From Germanicus to Corbulo:

The Evolution of Generalship under the Principate in Tacitus' *Annales*

BY

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**Abstract**

Tacitus' *Annales* present a comprehensive account of the formative early years of the Roman principate. Though the effects of the change from republic to principate are most frequently made evident through Tacitus' portrayal of politics in the city of Rome itself, his illustration of the change of the military's role under the principate also demonstrates these effects. The biggest effect that this transition had on the military, as portrayed by Tacitus, is the dramatic difference in the way that generals had to conduct themselves – he exemplifies this change through his descriptions of Germanicus Caesar and Domitius Corbulo. Germanicus, serving in the early days of the principate, conducts his campaigns in a style similar to those conducted during the republic. Though he is described by the narrator as realizing that his actions needed to be changed in order to combat Tiberius' growing jealousy toward his success, Germanicus loses his life because of Tiberius' jealous attitude. The Roman people, realizing this, are characterized as developing a fear of the vengeful jealousy of the *princeps* that extends beyond Tiberius' principate into those of his successors. The one exception to the prevailing hesitant attitude of generals that arises from this realization is Corbulo. What the narrator seems to imply about Corbulo is that he has learned that the way to succeed under the principate is to temper victories on the battlefield with successful acts of diplomacy. This discovery is described as Corbulo's method of maintaining a successful military career under the principate.

## Table of Contents

Tacitus' *Annales* present a comprehensive account of the formative early years of the Roman principate. A constant theme throughout the work is the Roman people's attempts to cope with their uncertainty concerning what exactly the change from republic to principate – the change from new office-holders every year to a single figure holding *imperium* for decades – meant for their everyday lives. Though the effects of this change are most frequently made evident through Tacitus' portrayal of politics in the city of Rome itself, his illustration of the change of the military's role under the principate also demonstrates these effects. The biggest effect that the transition from republic to principate had on the military, as portrayed by Tacitus, is the dramatic change in the way that generals had to conduct themselves.

There are two major generals described in the extant portions of the *Annales*: Germanicus Caesar, who serves under Augustus and Tiberius, and Domitius Corbulo, who serves under Claudius and Nero. Germanicus, serving in the early days of the principate, conducts his campaigns in a style similar to those conducted during the republic – he campaigns aggressively against his enemy and seizes every opportunity for combat that is presented to him. Though he is described by the narrator as realizing that his actions needed to be changed in order to combat Tiberius' growing jealousy toward his success, this realization seems to have come too late, and Germanicus loses his life because of Tiberius' jealous attitude.

After Germanicus' death, Tiberius' jealousy is described as having grown to a point at which its presence becomes evident to the rest of the Roman people as well. Tiberius is further described as acting on this jealousy and removing many powerful individuals from the positions that had allowed them to gain that power. The Roman people, realizing this, are characterized as developing a fear of the vengeful jealousy of the *princeps* that extends beyond Tiberius' principate into those of his successors. That the Roman people are acting in accordance with this

realization is made clear throughout what survives of the Claudian and Neronian books of the *Annales.*

During Claudius' and Nero's reigns, Roman generals are consistently described as underachieving specifically because their success will be unwelcome to the *princeps* – the majority of military campaigns are either cut short or never even take place due to their generals' fear of upsetting the *princeps.* The one exception to this attitude is Corbulo, whose battlefield exploits are narrated throughout four of the last six books of the *Annales.* What the narrator seems to imply about Corbulo is that he has learned that the way to succeed under the principate is to temper victories on the battlefield with successful acts of diplomacy. This discovery is described as Corbulo's method of maintaining a successful military career under the principate. Through his descriptions of Corbulo's successes as a general, the narrator shows his readers that it is possible for a general to succeed during the principate.

## Chapter 1: Germanicus and Tiberius

The first general who receives significant narrative time in the *Annales* is Tiberius' adopted son Germanicus, who has been called Tacitus' "hero."[1] He is portrayed as the first general who attempts to adapt his actions to the establishment of the principate. Although Tacitus depicts Germanicus as trying to conciliate himself with Tiberius' newly-established role as *princeps*, Germanicus nevertheless loses his life as a result of this interaction. Tiberius feels jealousy toward Germanicus, although Germanicus is simply attempting to carry on a tradition of generalship as old as Rome itself. This jealousy is portrayed through Tacitus' naming conventions, inter- and intratextual allusions, and Tacitus' own narrative voice.

### Tacitus' Use of *Caesar*

This relationship between Tiberius and Germanicus is revealed in the very way that Tacitus names his characters. Throughout the work there are titles (like *Augusta* or *Caesar*) which the narrator uses for multiple individuals. Within the first 14 chapters of *Annales* 1, for example, Germanicus is referred to as both *Germanicus* and *Germanicus Caesar*, while Tiberius is called *Tiberius*, *Tiberius Caesar*, and *Caesar*. And yet, once the narrative shifts to Germany and Germanicus enters the narrative, he is also frequently referred to by the name *Caesar* alone. Additionally within these first 14 chapters, Julius Caesar and Augustus are each referred to as simply *Caesar*. Throughout the course of *Annales* 1, in fact, eight different characters are referred to as *Caesar* or a compound thereof: Julius Caesar, Augustus, Germanicus, Tiberius, Drusus, Gaius Caligula, and Augustus' adopted sons Gaius and Lucius. Establishing the

[1] Goodyear 1972: 114

conventions by which Tacitus used *Caesar* reveals a pattern behind his naming choices that allows us to interpret his ideas about these characters. The results are charted below:

Titles of Major Characters in *Annales* 1-3

| | **"Name"[2]** | **"Name + *Caesar*"** | **"*Caesar*"** | **Total References** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Tiberius** | 164 (73.9%) | 2 (0.9%) | 56 (25.2%) | 222 |
| **Germanicus** | 121 (74.2%) | 3 (1.8%) | 39 (23.9%) | 163 |
| **Augustus** | 109 (93.2%) | 1 (0.9%) | 7 (5.9%) | 117 |
| **Drusus (Tiberius' son)** | 61 (92.4%) | 1 (1.5%) | 4 (6.1%) | 66 |

Through this tabulation of *Annales* 1-3, it can be seen that Tacitus uses *Caesar* very nearly the same percentage of the time for both Germanicus and Tiberius – 23.9% for Germanicus and 25.2% for Tiberius – over 385 references.

Additional evidence for analysis of Tacitus' naming habits in the *Annales* is in whose voice *Caesar* alone is used, which is listed on the following chart:

In Whose Voice Characters are Called *Caesar*, *Annales* 1-3

| | **Narrator (Tacitus)** | **Indirect Address (*Oratio Obliqua*)** | **Direct Address (*Oratio Recta*)** | **Total Times** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Tiberius** | 40 (71.4%) | 9 (16.1%) | 7 (12.5%) | 56 |
| **Germanicus** | 37 (94.9%) | 2 (5.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 39 |
| **Augustus** | 6 (85.9%) | 1 (14.3%) | 0 (0.0%) | 7 |
| **Drusus** | 4 (100%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 4 |

Through observation of the use of *Caesar* in *oratio obliqua* and *oratio recta*, we see Tacitus' effort to conform to the naming conventions of the narrative time: with very few exceptions, Tiberius is the only character indirectly addressed as *Caesar* in these books, and he is the sole character who is directly addressed as such. When the narrator addresses a character other than

[2] "Name" refers to the name by which the character is identified on the left-hand column of the chart.

Tiberius as *Caesar* and breaks the convention current to the time of the narrative, we may hypothesize that his use of the name *Caesar* is making a statement about that particular character. That the name *Caesar* was usually reserved for addressing the *princeps* is supported by the naming habits of Velleius Paterculus, a contemporary of Tiberius: Tiberius is variously referred to as *Tiberius, Tiberius Caesar,* and *Caesar*, while Germanicus and Drusus are only *Germanicus* and *Drusus*. As Velleius is writing during Tiberius' principate, his naming practices can perhaps be seen as an illustration of contemporary practice. Therefore, if Velleius sees *Caesar* as an imperial title rather than an unmarked family *cognomen,* then Tacitus, writing nearly a century later, surely would have become accustomed to this use – the Julio-Claudian line (to which the *cognomen* Caesar originally belonged) had ceased holding the office of *princeps* after Nero, and *Caesar* had become merely the usual title by which the *princeps* was referred to. Pliny, for example, a contemporary of Tacitus, not only directly addresses Trajan as *Caesar* in his letters, but also refers to him in the third person as *Caesar*.

When we examine those moments in which Tacitus the narrator refers to characters as *Caesar*, it becomes clear that he is associating the title with the possession of imperial or military power and not strictly with the position of the *princeps*. For example, when describing Germanicus' nerves at the uprising of a number of German tribes, the narrator says: *unde maior Caesari metus* ("Whence Caesar's fear was greater," 1.60.1). Though Germanicus is not the *princeps,* he is at the head of an army and in possession of *imperium,* so he is *Caesar.*

Tacitus also uses *Caesar* through the mouths of his characters not solely for the *princeps*, but for anybody from the imperial family who holds some position of authority. For example, in the first meeting of the senate after Augustus' death, Asinius Gallus asks Tiberius "*interrogo… Caesar, quam partem rei publicae mandari tibi velis*" ("I ask, Caesar, which part of the republic

you would like to be handed over to you," 1.12.2).[3] This example is of particular interest to our study. The fact that Gallus is asking such a question shows that he sees Tiberius as holding a position superior to his own, but the question *per se* tells us that Tiberius is in possession of no *official* power. In the *Annales*, then, it seems clear that *Caesar* is not reserved solely for *principes,* but for anybody possessing some significant amount of power.

This assertion is further supported by Tacitus' naming habits for Augustus. As can be seen in the above charts, Augustus is overwhelmingly referred to as *Augustus* in *Annales* 1-3 (109 times), while he is only *Caesar* seven times. Furthermore, each of the seven times that he is called *Caesar* refers either to past times in which he was still the *princeps* or to decisions that were made by him while *princeps*[4]*,* while the name *Augustus* is much more often found in reference to him through the lens of the narrative present, in which he has already died (e.g., *qui…maestitiam eius ob excessum Augusti solarentur,* 1.14.3). This is not to say that Tacitus uses alternative names (*Germanicus, Tiberius, Augustus*) to imply a lack of power, but that he seems, in accordance with the times in which he himself lives, to associate "Caesar" with the active possession of power.

This point becomes even clearer when the naming statistics of Augustus are compared with those of Drusus the Younger, neither of whom possess much power during the time period covered by the narrative of the *Annales*: Tacitus' naming habits for each of these characters are nearly identical. Each of the four times that Drusus is called *Caesar* occurs within the narrative of the uprising of the Pannonian legions, covered in only four chapters (1.25-28), in which Drusus is acting as Tiberius' representative and is described as possessing the same power as

[3] All translations and emphases of Latin and Greek are my own
[4] 1.2.1, 5.2, 10.2; 2.2.1, 2.2, 3.2; 3.24.3

Tiberius for appeasing the legions' demands (*ut sine cunctatione concederet quae statim trubui possent,* 1.25.3). The examples of both Augustus and Drusus, then, strengthen the argument that Tacitus uses "Caesar" specifically when a character is in active possession of imperial power.

