian's policy of specialization reaped a dividend on this frontier after his death; it was undoubtedly Pompeius Longinus who engineered the victory over the Suebi in 97 which occasioned Nerva's⁶⁵ adoption of Trajan.

Conclusion:

The evidence for specialization under Domitian, then, is convincing but not as clear as the evidence for specialization under Vespasian. Funisulanus Vettonianus, with successive commands in Dalmatia, Pannonia, and Moesia Superior, and Pompeius Longinus, with commands in Moesia Superior and Pannonia, are the clearest examples of the policy at work. Tettius Iulianus and Curiatius Maternus also seem to have been promoted to consular commands on the Danube on the basis of previous service there, but their experience was brief, and other factors seem to have contributed to their appointments.

⁶⁴CIL XVI.42; cf. W. Eck, Senatoren, 146-150.

⁶⁵Pliny Pan. 8.2.



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