Tacitus' naming conventions for Germanicus manifest themselves precisely as the above examples predict. Of the thirty-nine times that he is called *Caesar*, Germanicus is in Germany at the head of the Rhine legions for thirty-three of those occasions, and in Syria in possession of proconsular *imperium* for five (*maiusque imperium* [*Germanico*]*…quam iis qui sorte aut missu principis obtinerent,* 2.43.1). The one instance in which he is not the highest-ranking official in a province comes after his death, when the nobles of the city are incensed that "a Caesar is mourned by the voices of a Vitellius and a Veranius, while Plancina is defended by the *imperator* and the *Augusta*" (*Vitellii et Veranii voce defletum Caesarem, ab imperatore et Augusta defensam Plancinam,* 3.17.2). Here though, as my translation suggests – i.e., "a Caesar" – the reference seems much more likely to be to the family name than the imperial title: the people are enraged that the noblest men mourning Germanicus, a man of such high birth, are men like Vitellius and Veranius, while Tiberius and Livia are too busy to do so.

This generality of this use of *Caesar* is supported by the convention by which Tacitus uses the title *Caesar:* Germanicus, being dead, is not in possession of any power and therefore does not receive the title. The immediate context also supports this: the idea of the sentence is not that specifically Vitellius and Veranius are mourning Germanicus' death, but that men of Vitellius' and Veranius' status are the ones mourning him. This becomes a much more plausible argument when we also point out that Tiberius and Livia are referred to here not by their names, but by their titles *imperator* and *Augusta.* The use of *imperator* and *Augusta,* which are both clearly titles, lends much more strength to the assumption *Vitellius* and *Veranius* are being used

not as names but as general titles as well. The generality of the titles of the other people involved in the sentence suggests that *Caesar* here is also being used in a general, familial sense. Therefore, the connotation that Tacitus places upon "*Caesar*" remains consistent with his use for Germanicus: he is portrayed as constantly possessing a significant amount of power while he lives. Thus, Tacitus' naming conventions throughout the *Annales* point to his perception of Germanicus as possessing a similar amount of power to Tiberius.

## The Details of Germanicus and Tiberius' Relationship

The narrator further emphasizes the power that Germanicus possessed through his portrayal of Tiberius' strong feelings of jealousy and fear towards him. Tacitus' Tiberius seems to have recognized the amount of influence that Germanicus had, and acted in a way that made this quite clear. Early in the work, the narrator openly states these feelings: *causa praecipua ex formidine, ne Germanicus…habere imperium quam exspectare mallet* ("The chief reason [for aggressively asserting his control over the empire upon Augustus' death] was out of fear, lest Germanicus…prefer to have imperium rather than wait for it," 1.7.6).[5] These actions of fear and jealousy, in turn, alerted Germanicus to Tiberius' feelings, and Germanicus is shown making numerous attempts to mollify them.

Aside from discussion of the workings of the imperial family at large (1.3.5, 14.3), Germanicus' introduction to the narrative, after an introduction to the legionary uprising in Germany, comes in chapter 34. This chapter, the first in which Germanicus is an active participant, sets the stage for the conflict between him and Tiberius. The first sentence of the chapter runs thus: *Sed Germanicus quanto summae spei propior, tanto impensius pro Tiberio niti*

[5] Dio concurs, though not so eloquently: [ὁ Τιβέριος] τὸν δὲ δὴ Γερμανικὸν δεινῶς ἐφοβεῖτο (57.4.1).

("But however much more closely Germanicus approached the greatest promise, that much more eagerly did he exert himself on Tiberius' behalf," 1.34.1). The reason for this striving was introduced in the previous chapter, when Tacitus describes Germanicus as "worried about the secret hatred of his uncle and grandmother against him, the causes for which were more bitter because they were undeserved" (*anxius occultis in se patrui aviaeque odiis, quorum causae acriores quia iniquae,* 1.33.1).

This phrase *nitor pro aliquo* (seen above at 1.34.1) occurs just one other time in Tacitus, and only three times before him.[6] The other Tacitean usage comes at *Hist.* 1.55.4, describing the legions of Upper Germany on the first of January, 69 C.E. – *nullo pro Galba nitente.* This is, of course, the first day of the infamous Year of the Four Emperors. Asked to renew their oath to Galba, the current *princeps*, the soldiers seriously consider revolting, going so far as to deface all of the portraiture of Galba around their camp. But when they realize that they have nobody worthwhile with whom they can replace Galba, they halfheartedly swear the oath nonetheless. As the *Historiae* were written before the *Annales*, it is possible that this scene was intended to be recalled by the reader of the *Annales*. Tacitus there describes Germanicus as striving on Tiberius' behalf not through true loyalty, but because he realizes that he himself is becoming too popular, and this assertion is immediately followed by the swearing of an oath to this possibly-undeserving emperor. Assuming that Tacitus is making an intertextual allusion to his own *Historiae* is quite likely – Woodman makes a strong case for such an allusion to the *Historiae* in Tacitus' description of Germanicus' visit to the infamous Teutoburg Forest in *Annales* 1.[7] Therefore, the explicit description of the loyalty shown to the office of the *princeps* as opposed

[6] Livy 35.10.10, *cum pro C. Laelio niteretur* ; Ov. *Pont.* 3.1.40, *niti pro me nocte dieque decet* ; Plin. *Ep.* 3.9.8, *non pro se sed pro causa niteretur.*
[7] Woodman 1979

to the *princeps* himself, exemplified in both cases by the swearing of an oath, makes this allusion to the *Historiae* seem very likely to have been purposeful. Germanicus' striving for Tiberius, then, read in the light of this passage from the *Historiae*, illustrates the narrator's implication that Tiberius, like Galba, was viewed by his contemporaries, including Germanicus, as a *princeps* who was undeserving of the position.

A short while later, when Germanicus is delivering his second speech directed toward quelling the German uprising, he makes a further effort to assert publicly his loyalty to Tiberius. The opening words of the speech are "*Non mihi uxor aut filius patre et re publica cariores sunt*" ("'Neither wife nor son are dearer to me than father and country,'" 1.42.1). These first words demonstrate Germanicus' loyalty to Tiberius not only in the subordination of his wife and child to his father and his country, but also in the close association between his father and country. Tiberius' chief reasons for disliking Germanicus in the *Annales* are fear of his military successes and his popularity with and importance to the Roman soldiery – his popularity among the men who held complete control of the *res publica*.[8] The power that the soldiery possessed was obvious to Tiberius through the actions of both Augustus and Julius Caesar, and to our author through, among other examples, the year 69 C.E. Germanicus' importance was so strong partly due to the reciprocation of those feelings – the importance that the soldiery had for him. So in regarding Tiberius and the *res publica* as the chief entities to whom he was loyal, Germanicus makes a rather strong statement.

An additional observation from the above quotation is the fact that Germanicus uses the word *pater* to describe Tiberius. In his discussion of Tiberius' hatred toward Germanicus, the

[8] 1.52.1: …*quod largendis pecuniis et missione festinata favorem militum quaesivisset, bellica quoque Germanici gloria angebantur*.

narrator refers to the "secret hatred of his uncle and grandmother against him" (*occultis in se patrui aviaeque odiis,* 1.33.1). This word *patruus*, while its denotation is simply "a paternal uncle," has the connotation of someone who is "typically harsh and censorious" (OLD 1b). In fact, the narrator himself never uses the word *pater* for the relationship between Germanicus and Tiberius, but always *patruus.*[9] Germanicus is the only character who uses the word *pater* to refer to his relationship with Tiberius,[10] besides Tiberius himself (and this one instance is a generality that is indirectly about both Germanicus and Drusus: *simul adulescentibus excusatum quaedam ad patrem reicere,* ["At the same time, it is excusable for young men to refer to their father for some matters," 1.47.2]).

Aside from comments by Tiberius, Germanicus, or the narrator, there are only two other passages in which the relationship between Tiberius and Germanicus is specifically referenced. The first of these comes from the collective mouth of the Roman people, incensed at the treatment of Germanicus' funeral procession: *non fratrem, nisi unius diei via, non patruum saltem porta tenus obvium* ("His brother did not come out to meet it, except at a distance of one day from the city, his uncle did not even come out to the city gate, 3.5.2). In their outrage at the disrespect shown to Germanicus' remains, the people use the word *fratrem* for Drusus, but *patruum*, as opposed to *patrem,* for Tiberius. The use of *fratrem* indicates their acknowledgement of Germanicus' adoption by Tiberius, so the choice to use *patruum* here suggests a conscious choice of a word that brings with it a negative connotation.[11] Though it is true that there is no single word for step-brother in Latin, the juxtaposition of *non fratrem…non*

[9] 1.33.1 ; 2.5.2, 14.4, 43.5 ; 3.3.3, 31.1.
[10] 1.42.1, 42.4 ; 2.71.1
[11] For further discussion on the people's use of *patruus*, see Woodman and Martin 1996 *ad loc.* (101)

*patruum*, when a simpler possibility like *non Drusum…non Tiberium* was available, draws specific attention to the fact that Tiberius is *not* actually Germanicus' father.

The second description of Tiberius and Germanicus' relationship comes from the nobility. After Germanicus' death, Gnaeus Piso is put on trial for his murder and his wife, whom many held to be equally responsible, is acquitted of her alleged crime. Here Tacitus describes the "secret complaints of all the nobles" (*optimi cuiusque secreti questus*) about the result of the proceedings:

> A Caesar is mourned by the voices of a Vitellius and a Veranius, while Plancina is defended by the *imperator* and the *Augusta*. So let her turn her poisons and her so happily tested arts against Agrippina and her children, let her satisfy so outstanding a grandmother and uncle with the blood of the most miserable household.
>
> *Vitellii et Veranii voce defletum Caesarem, ab imperatore et Augusta defensam Plancinam. proinde venena et artes tam feliciter expertas verteret in Agrippinam, in liberos eius, egregiamque aviam ac patruum sanguine miserrimae domus exsatiaret.* (3.17.2)

From the previous two examples, then, we see that Germanicus is the only character who chooses to use the word *pater* to describe Tiberius' relationship to him. The narrator, as well as various groups of Romans, make the decision to use *patruus* instead, seeming not accidentally to choose the word with a negative connotation.

An additional effect that the use of *patruus* has on the relationship between Germanicus and Tiberius is that it draws attention to the fact that Germanicus is a Caesar independently of Tiberius; he, unlike Tiberius, is a Caesar by birth. This surely adds fuel to the fire of Tiberius'

jealousy – Germanicus' independent "royalty" created a situation in which the Roman people, were they to decide to turn away from Tiberius, already had a legitimate successor at hand. One could even argue that, because Tiberius was only related to Augustus through adoption, while Germanicus was by birth, that Germanicus was a *more* legitimate option for the position of *princeps.* This independent presence in the Julio-Claudian family, coupled with Germanicus' popularity among the Roman people at large (which will be discussed below) made for a very threatening combination.

## Why Tiberius (Objectively) has nothing to Fear

After the final victory over the Germans for the campaigning season of 16 C.E., a rout of even greater degree than the previous one, Germanicus has his soldiers set up a victory monument bearing the following inscription: *debellatis inter Rhenum Albimque nationibus exercitum Tiberii Caesaris ea monimenta Marti et Iovi et Augusto sacravisse* ("The army of Tiberius Caesar, having routed the peoples between the Rhine and the Elbe, dedicated these spoils to Mars, Jupiter, and Augustus," 2.22.1). Here the narrator adds an explanation of the reason for the description of the army as Tiberius' alone: *de se nihil addidit, metu invidiae an ratus conscientiam facti satis esse* ("About himself [Germanicus] added nothing, either through fear of jealousy or because he believed that awareness of the deed was enough," 2.22.1). This sentence strongly suggests, not just through an interpretation of Germanicus' actions, but through the voice of the narrator himself, the possibility that Tiberius' hatred toward Germanicus was not only known to Germanicus, but was shaping his actions.

However, Germanicus' exclusion of himself from the monument exactly followed military precedent.[12] The truly odd action would have been if he *had* included his own name in the inscription.[13] Whether or not this jealousy truly motivated Germanicus' actions is no longer possible to know; what can be seen here, though, is that the narrator is making an effort to convince his reader that this was the case by explaining an action that needed no explanation. By including this explanation, the narrator gives himself an opportunity not only to depict Germanicus as respectful of his position in the principate, but also to again mention Tiberius' characteristic jealousy.

Though Germanicus makes strong displays of his subordination to his new *princeps*, he nonetheless dies (according to his own opinion, and seemingly Tacitus' as well) through the agency of that *princeps*. What, then, did Germanicus do that was so grievous as to overshadow the significant loyalty to Tiberius that he had professed throughout the German campaigns? It seems, in the narrator's opinion at least, not to have been what Germanicus was doing, but the way in which his actions were being received by the military and by the Roman people at large that caused his fall.

Already in Book One, before Germanicus' major German victories had been accomplished, Tiberius had demonstrated feelings of enmity toward him. In the year 15, Germanicus feels a longing to bury the remains of the legions that had been slaughtered in the Teutoburg Forest, an action that he is described as taking "since the entirety of the army that was present was moved to pity for relatives, friends, and additionally the fortunes of war and the lot

[12] Campbell 1984: 123: "Augustus accepted an acclamation for victories won by Tiberius, other members of the imperial family, and senatorial legates. This determined normal practice thereafter…and when in 11 B.C. his troops proclaimed Drusus *imperator*, Augustus did not allow him to accept the title, but took it for himself."
[13] Cornelius Gallus had erected his own likeness throughout Egypt and had inscribed his achievements upon the pyramids during Augustus' principate, for which he was disenfranchised and exiled, and eventually committed suicide. (see Cass. Dio 53.23.5-7)

of man" (*permoto ad miserationem omni qui aderat exercitu ob propinquos, amicos, denique ob casus bellorum et sortem hominum,* 1.61.1), and that the narrator describes as "a most welcome offering to the dead from an associate of the grief of those present" (*gratissimo munere in defunctos et praesentibus doloris socius,* 1.62.1). This deed, portrayed in an overwhelmingly positive and selfless light by the narrator, is nevertheless not pleasing to Tiberius:

> Which Tiberius hardly approved, whether he was dragging all of Germanicus' deeds into a less favorable light, or he believed that the army would be sluggish going into battle and more fearful of the enemy because of the sight of the unburied dead.
>
> *quod Tiberio haud probatum, seu cuncta Germanici in deterius trahenti, sive exercitum imagine caesorum insepultorumque tardatum ad proelia et formidolosiorem hostium credebat.* (1.62.2).

Though the narrator presents these options as equally valid, and the detail afforded to the second option seems to lend it greater legitimacy, his earlier explanation of the men's reaction to the burial, in this very same chapter, undercuts that second option: *omnes ut coniunctos, ut consanguineos aucta in hostem ira maesti simul et infensi condebant* ("The men, their wrath toward the enemy increased, buried every body as if burying their kinsmen, mournful as well as enraged," 1.62.1). This sentence, coming before Tiberius' reaction, does away with the second of the two options before it has even been presented – a soldier who is *infensus* ("ready for the attack," *OLD* 1) because he had to bury his butchered countrymen will have no apprehensions about fighting the enemy who did the butchering. Since Germanicus' actions seem to have been taken to gain an advantage over his enemies, the narrator seems to be specifically pointing out Tiberius' efforts to drag Germanicus' character through the dirt, which is not surprising in the

light of the previous reference to Tiberius' *odium* toward Germanicus. Suetonius would certainly agree with this suggestion, stating his opinion that "Tiberius disparaged Germanicus to the point that he made light of his renowned deeds as if trifles, and protested against his most glorious victories as if harmful to the republic" (*Germanico usque adeo obtrectavit ut et praeclara facta eius pro supervacuis elevarit et gloriosissimas victorias ceu damnosas rei publicae increparet, Tib.* 52).

Conversely Shotter, attempting to rehabilitate Tacitus' Tiberius, argues that Tiberius' reaction to this situation is "in no way malicious" and that Germanicus' soldiers' burial of the legions "must have been utterly demoralising."[14] Though there is no way that we can know the soldiers' feelings about this event, the narrator's characterization of the soldiers as *in hostem…infensi* is surely his effort to make his reader believe that they were not demoralized by this action. Pelling, at any rate, comes out on this side of the debate, stating simply that Tiberius "comes out as unattractive" in his reaction to Germanicus' decision.[15]

The biggest specific accusation that Tiberius would level against Germanicus, it seems, would be that he had aspirations of doing away with the principate and restoring the old republic. Though Germanicus never makes any such assertion, nor does the narrator, the belief that he would be willing to do so is put into the collective mouth of the Roman people on more than one occasion.[16]

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[14] Shotter 1968: 201-202

[15] Pelling 1993: 76

[16] Germanicus' republican characterization has been discussed several times in the past. Pelling 1993 describes Germanicus' style of generalship as "old-fashioned, bloody, but glorious; and the way of Tiberius, diplomatic, modern, unglamorous, but highly effective" (77), and O'Gorman 2000 calls him "a doomed republican in the new world of the principate" who "represents a past which becomes 'the republican past' only when it is viewed from the present of the principate" (47). Kelly 2010 calls the difference between Tiberius and Germanicus "a contrast between the styles of two political systems: the Republic and the Principate" (231). If Tiberius is truly the embodiment of the imperial system, then his assumption that Germanicus was a republican at heart would not have been a difficult one to make.

The first time that this desire for a restored republic is found is in Germanicus' introduction into the narrative. While introducing Germanicus' familial connections, the narrator comments that:

> The remembrance of Drusus among the Roman people was obviously great, and it was believed that if he had gained control of things, he would have restored freedom. From this came the same regard and hope toward Germanicus.
>
> *quippe Drusi magna apud populum Romanum memoria, credebaturque, si rerum potitus foret, libertatem redditurus; unde in Germanicum favor et spes eadem.* (1.33.2)

Germanicus' desire to restore the republic, then, is not only a rumor, but a rumor that originated about his biological father. Nonetheless the paranoia that the narrator shows to be a defining characteristic of Tiberius allows this rumor to take hold in his mind.[17] The narrator's use of the adverb "*quippe*" to introduce this sentence associates it strongly with the previous one, which describes the "secret hatred of his uncle and grandmother against him, the causes for which were more bitter because they were undeserved" (1.33.1).

The close association between the rumors about Germanicus and Tiberius' hatred for him sets forth what the narrator likely believed was the true nature of the relationship between Tiberius and Germanicus. First, that Tiberius was aware of this "regard and hope toward Germanicus" among the Roman people, enough of a reason on its own to be jealous of his (adopted) son. Second, he believes that Tiberius put some stock in the reasons behind this regard and hope and believed that Germanicus had at least some desire to do away with the principate.

[17] Tacitus' characterization of Tiberius to be discussed in the following chapter

And finally, he implies that Germanicus was aware not only of Tiberius' hatred toward him but also the reasons that led him to that hatred, illustrated by the assertion of his belief that they were "undeserved" (*iniquae*).

The clause that contains this word (*quorum causae acriores quia iniquae*) notably (and technically incorrectly) does not contain a verb. While the missing verb would clearly be a form of *esse*, this omission seems to serve a purpose. By using the indicative, *sunt,* the narrator would be making the claim that these reasons were *objectively* unfair, the sort of commitment that he often seems unwilling to make. The alternative option would be the subjunctive, *sint*. This option, though, while asserting that this was what Germanicus thought, would still grammatically be demonstrating the narrator's belief that this was Germanicus' opinion. The complete omission of the verb, then, allows readers to fill in the blank themselves. Germanicus' status as the subject of the previous clause allows readers to conclude that this is Germanicus' own opinion (that is, that *sint* is understood), and the way that Germanicus' relationship with Tiberius is described does not at all discourage such a conclusion. Therefore, the readers come to the same conclusion as the narrator, but feel that they have done so independently.

The next mention of the people's belief in Germanicus' desire to restore the republic comes after his death. When Germanicus' remains are being carried to Augustus' tomb, the Roman people follow along, shouting "The republic has fallen! There is no hope left!" (*concidisse rem publicam, nihil spei reliquum,* 3.4.1). If we recall the Roman people's unfulfilled belief about Drusus and their similar feelings toward Germanicus (*quippe Drusi magna apud populum Romanum memoria, credebaturque, si rerum potitus foret, libertatem redditurus; unde in Germanicum favor et spes eadem,* 1.33.2), the implication of this lament is that the people

believed that Germanicus, had he eventually come into the office of *princeps*, would have restored the old republic.

This belief among the Roman people that Germanicus would restore the old republic, that he was not truly a part of the "imperial" dynasty, also manifests itself through Tacitus' shaping of the text. This manifestation begins as early as Tacitus' first use of Germanicus' name. *Annales* 1.3 begins thus: *Ceterum Augustus subsidia dominationi…extulit* ("But Augustus promoted as successors for his dominion…," 1.3.1). This lengthy sentence lists all of the men whom Augustus had marked out as potential successors, as well as the ways in which death stole many of them away, finishing with the only candidate who survived, Tiberius. The following sentence describes one final potential candidate for the succession:

> But, by Hercules!, Germanicus, son of Drusus, [Augustus] placed at the head of the eight legions near the Rhine, and ordered that he be adopted by Tiberius, although Tiberius had a young son in his family, so that [Augustus] could stand upon greater protection.
>
> *at Hercule Germanicum, Druso ortum, octo apud Rhenum legionibus imposuit adscirique per adoptionem a Tiberio iussit, quamquam esset in domo Tiberii filius iuvenis, sed quo pluribus munimentis insisteret.*.(1.3.5)

The "strongly adversative…expletive"[18] *at Hercule*, which the narrator uses in his own voice only one other time in the entirety of the *Annales*, is used here to introduce Germanicus, the member of the family who was conspicuously absent from the previous list of potential successors. The main emphasis of this sentence is of a military nature: while Augustus does

[18] Goodyear 1972: 114

order Tiberius to adopt Germanicus as an additional choice for succession (*quo pluribus munimentis insisteret*), the emphasized clause of the sentence (felt through the placement of *at Hercule*) is that Augustus had placed Germanicus in charge of the eight German legions.

The interjection *at Hercule,* though, when read in light of the one other use in the narrator's voice in the *Annales,* could also have some impact on the latter half of the sentence. In its later use in the *Annales*, *at Hercule* is expressing the shame that the narrator feels about Rome's reliance on foreign grain while Italy is facing a potential famine:

> But, by Hercules!, Italy once carried grain to far-away provinces with the legions and now does not contend with barrenness, but we instead cultivate Africa and Egypt, and the lives of the Roman people are entrusted to ships and accidents
> *at Hercule olim Italia legionibus longinquas in provincias commeatus portabat, nec nunc infecunditate laboratur, sed Africam potius et Aegyptum exercemus, navibusque et casibus vita populi Romani permissa est.* (12.43.2)

Though the situations do not, at first glance, have much in common, the rarity of *at Hercule* in the narrator's voice, found in only these two instances in the *Annales*, must indicate some common theme. The clear shame being felt by the narrator in the latter of the two passages could also be felt in the former, prompted by the fact that Tiberius was *forced* to adopt Germanicus when he would have been hard-pressed to find a better successor anywhere else. Tacitus' favoritism toward Germanicus in the *Annales* certainly does not rule out such a reading. In addition to this favoritism of Germanicus, the postponement of Germanicus to his own individual sentence, the military emphasis of that sentence, and the use of the expletive *Hercule* serve to separate Germanicus from the rest of the imperial household as a man for whom the military is more important than imperial politics and succession.

Germanicus himself is also portrayed as expressing that his aspirations are of a military and not necessarily political nature. He spends the entirety of his second speech to the mutinous German legions discussing the shame that the soldiers should feel for acting in such an insubordinate fashion. Amidst his rebuking, he refers to Julius Caesar's quelling of a mutiny merely by referring to his soldiers as *Quirites* ("citizens," as opposed to *commilitones,* "fellow soldiers"[19]) and Augustus' terrifying his disloyal soldiers with just a single look (1.42.3). He follows these stories with this concession: *nos, ut nondum eosdem, ita ex illis ortos* ("I, though not yet the same as those men, but nonetheless descended from them…" 1.42.3). Comparing himself to Julius Caesar and Augustus, with specific reference to his descent from them (a claim that Tiberius cannot make), Germanicus at first glance seems to be affirming that he sees himself as eventually becoming *princeps*. The content of the two stories to which he alludes, however, strongly suggests otherwise.

The first of these stories refers to Caesar's dealing with a mutinous tenth legion after arriving to Rome during his civil war with Pompey. Caesar addresses the mutineers, who are demanding discharge after long service, and calls them *Quirites*, which so strongly bothers the men that they profess that they are still Caesar's soldiers, and continue to fight.[20] The second story, Augustus' frightening look that terrifies his soldiers into submission, refers to his dealing with an uprising of the soldiers at Brundisium after the Battle of Actium. While this version of the story is not paralleled elsewhere (Suet. *Aug*. 17 and Cass. Dio 51.3.4 have Augustus appeasing legions at Brundisium through more diplomatic means), the fact that the narrator has Germanicus portray Augustus in a more soldierly fashion (as opposed to ambassadorial) should

[19] e.g., Caes. *BG* 4.25.3
[20] See Suet. *Iul*. 70; Cass. Dio 42.53.3; App. *B Civ* 2.93

not be ignored. Both of these stories show their subjects acting not as *principes*, but as generals.[21] In accordance with this characterization, then, Germanicus' *nondum* must mean not that he is not yet *princeps* (or, in Caesar's case, *dictator in perpetuum*), but that he is not yet a general on the same level of these two very successful ones. Therefore, this statement implies that Germanicus' ambitions seem to be of a purely military nature.

Tiberius' actions also emphasize Germanicus' nature as a warrior. After his victories over the Germans in Book Two, Germanicus receives constant letters (*crebris epistulis,* 2.26.2) from Tiberius advising that he return to Rome to receive his triumph. Ignoring the numerous additional reasons why Tiberius believes he should leave Germany to the Germans, Germanicus requests one additional year at the head of the legions, in which he believed the war could be brought to a close. This requests goads Tiberius into offering Germanicus a further honor – the consulship. At this request, Germanicus finally gives in to his uncle's demands, though he believes that he has figured out Tiberius' actual reason for wanting him to leave Germany: *haud cunctatus est ultra Germanicus, quamquam fingi ea seque per invidiam parto iam decori abstrahi intellegeret* ("Germanicus hardly delayed any longer, although he understood that the reasons were feigned and that he was being dragged back, when his glory was just at hand, on account of jealousy," 2.26.5).

The order in which Tiberius offers these enticements to Germanicus speaks to his opinion of what sort of man Germanicus was. The frequency of the letters (*crebris*) and the plethora of excuses characterize Tiberius as being very eager to remove Germanicus from the fortunate

[21] Though both of these examples portray their subjects acting as generals during *civil* wars, it should not be assumed that Germanicus is being characterized as holding on to revolutionary aspirations. In the first century C.E., one would be hard pressed to find a recent example – especially one involving relations of Germanicus – of a quelled mutiny in anything but a civil conflict.

situation that he had found himself in. But his first offer, the triumph, suggests that he wanted to remove Germanicus from this situation in a way that reinforced that he was merely a soldier. It is only after Germanicus denies this opportunity that Tiberius makes him an offer he can't refuse – a second consulship. Only when his back is against the wall does Tiberius offer Germanicus a position of true *political* power. But even when Germanicus accepts this offer, Tiberius is able to find a way to lessen any threat that Germanicus' consulship might have had against him.

## Getting Rid of Germanicus

After Germanicus' triumph and Tiberius' announcement that he himself will be Germanicus' colleague in the consulship, an additional honor, Tiberius realizes that the people still didn't believe that he had any true affection for Germanicus and decides to "do away with the young man with the appearance of an honor" (*nec ideo sincerae caritatis fidem adsecutus amoliri iuvenem specie honoris statuit,* 2.42.1). And what could be less suspicious than sending Germanicus away to fight a war? Right away, Tiberius reports to the senate that the turmoil in Armenia must be dealt with, and that the only thing capable of doing so is Germanicus' good sense (*nec posse motum Orientem nisi sapientia Germanici componi,* 2.43.1). It seems convenient for Tiberius that, less than a year before Germanicus was set to take up his consulship, he finds a reason to send him out of the city.

The narrator also seems to find Tiberius' sudden requirement of Germanicus' particular skillset somewhat convenient, saying that Tiberius "drummed up reasons or snatched up whatever he happened upon" (*struxitque causas aut forte oblatas arripuit*, 2.42.1). Regardless of which of these possibilities one might believe, Tiberius comes off poorly in this situation. If, as the narrator's first option suggests, Tiberius invented these reasons, then he is creating a

fallacious campaign specifically in order to get Germanicus out of the city. This is not at all an unreasonable assumption to make, as the narrator has shown Tiberius performing a very similar action in the previous book.

In his final days, Augustus had spoken of multiple individuals whom he had seen as potential candidates for the principate. Once Tiberius became *princeps*, the narrator says that all of those men, besides Lepidus, "were shortly ensnared by various crimes that Tiberius was drumming up" (*omnes…variis mox criminibus struente Tiberio circumventi sunt*, 1.13.3). *Struo*, a common word in Tacitus, is only used three times in this figurative sense in the first two books of the *Annales*, as opposed to eight literal uses (e.g., *Caesar congeriem armorum struxit*, 2.22.2). Further, it should not be ignored that both of its first two metaphorical uses in the work are in reference to Tiberius, while its literal uses have a variety of subjects. Certainly, then, taking into account the various similarities between these two uses of *struo*, we should read these episodes as interacting with one another. If we are to believe the narrator's first suggestion about Tiberius' actions, that he had "drummed up" reasons to send Germanicus to Armenia, we must read it as Tiberius making a conscious effort to get rid of a man whom he felt threatened his grasp on the principate.

If, on the other hand, Tiberius was snatching up an opportunity that he happened upon (*causas…forte oblatas arripuit*) and this was a legitimate situation that needed to be dealt with, a previous statement of his is shown to have been false. When he had originally recalled Germanicus to the city, Tiberius had told him that Drusus needed a campaign to win some honor of his own, and that the Germans were the only enemies left to fight (*nullo tum alio hoste non nisi apud Germanias*, 2.26.4). The extended description of this situation in Armenia (2.42.2-5) suggests that this was not a sudden uprising, but a situation that had been escalating over a long

period of time, so Tiberius' reason for calling Germanicus back seems to have been embellished. Therefore, whether he had invented a reason to call Germanicus back to Rome or one to send him away again, Tiberius is shown to have been dishonest and Germanicus' earlier suspicion that Tiberius' explanations were dishonest (*fingi ea…intellegeret*, 2.26.5) is proven true.

Just as quickly as Tiberius had created the problem of having Germanicus in the city as consul for an entire year, he solved it – Germanicus would spend (at least) the year in Armenia and would be consul in name alone. So, though his offer of a consulship went against his desire for Germanicus to remain solely a military man, Tiberius satisfied that same desire by sending him off for another war.

As has been shown throughout this chapter, Tacitus characterizes Germanicus principally as a soldier. This is not illustrated solely through the voice of the narrator, but also through the voice of the Roman people, through Germanicus' actions, and through Tiberius' actions. This then begs the question why Tiberius, retired from the military and in sole control of the entirety of the Roman empire, would feel such strong jealousy toward a mere soldier. The time in which these events are occurring can provide an answer.

As the Mariuses, Sullas, Pompeys, and Caesars of the world have shown us, the quickest path to political power during the late republic was through military success. While the imperial family might have realized that the principate had changed how the empire was run, neither the people nor even the senate are shown to have adapted to the change so quickly. The *Annales* is the first account to depict Tiberius' principate as taking place not in the old *res publica*, but in a wholly new form of government under the rule of a *princeps*. Having first breached the idea of the division between the republic and the principate in the *Dialogus de oratoribus*, written (likely) in 102 C.E. and set (again, likely) in 75 C.E., Tacitus applies his opinions about the

nature of the Roman government to the time period during which, to the modern mind, the principate emerged from the republic's ashes.[22] The reaction of the senate and people to Tiberius' principate, without the benefit of hindsight that Tacitus enjoys, would therefore have been neither uniform nor quick.

This slow adjustment is clear through the senators' confusion, upon Augustus' death, as to exactly which powers Tiberius will hold (1.11-13), exemplified by Asinius Gallus' question "'*interrogo…Caesar, quam partem rei publicae mandari tibi velis*'" (1.12.2). The people also seem to have momentarily believed that the principate was more of a passing trend than anything else, when they lament Germanicus' death and exclaim that "The republic has fallen! There is no hope left!" (*concidisse rem publicam, nihil spei reliquum,* 3.4.1). Their belief that things were the same in Rome as they had been during the republic, coupled with Germanicus' popularity in the city at large, supplies strong support for the rationale behind Tiberius' jealousy. As a general who was very popular among a people who had yet to come to the realization that the governance of Rome had been significantly changed, Germanicus still posed a threat to Tiberius' supremacy.

The narrator implicitly supports this reasoning with his use of the title *Caesar*. The use of the title for so many different individuals throughout the course of *Annales* 1-3, coupled with the similar frequency with which Tiberius and Germanicus receive it, suggests a conscious effort on Tacitus' part to equate the power of the two men. This similarity of power, then, gives Tiberius a reason to be jealous of Germanicus, and that jealousy ultimately leads to Germanicus' death.

[22] Gowing 2005: 109-110: "…the *Dialogus* proposes an unprecedented rapprochement of Republican and imperial values that implies that the Republic is indeed 'past.' This conclusion is not new, of course – Seneca had already said as much…" For further discussion of the observance of the Republic as "past," see Gowing chapters 3 and 4.

## Chapter 2: Tiberius' Characteristic Jealousy

It is clear from his description of the relationship between Tiberius and Germanicus that Tacitus wants his reader to believe that Germanicus lost his life specifically due to Tiberius' jealousy of him. Germanicus is not the only figure who becomes a target of Tiberius' jealousy in the *Annales*, however. This jealousy, seemingly stemming from a lack of confidence in the security of his own position as *princeps*, is a characteristic of Tiberius' that is found throughout the work's early books. This jealousy is portrayed in a number of ways, which have been described thus by Ryberg: "Tacitus has created a very convincing impression of jealousy, treachery and crime, an impression built up by attribution of evil motives, by accusations put in the mouth of Germanicus, by quotation of statements from various individuals, by recounting of hearsay and rumors, and by later references which assume the truth of earlier implications" – in this chapter I will be discussing specific examples of attribution of evil motives, quotations from various individuals, recounting of hearsay, and references that assume the truth of earlier implications.[23] In the *Annales*, Tiberius is characterized as feeling jealousy toward anybody in any sort of position of power, whether it be political, martial, or even social. This seems to be Tacitus' way of demonstrating the impact that Tiberius' reign had on the principate as an institution and thence on the military – from this point on, people in positions of influence find it in their best interests to restrain their fame, lest they incur the jealousy of the *princeps.* The examples that follow will illustrate that Germanicus' demise was not a unique case during Tiberius' principate. Further, the examples here will later be shown to have influenced the attitudes that later generations had toward the attitudes of their *principes.*

[23] Ryberg 1942: 397

## Piso's Relationship with Tiberius

One of the more noteworthy targets of Tiberius' jealousy is Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, the alleged killer of Germanicus. His case is particularly notable in that before he is the target of Tiberius' jealousy, he is (according to Tacitus) a tool that is used in the actions taken against a different target of Tiberius' jealousy – Germanicus. When, after Germanicus has returned from Germany, Tiberius assigns Syria to him, the narrator mentions Piso's appointment as the new governor of the province, replacing one Creticus Silanus. In the description of Piso's succession to the governorship, the narrator mentions that Silanus was a marriage-connection of Germanicus. This bit of information, while it originally seems interesting and nothing more, appears to be part of Tacitus' effort to put forth his opinion that Tiberius had replaced Silanus, a potential ally for Germanicus, with Piso specifically in order to hinder Germanicus.

There are additional factors that make this idea much more likely. First, in the discussion of Silanus' dismissal from the governorship of the province, no reason is given for why this happened: "but Tiberius removed Creticus Silanus, connected to Germanicus through marriage, from Syria… and he put Gnaeus Piso in charge" (*sed Tiberius demoverat Syria Creticum Silanum, per adfinitatem conexum Germanico…praefeceratque Cn. Pisonem*, 2.43.2). The lack of explanation here, coupled with the context in which this sentence is situated, would likely have caused Tacitus' audience to wonder why exactly this had happened. The following sentence makes the replacement of Silanus with Piso seem even more questionable, when the narrator describes Piso as a man "violent in his temper and unaccustomed to obedience" (*ingenio violentum et obsequii ignarum*, 2.43.2). If it is not because of his affability or his ability as a subordinate that Tiberius put Piso in charge of Syria, then a more sinister motive becomes more likely. Tiberius' overall distaste toward Germanicus throughout the *Annales* make the presence

of a sinister motive a very reasonable assumption. Further, Ryberg calls attention to the adversative *sed* that begins the statement, arguing that "the implication of hostile intent lies entirely in the adversative, which balances the two statements against each other" – although Tiberius did grant Germanicus a significant command, he balances this act out by putting Piso, a man who will act contrary to Germanicus' best interests, in charge of the province.[24] The three factors here described – Silanus' connection to Germanicus, the absence of an attributed reason for his dismissal, and Piso's negative character – make a fairly strong case for the narrator's belief that Tiberius' appointment of Piso was done specifically in order to hinder Germanicus.

This idea is further supported by explicit discussion, put into the mouths of multiple characters, of the alliance between Tiberius and Piso. The first of these comes in the section of the work immediately following the one previously discussed. The narrator asserts that Piso "had no doubt that he had been chosen to be in charge of Syria in order to restrain Germanicus' aspirations. Certain people believed that secret orders had even been given by Tiberius" (*nec dubium habebat se delectum qui Syriae imponeretur ad spes Germanici coercendas. credidere quidam data et a Tiberio occulta mandata,* 2.43.4). This sentiment is also expressed by the soldiery when, once Piso has arrived in Syria and bribery and a lack of discipline have begun to arise among the legions, "a secret rumor arose that these things were happening hardly against Tiberius' will" (*haud invito imperatore ea fieri occultus rumor incedebat,* 2.55.6). And finally, once Germanicus has died and Piso is debating whether or not he should take control of Syria himself, one of his associates, advising a quick occupation of the province, reminds him that "you have the *Augusta*'s support, and Tiberius' favor, though in secret" ('*est tibi Augustae*

[24] Ryberg 1942: 393

*conscientia, est Caesaris favor, sed in occulto,'* 2.77.3). So, whether or not it was in fact the case, multiple instances in *Annales* 2 make it clear that the narrator, through quotation of statements and recounting of rumors, wants his reader to believe that Tiberius and Piso were conspiring against Germanicus.

This secret alliance makes Piso's downfall all the more surprising, at first glance. But after Germanicus has died and Piso has decided to take over Syria for his own, Piso is in a very similar position to the one Germanicus had been in: he was a man in a position of power with a band of loyal men supporting him. Though he was taking these actions (in his own opinion, at least) with Tiberius' support, he had nonetheless become a potential threat to Tiberius' position and had to be dealt with.

After having been on trial for Germanicus' murder for only one day, Piso is found dead in his bedroom, purportedly of a self-inflicted sword wound, about which the narrator leaves room for doubt by citing contemporary testimony: "I recall that I heard from some older men that he had not died of his own volition, but with an assassin sent after him" (*Audire me memini ex senioribus…nec illum sponte exstinctum, verum immisso percussore,* 3.16.1). In the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre,* a preserved decree of the senate that describes the results of Piso's trial, this death is described as a suicide undertaken to avoid a worse punishment: "the senate believes that he did not subject himself to the deserved punishment, but that he dragged himself away from a greater one, one which he understood was hanging over his head due to the *pietas* and severity of the judges" (*arbitrari senatum non optulisse eum se debitae poenae, sed maiori et quam imminere sibi ab pietate et severitate iudicantium intellegebat subtraxisse,* SCPP 71-73). That Piso was guilty of Germanicus' murder, we can now know for a certainty, was the official position of the Roman senate.

However, even with Piso out of the way, Tacitus' Tiberius continues to be paranoid about what this man's actions were doing to his own reputation. The first words attributed to Tiberius after Piso's death are not ones of relief over a threat removed, but of worry about what the man's manner of death might have accomplished: "Ill-will toward me among the senate was sought with such a death…" (*suam invidiam tali morte quaesitam apud senatum,* 3.16.2). This is not the first time in the *Annales* that Tiberius feels paranoia about the sympathy aroused amongst the Roman populace by a dead man. He also expresses some feelings of discomfort about the Roman people's attitude toward Germanicus after his death. These feelings are implied in the narrator's discussion of Tiberius' attitude toward Germanicus' widow Agrippina.

## Tiberius' Treatment of Germanicus' Family

Agrippina also incurs Tiberius' jealousy after Germanicus' death, due to the fact that Germanicus' popularity among the Roman people seems to have been transferred to her: "nothing bothered Tiberius more than the people's burning zeal for Agrippina, when they were calling her the glory of Rome, the sole blood of Augustus, a unique model of the past" (*nihil tamen Tiberium magis penetravit quam studia hominum accensa in Agrippinam, cum decus patriae, solum Augusti sanguinem, unicum antiquitatis specimen appellarent,* 3.4.2). While the zeal for Agrippina is Tiberius' primary concern here, the *magis…quam,* lacking anything to which it is comparing the *studia* (being compared to literally nothing, *nihil*), implies that the popularity of the dead Germanicus among the people continues to affect Tiberius. What unites the popularities of Germanicus and Agrippina is the fact that they both have associations with the Julian family; as discussed above, Germanicus' independent association to the Julian line can be

seen as a factor in Tiberius' attitude toward him. If this is the case, then Agrippina's marital relation to the Julian line, as well as the blood-relation to the Julians that her children enjoyed, surely would have continued to bother Tiberius.

An allusion to Sallust's *Bellum Iugurthinum* throws Tiberius' sensitivity about Agrippina's popularity into a negative light as well. In the early chapters of the *Bellum Iugurthinum,* Sallust describes Jugurtha's uncle Micipsa as afraid of "the Numidians' burning zeal for Jugurtha" (*studia Numidarum in Iugurtham accensa,* 6.3). The contexts in which this quotation and Tacitus' *studia hominum accensa in Agrippinam* are found are very similar.[25] Both describe an absolute ruler (Tiberius or Micipsa) feeling concerned about his peoples' strong enthusiasm for another (Agrippina or Jugurtha). However, Micipsa's fear is warranted, as Jugurtha soon wrests control of Numidia from his half-brothers, while Tiberius' fear of Agrippina, who has taken no threatening actions against Tiberius nor, arguably, is she described as doing so in the entirety of the *Annales,* is proven to be unwarranted. Further, the Latin itself is identical but for the placement of the phrase *in Iugurtham/in Agrippinam*, and before Tacitus the use of the structure "*studium in aliquem accensum*" is found only in Sallust.[26] It seems purposeful that the one change that Tacitus makes from Sallust's phrasing causes Agrippina's name to end up in the emphatic final position. This placement of Agrippina's name could surely be intended to draw the reader's attention to the fact that while Micipsa's concern is directed toward Jugurtha, Tiberius' concern is directed toward a *woman*. The juxtaposition of Jugurtha, who took control of the entirety of Numidia, with Agrippina, a woman who never comes into any legitimate power, makes Tiberius' jealousy seem even more ridiculous.

[25] Koestermann 1963 cites this similarity with no comment.
[26] According to a search from the Phi disk.

Tacitus' reliance on Sallust throughout his work, most famously represented in the *Annales* by the similarity between its opening sentence (*urbem Romam a principio reges habuere,* 1.1.1) and the preface of Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae* (*urbem Romam, sicut ego accepi, condidere atque habuere initio Troiani,* 6.1), lends further strength to the likelihood this allusion.[27] This allusion, then, coupled with the fact that Agrippina takes no seriously threatening actions against Tiberius in the narrative of the *Annales*, suggests to the reader that Tiberius' sensitivity about Agrippina's popularity is yet another sign of his now-characteristic jealousy.

Germanicus and Agrippina's eldest son Nero also suffers the ill effects of Tiberius' jealousy. His popularity among the Roman people was equal to his mother's, as shown by the narrator's description of the Roman people's prayers: "turned to the sky and the gods, they prayed that [Agrippina's] son be safe and sound, and outlive his enemies" (*versique ad caelum ac deos integram illi subolem ac superstitem iniquorum precarentur,* 3.4.2). His position as the successor to Tiberius' office made him even more of a threat. Thus, he was vehemently mistreated by Sejanus, as described most fully in *Annales* 4:

> Sejanus simulated the role of a judge against the offspring of Germanicus, with men subordinated to him who would take up the duty of informants and would attack Nero in particular, as the next in line for succession. …Defiant and ill-advised words would come [from Nero] and, when the guards near him reported them, having taken note and exaggerated them, no chance was given to Nero to defend himself; …whether the young man spoke or was silent, he was faulted for his silence or his speech.

[27] For further discussion on Tacitus' reliance upon Sallust, see Woodman 1992 and Krebs 2012.

> *adsimulabatque [Seianus] iudicis partes adversum Germanici stirpem, subditis qui accusatorum nomina sustinerent maximeque insectarentur Neronem proximum successioni. …voces procedebant contumaces et inconsultae, quas adpositi custodes exceptas auctasque cum deferrent neque Neroni defendere daretur; …seu loqueretur seu taceret iuvenis, crimen ex silentio, ex voce.* (4.59.3-60.2)

Though all of these actions taken against Nero are attributed to Sejanus' agency, the passage immediately preceding this one suggests Tiberius' awareness of these efforts, if not his outright complicity.

The passage that precedes this section describes Sejanus' selfless effort to save Tiberius' life while they were dining in a villa that was situated inside of a natural cave. During the meal, the roof of the cave collapsed and Sejanus propped himself up over Tiberius in order to protect him from any falling debris. Because of this event, the narrator claims, Sejanus was trusted more fully by Tiberius from that point on, no matter what course of action he advised (*maior ex eo, et quamquam exitiosa suaderet, ut non sui anxius, cum fide audiebatur,* 4.59.2). The very next words of this section are the ones quoted above in the description of Nero's mistreatment at Sejanus' hands. The placement of this anecdote here seems to suggest Tacitus' efforts to convince his reader that though Sejanus was the one orchestrating these deeds, Tiberius had approved of them. Bowen very accurately summarizes this phenomenon: "Tiberius also permitted Sejanus to exercise other forms of tyranny in his political prosecutions and executions, and thus by silent compliance more than overt act contributed to make his principate odious in

the memory of the Roman people…what an absolute ruler permits through his minister he performs in fact."[28]

A description of Tiberius later in *Annales* 4.60 also lends credence to this argument. After further description of the way that Nero was being treated throughout the entire city, Tiberius is described as "harsh, or falsely smiling" (*torvus aut falsum renidens vultu,* 4.60.2). His lack of empathy about Nero's plight (shown by *torvus*), or his deceptively encouraging attitude (*falsum renidens*) both suggest that Tiberius also had a hand in Nero's suffering. Thus we see again, just as in Agrippina's case, a member of Germanicus' family being mistreated due to Germanicus' enduring popularity. The original reason given by the narrator for Sejanus' actions is the fact that Nero is next in line for the succession. That fact, coupled with the surviving popularity of Germanicus' family, made him an ideal target for Tiberius as well. In addition to furthering his characterization of Tiberius as cold and calculating, these instances serve to further another of Tacitus' goals in *Annales* 4, namely blackening the character of Sejanus.

## Tiberius and Drusus

There is another story in *Annales* 4 that casts a negative light upon Sejanus and Tiberius' relationship. After describing the death of Tiberius' son Drusus in the manner described by the "most numerous, and reliable, authors" (*plurimis maximaeque fidei auctoribus,* 4.10.1), the narrator relates a second account of Drusus' death. The narrator's reason for including this story is that he does not believe such a telling rumor (*validum*) should be left out of his account of Drusus' death (*sed non omiserim eorundem temporum rumorem, validum adeo, ut nondum*

[28] Bowen 1913: 165

*exolescat*, 4.10.1). The word *validus* being used to describe a *rumor* in Tacitus is a quite unusual occurrence – though *rumor* is certainly a favorite word of his (it is used 73 times in *Agricola*, *Historiae*, and *Annales*), this is only one of two instances in which its description has a degree of positivity.[29] The one other example deserves mention, given its context. The marriage of Germanicus' son Nero and Drusus' daughter Julia was received with favorable talk (*secundo rumore*), but that talk was tempered by the fact that through that marriage, Sejanus was going to become part of the Julio-Claudian family – this, the people thought, was both a defilement of the nobility of the family and also an example of Sejanus' excessive expectations (*utque haec secundo rumore, ita adversis animis acceptum, quod filio Claudii socer Seianus destinaretur. polluisse nobilitatem familiae videbatur suspectumque iam nimiae spei Seianum ultra extulisse*, 3.29.4). As this is the only other example of the word *rumor* being described with any degree of positivity, the possibility of the connection between the two episodes should be explored. While this example depicts a *rumor* whose positivity is tarnished and the other example is of a negative *rumor* described with a positive adjective, the original positivity of the *rumor* disappears because of Sejanus' presence in both cases. Surely a reader familiar with Tacitus would pause upon finding the word *rumor* qualified with a favorable modifier, only to then realize that that rare positivity was shortly done away with by Sejanus.

In the rumor's version of Drusus' death, Sejanus warns Tiberius that the first cup that his son will offer him at the night's festivities will be poisoned, thereby accusing Drusus of plotting against his father's life (*Drusum veneni in patrem arguens*, 4.10.2), though it was actually through his own agency that the cup had been poisoned. Tiberius, characteristically paranoid

[29] Nearly every instance of *rumor* in Tacitus is followed by a negative or, at best, a neutral adjective. Examples run from *constans*, *creber*, and *varius* to *falsus*, *spernendus*, and *atrox*.

about losing his life at the hand of somebody striving after his position as *princeps*, believes Sejanus and, when offered the cup later that evening, hands it back to Drusus. Drusus, having taken the cup from his father, unwittingly drinks the poison. Tiberius, finding a way to construe this sign of Drusus' innocence into evidence of a crime, believes that "out of fear and shame he had brought the death that he had prepared for his father upon himself" (*metu et pudore sibimet inrogaret mortem, quam patri struxerat*, 4.10.3). Thus, according to this version of events, Tiberius willingly allows his son to die, believing that he would otherwise have died himself.

The narrator argues quite strongly against the possibility of this story being true, but his explanation of the reason that it was so widely believed seems to very much align with his own beliefs about Tiberius: "But because Sejanus was considered the fashioner of all wicked deeds, from Caesar's excessive care for him and everybody else's hatred of them both, these things, however unbelievable and extreme, were believed" (*sed quia Seianus facinorum omnium repertor habebatur, ex nimia caritate in eum Caesaris et ceterorum in utrumque odio quamvis fabulosa et immania credebantur*, 4.11.2). Now although the narrator purportedly reports this story in order to do away with such an absurd rumor (*ut claro sub exemplo falsas auditiones depellerem*, 4.11.3), the level of detail afforded to the description of the story's believability seems unnecessary. Ryberg concurs that rumors are often included for reasons beyond those given, citing this specific scene as one of Tacitus' "several methods of escaping the onus of bringing charges against Tiberius without lessening the impression of his guilt."[30] This seems clearly to be what the narrator is doing here – by bringing up this story, whether or not he openly

[30] Ryberg 1942: 386-7

agrees with it, he has alerted the reader to the fact that this story had circulated throughout the city at the time of the event.

Certainly the fact that the first version of the story is paralleled in the "most numerous, and reliable, authors" (*plurimis maximaeque fidei auctoribus*, 4.10.1) would normally be proof enough of its accuracy. In *Annales* 3, when discussing the attendance of Germanicus' funeral, the narrator refers to his mother's absence. Because her name is not found anywhere in the historians (*apud auctores rerum*, 3.3.2), the narrator takes it as a given that she was not in attendance and proceeds to postulate reasons for her absence. Why, then, since the historians (*auctoribus*) agree that his first telling of the death of Drusus is the correct one, would the narrator bother to tell the second version? It seems more than plausible to assume that the narrator included this story just for its negative description of Tiberius and Sejanus' actions. It would certainly not be the first time that the narrator has looked to attack their character, nor will it be the last. Whether or not the narrator's sole intention is to draw attention to the negativity of this relationship, the fact that this story was believable enough to survive to Tacitus' time further indicates the level of notoriety that Tiberius' jealousy experienced.

## Tiberius and the Military

Tiberius' family members are not the only people who feel the effects of his jealousy, however. The military, as an institution, suffers under the restraint of Tiberius' jealous actions as well. After describing the influx of men to the cause of Tacfarinas, a deserter from the Roman army who was leading his fellow Africans against Roman rule, the narrator informs the reader that "Caesar, after the achievements of Blaesus, as if there were no longer enemies in Africa,

ordered that the Ninth legion be recalled" (*Caesar post res a Blaeso gestas, quasi nullis iam in Africa hostibus, reportari nonam legionem iusserat*, 4.23.2). This sentence drips with sarcasm, especially noticeable when read in the light of a comment of the narrator's made earlier, in *Annales* 3. In his description of the aforementioned *res a Blaeso gestas*, the narrator makes these comments: "Once [Tacfarinas'] brother was captured, Blaesus withdrew, but earlier than was useful for his allies, as he had left behind those through whom the war could be renewed" (*fratre eius capto regressus est, properantius tamen quam ex utilitate sociorum relictis per quos resurgeret bellum*, 3.74.3). The final clause is particularly important to this analysis: the men who had the capacity to renew the war, among whom was the leader of the entire rebellion, Tacfarinas, had neither been captured nor defeated – they had been left in Africa. But even at this point, Tiberius construes the war as completed (*pro confecto interpretatus*, 3.74.4) and rewards Blaesus for his achievement. This earlier comment upon the war in Africa, coupled with the comment *quasi nullis iam in Africa hostibus* in the quote at hand, stand as strong evidence that Tiberius was knowingly recalling soldiers from Africa before the conflict had been settled.

Why, though, would the narrator portray Tiberius as purposely recalling soldiers from a war that was not completed? The motivation for such an action is found in the final chapter of *Annales* 4. In the year 28 CE, the Romans suffer a loss of approximately 1300 soldiers at the hands of a German tribe called the Frisians. When this information is reported to Tiberius, he purposely keeps it from the Roman people, specifically so that he not have to allot a command to anybody (*dissimulante Tiberio damna, ne cui bellum permitteret*, 4.74.1). This motivation, then, can also be retroactively applied to Tiberius' recalling of troops from Africa – a clear example of Ryberg's "later references which assume the truth of earlier implication." As the narrator provides no strategic reason why Tiberius might have taken such an action, the circumstances

strongly suggest to the reader that Tiberius was acting to make sure nobody received a command in Africa.[31] What we see here, then, is the narrator specifically citing Tiberius' jealousy as a motivation for an action that he takes, where previously the motivation would only have been implied.

In addition to Tiberius' jealousy prompting him to take actions that hinder men whom he believes could become a threat to his position, there are also instances in the *Annales* of Tiberius rewarding men or celebrating their achievements specifically because he does not see them as threatening. A specific example of this habit is Furius Camillus:

> For after the preserver of the city and his son Camillus, military praise had been among other families, and this Camillus whom we mention was considered inexperienced in war. For this reason, Tiberius more readily celebrated his achievements at the senate; and the senators decreed to him an honorary triumph, which was not harmful to Camillus on account of the modesty of his life.
>
> *nam post illum reciperatorem urbis filiumque eius Camillum penes alias familias imperatoria laus fuerat, atque hic, quem memoramus, bellorum expers habebatur. eo pronior Tiberius res gestas apud senatum celebravit; et decrevere patres triumphalia insignia, quod Camillo ob modestiam vitae impune fuit.* (2.52.5)

Here we see two separate condemnations of Tiberius' reign. The first of these is the fact that Tiberius was more ready to celebrate a man's achievements specifically due to the fact that his

[31] Furneaux 1896 suggests that "it is equally probable that Tiberius did not think the territory worth the pains of such reconquest; still more so that this is merely an instance of the disinclination to effort which marks his later years" (576). The evidence cited in this paper about Tiberius' previous actions concerning Africa, though, make a strong case for a less neutral motive.

family had fallen out of renown. This could be seen as a positive – celebrating the resurgence of an old family's name is certainly a praiseworthy action to take. To fully understand how far out of renown it was necessary for a family to fall in order for Tiberius to be comfortable celebrating its achievements, though, one must realize that "that well-known preserver of the city" (*illum reciperatorem urbis*) was not a man who had operated at the time of Marius and Sulla, who had lived over a century previous, but one who had led the utter destruction of the city of Veii in 396 B.C.E. and had driven off the Gallic army that had sacked Rome in 390, earning himself the nickname "the second founder of the city" (*conditorque alter urbis*, Livy 5.49.7). Thus the narrator implies that in order for Tiberius to celebrate a man's achievements, his family must only have been in obscurity for 400 years.

The final clause of this section further shows that Tiberius' reason for this celebration was less than positive. This sentence, which asserts that Camillus' reception of an honorary triumph was harmless only because he did not live a notable life (*ob modestiam vitae*), also strongly implies that if he had lived a more notable life, Camillus would have been punished for receiving an honorary triumph. This, then, puts forth a picture of Tiberius as a ruler who celebrates the achievements of those who were not previously well-known, but punishes the achievements of those who already had some renown.

## Conclusion

Two of the more notable examples of men being punished for their renown are those of Gaius Silius and Titius Sabinus. The decision to attack these two men is prompted by Tiberius' realization that, due to his own old age, the younger generation of statesmen is beginning to

receive increased attention from the Roman populace. From this realization, and Sejanus' obvious encouragement (*instabat quippe Seianus*), comes Tiberius' decision to topple one or two of the most well-known men (*unus alterve maxime prompti subverterentur*, 4.17.3). This is yet another example of the narrator's negative characterization of the relationship between Tiberius and Sejanus. The adverb *quippe* demonstrates to the reader that not only was Sejanus the one who encouraged Tiberius to take these actions, but he was *obviously* the one who did this encouraging – this has become characteristic enough of Sejanus that we should no longer be surprised when he encourages such negative actions. From the perspective of Tiberius' actions, we see the narrator *specifically* attributing this behavior to jealousy for the first time in the narrative – he relates Germanicus' death only uncertainly to Tiberius, Piso's trial and subsequent death are attributed to his revolutionary actions in Syria, and the mistreatment of Nero is officially attributed to Sejanus alone. But here the narrator explicitly blames Tiberius' jealousy for his actions: "For this reason [his age and the people's partiality toward his younger relatives], he went after C. Silius and Titius Sabinus" (*qua causa C. Silium et Titium Sabinum adgreditur*, 4.18.1). Just as with Sejanus' actions, it seems, the narrator has now seen enough examples of Tiberius' involvement in these sorts of actions that he no longer tempers these stories with any other explanations – he now confidently asserts that jealousy was the motivating factor behind these actions.

These examples represent the effect that Tiberius' jealous nature had on different areas of Roman society. While the reason for this jealousy – apprehension that somebody more renowned than himself might wrest his position away from him – is relatively clear, the source of the apprehension has not yet been discussed. Aside from a possible innate tendency toward paranoia, another possible explanation is found early in *Annales* 1. Upon Augustus' death, Tacitus presents

a sample of the sorts of things that were possibly being said about him among the people. One of the less-glowing appraisals of his character runs thus: "He did not even choose Tiberius as his successor out of affection or concern for the republic, but, since he had observed [Tiberius'] arrogance and brutality, he sought glory for himself through a very unfavorable comparison" (*ne Tiberium quidem caritate aut rei publicae cura successorem adscitum, sed, quoniam adrogantiam saevitiamque eius introspexerit, comparatione deterrima sibi gloriam quaesivisse*, 1.10.7). Now, if this rumor had found its way to Tiberius, he surely would have felt some pressure to be the most outstanding man in Rome. If for no other reason, what Shotter characterizes as Tiberius' "near-obsessive attitude to the dead Augustus" would have compelled Tiberius to demonstrate that this accusation was false.[32] Even the implication that people believed that he had been chosen specifically due to his negative attributes could certainly have motivated him to prove them wrong. If, then, this were the case, we can safely assert that the narrator wants this to seem to be a motivating factor behind his jealous behavior – his attacking of popular and powerful men, his readiness to praise men who were of relatively low status, and his reluctance to give anybody an opportunity for further glory would all be very effective means of guaranteeing that he retain his status as the most prominent man in Rome.

Tiberius' characteristic jealousy is not something that the people who lived in Tiberius' reign are described by the narrator as being unaware of – in the case of Gaius Silius, the correlation between his greatness and his downfall was understood. Our narrator tells us that "from however greater a height he fell, that much more fear was scattered among others" (*quanto maiore mole procideret, plus formidinis in alios dispergebatur*, 4.18.1). Because this event took

[32] Shotter 1988 (229), elaborating on Shotter 1966 where he describes in detail Tiberius' relationship with the deceased Augustus.

place so early in Tiberius' reign (he rules for thirteen more years after this event), there was surely enough time for the Roman people's attitude about gaining fame to be inexorably changed. Living under a *princeps* who was so averse to anybody achieving any level of significance, Tacitus seems to believe that the Romans would naturally have adapted their behavior in order to survive and checked their own aspirations for renown. The roller-coaster ride of a principate that was the reign of Gaius Caligula would have done nothing to change this attitude. However, the ever-present grief that the Romans are described as having felt about the death of their beloved Germanicus surely would have caused them to realize that he was one of the earliest casualties of Tiberius' jealousy. Thus, Tacitus asserts that Germanicus' example would have stood out in the minds of any aspiring generals for the rest of the principate and caused them to think twice about the level of fame that they were reaching, as can be seen in his description of the style of generalship utilized throughout the later books of the *Annales.*

## Chapter 3: Nero's Principate, and Corbulo

While the gap in the text of the *Annales* after the Tiberian books hinders us from observing the course of development of the new "imperial" style of generalship, the finished product is readily observable in the Claudian and Neronian books. Germanicus, pressing his advantage and continuing his campaigns across a span of many years, is no longer the model upon which these generals base their behavior – far from it. The narrator describes two new types of general in the Claudian and Neronian books: the first achieves a significant level of success, but is shortly thereafter deprived of his command in some way; the second is one who is very rarely, if ever, described as making a campaign against an enemy for more than a single year, and whose main focus is no longer achieving a crushing military victory over his adversaries. These generals often do just enough to earn an honorary triumph (which I will show is described by Tacitus as having become exceedingly common and therefore noticeably less significant), and then merely hold on to their command as quietly as possible. The one exception to these trends as described by Tacitus is Domitius Corbulo, who is found consistently succeeding on the battlefield during four of the final six books of the *Annales.*

### Pushing the Limits of Prominence

This first sort, the general who becomes noteworthy and then is deprived of his command, is only represented with one specific example in the Claudian and Neronian books of the *Annales*, but the idea that excessive glory is not something that a general should strive for is more generally expressed on several occasions. The one specific example of a victorious general being summarily removed from his position is Suetonius Paulinus, governor of Britain, who is

described by the narrator as "Corbulo's competitor in knowledge of strategy and talk of the people" (*scientia militiae et rumore populi…Corbulonis concertator,* 14.29.2). After several smaller victories throughout the province, Paulinus wins a decisive victory against the army of Boudicca, in which, the narrator reports, "some say" (*qui…tradant,* 14.37.2) no fewer than 80,000 Britons fell, with only 400 fallen Romans.

Nero was quickly informed of this victory, as it was no small affair, and a court freedman was shortly sent to assess the situation in Britain. After the freedman's report is sent back to Rome, Paulinus is relieved of command. The reason that is attributed to this removal is the fact that Paulinus "had lost a few ships on the shore, and the rowers with them" (*quod paucas naves in litore remigiumque in iis amiserat,* 14.39.3). This seems a harsh punishment, especially given the significance of the victory that Paulinus had just achieved over Boudicca's army.

The narrator suggests, in multiple ways in this passage, that he also believes that this punishment is harsh. The first of these ways is simply the use of the adjective *paucas* to describe the number of ships that Paulinus had lost: the primary definition of this word is "only a small number" (OCD 1). If this is indeed the shade of meaning that the author intended with the use of this word, then we can safely assume at least some level of criticism, as if this were *too* small a number of losses to have warranted such a punishment.[33]

Secondly, the praise that Suetonius gained from this victory is described as on par with those of old (*antiquis victoriis par ea die laus parta,* 14.37.2). Just as Germanicus' "republican" style of military command was shown in previous chapters to have elicited Tiberius' jealousy,

[33] Furneaux 1908, in describing Paulinus' dismissal, also believes that the punishment was excessive, saying that "soon afterwards a trifling disaster was made the occasion for this to be done" (Furneaux 283).

Suetonius' victory here, similar to that of his famous predecessors, can be seen as eliciting the same response from Nero. The narrator's description of his praise as *antiquis victoriis par*, then, should be read as his effort to draw attention to the notion that the motivation behind Nero's dismissal of Suetonius, in the narrator's opinion, was the same as the motivation that caused Tiberius to react so jealously toward Germanicus' victories – he did not believe that Suetonius was no longer deserving of an army, but he was jealous of his success and needed to remove him from a situation in which he could achieve more.

An additional suggestion of the narrator's opinion about the severity of this punishment comes in his description of the order itself: "Suetonius [Paulinus] is ordered to hand over his army to Petronius Turpilianus, as if the war were continuing" (*Suetonius…tamquam durante bello tradere exercitum Petronio Turpiliano…iubetur,* 14.39.3). The ablative absolute *tamquam durante bello* seems to make the narrator's opinion much more clear than his use of the adjective *paucas.* The adversative sense of the conjunction *tamquam* effectively means that whatever follows (here, *durante bello*) is contrary to what is actually the case.[34] This means that the narrator believes that the war had ended, and that it had been ended at Paulinus' hands. The fact that he had successfully quelled a rebellion and won a war seems more than enough reason to leave a general at the head of his army. Further, the adversative sense of *tamquam* suggests some level of mockery in the description of this order: if the war were continuing, then this would be an order that one would expect to hear, but because the war is over, it does not make much sense.

[34] Though no finite verb is present, through which the specific shade of meaning of *tamquam* could be ascertained, Woodcock 1984 translates *tamquam durante bello* as "on the excuse that a state of war continued," citing it as the normal use of *tamquam* with a participle (126). Furneaux 1908 additionally reads *tamquam* this way: "i.e. the loss of some ships, probably by some piratical attack, was taken as evidence that, after all, the state of war still existed and that Suetonius was not capable of restoring peace" (283).

The specific language used in the description of Paulinus' loss of his army suggests that the narrator believed that his removal was not deserved, and the description of Paulinus' successor suggests that the narrator believed his punishment was due to his success. After Paulinus is ordered to hand over his army, the narrator says that Turpilianus "without provoking the enemy, nor harassed himself, placed the honorable name of 'peace' upon slothful laziness" (*non inritato hoste neque lacessitus honestum pacis nomen segni otio imposuit,* 14.39.3). The contrast between *honestum pacis nomen* and *segni otio* casts Turpilianus' personality in a very negative light. Further, in a province in which a war had very recently been quelled, replacing a wildly successful general with a lazy one strongly suggests that the motivation behind the choice of Turpilianus as successor to the governorship was to ensure that no more military glory was won in Britain.

The idea that Paulinus was removed from his command due to Nero's opposition to other men being successful is supported by a comment made by the narrator in the previous book. Discussing the lack of campaigning being performed by the German legions, he reports that "a rumor arose that the right to campaign against the enemy had been taken away from the generals" (*fama incessit ereptum ius legatis ducendi in hostem*, 13.54.1). Read in light of the episode of Paulinus' dismissal in the following book, this rumor gains some credibility. Though asserting that the generals had been *forbidden* to campaign might be a bit strong, the claim that they were discouraged from doing so certainly finds credence here. If campaigning had been discouraged, then Paulinus' removal from his position, no matter what the outcome of his expedition might have been, now has at least some semblance of an explanation.

Further, more general comments on the dangers of success are found throughout the Neronian books of the *Annales*. In narrating a story of Thrasea Paetus interpreting an insult of

Nero against him as a sign of his imminent death, the narrator comments that "glory and danger were increasing for outstanding men" (*gloria egregiis viris et pericula gliscebant,* 15.23.4). This comment in particular signals the narrator's belief in a change in the *status quo* between the republic and the principate – two words that had previously been nothing but positive, *gloria* and *egregius*, now go hand-in-hand with *periculum*. This association between *gloria* and *periculum* is made even stronger in light of the observation that the two words make up a virtual hendiadys (i.e., instead of "glory and danger," they could be translated as "the danger that arises from glory"). Thus, according to the narrator, the principate is no longer safe for outstanding men.

The Roman people espouse this same sentiment much earlier in the work. Commenting upon the success in Germany of Corbulo, the people lament: "Why stir up the enemy? It's going to turn out badly for Rome; but if he is successful, an outstanding man endangers peace and is grievous to a cowardly emperor" (*cur hostem conciret? adversa in rem publicam casura; sin prospere egisset, formidolosum paci virum insignem et ignavo principi praegravem,* 11.19.3). The juxtaposition here of *formidolosum* with *insignem*, just like that of *gloria* and *egregiis* with *periculum* above, points out the altered state of affairs under the principate – the same traits that were once wholly positive under the republic now bring danger upon the men who embody them.

The people even take their critique a step further than the narrator, in that they specifically blame the danger of prosperity on the *princeps* and on the implication that he is afraid of successful men. Malloch points out that the juxtaposition of a nameless *virum insignem* and *ignavo principi* takes this statement beyond a critique of just the relationship between Corbulo and (here) Claudius, but makes it more a critique of that between the *viri insignes* and

*principes* of the entire first century C.E.[35] He cites in support of this feeling passages from both Sallust and Livy that echo the sentiment – the distance between the time periods in which these authors were writing is evidence that this feeling is not being falsely attributed to the Roman people by Tacitus, as it was expressed by authors over the course of well over a century.[36] Tacitus himself had earlier expressed this sentiment in the *Agricola,* in which he, discussing Agricola's successes in Britain, says that "this was most dangerous to him, that the name of a private citizen be lifted up above that of the *princeps*" (*id sibi maxime formidolosum, privati hominis nomen supra principem adtolli, Agr.* 39.2). While the prevalence of this sentiment throughout Roman literature of different time periods could suggest that this case is no different than that of, for instance, the jealous men to whom Sallust and Livy refer, it is the position of *princeps* that makes his case special. Tiberius was the first example since the inception of the Roman republic of somebody who was both inherently a jealous person and also in a position of power for a long enough time that the effects of his jealousy could become manifest. During the entirety of the republic, no matter how inherently jealous a man was, it was only for one-year periods (with a minimum of a ten-year break in between) that he was truly in a position in which the results of that jealousy could become manifest. But with the rise of the principate, men were suddenly placed in positions of significant power, sometimes for decades – this was more than enough time for their jealousy to have had an effect on the collective psyche of their constituencies.

[35] Malloch 2013: 287

[36] Sall. *Catil.* 7.2: *regibus boni quam mali suspectiores sunt semperque eis aliena virtus formidulosa est*; Liv. 35.43.1: *nulla ingenia tam prona ad invidiam sunt quam eorum qui genus ac fortunam suam animis non aequant, quia virtutem et bonum alienum oderunt.*

The result of this belief of the Roman people that the *princeps* is frightened of successful men is displayed later in the narrative. When Lucius Vetus, the leader of the German legions, considers enacting a plan that would cause him to lead his army into territories other than the one allotted to him, the governor of Belgica, Aelius Gracilis, is described as warning him not to follow through with his idea, advising that "he should not lead legions into another's province and aim for popularity in Gaul, insisting that this was alarming to the emperor, and that honorable pursuits are often deterred for this reason" (*ne legiones alienae provinciae inferret studiaque Galliarum adfectaret, formidolosum id imperatori dictitans, quo plerumque prohibentur conatus honesti,* 13.53.3). A general leading an army into another man's province for reasons of aggression could very reasonably be considered *formidolosum* to any person operating in the Roman government – Vetus' intentions, however, were far from aggressive. His plan, as described by the narrator, was to connect the major rivers of the region with canals, in order that freight could make its way farther inland from the sea (13.53.2). The fact that the governor of a province is seriously advising a general against a plan like this – entirely harmless, and objectively very useful to the Roman army – illustrates exactly what the Roman generals thought of their position in the principate. Gracilis' reaction suggests that, in his mind, the possibility of upsetting the *princeps* was so great that a Roman general had no choice but to command his army as quietly as possible.

## Avoiding Prominence

This necessity of quietude in leading one's army explains the narrator's descriptions of many of the generals in the later books of the *Annales.* Helvidius Priscus, for example, is called

upon to settle the potentially-turbulent situation in Syria. He achieves his goal in settling things, but the narrator comments upon the way in which he achieved this result: "he settled the matter more through moderation than force…in an effort not to stir up the beginning of a war with the Parthians" (*moderatione plura quam vi composuerat…ne initium belli adversus Parthos existeret*, 12.49.2). The fact that the narrator goes out of his way to describe Helvidius as having acted "more through moderation than force" seems to suggest that this method of settling the situation was something relatively novel to the style of generalship described in the prior books of the *Annales*, and warranted explanation – if acting with more moderation than force had been usual operating procedure for a general up until that time, it would not have required comment. The description of his acting "in an effort not to stir up the beginning of a war with the Parthians" further illustrates the novelty of his style. One previous noteworthy general in the *Annales*, Germanicus, surely never acted in a way to specifically avoid a war – in fact, when he is asked to abandon his war against the Germans, he begs Tiberius to allow him to campaign for one final year (2.26, discussed in a previous chapter).

Another example of a general avoiding a war is Petronius Turpilianus, who was chosen to replace Suetonius Paulinus in Britain. The narrator here describes his style of generalship a bit more harshly than that of Helvidius. As discussed above, the narrator's description of Turpilianus as putting the "honorable name of 'peace' upon slothful laziness" (*honestum pacis nomen segni otio*, 14.39.3) shows his very low opinion not only of Turpilianus, but of the way that the institution of generalship was being handled under the principate.

A general avoiding any type of renown while out in his province is not the only sort described by the narrator as having emerged from the principate, however. There are also a number of generals who are described as having gained renown to a certain degree before they

settled down and focused on cultivating peace. The point at which many of these generals deem their renown enough is when they have earned an honorary triumph. The narrator, while discussing the lack of conflict in Germany, describes his opinion about honorary triumphs: "because honorary triumphs were commonplace, [generals] were hoping for greater glory if they maintained peace" (*qui pervulgatis triumphi insignibus maius ex eo decus sperabant, si pacem continuavissent,* 13.53.1).[37] What the narrator seems to be implying here is that the honorary triumph, a military honor, has become so common that a general no longer needed to take any actual military action to earn one. He describes throughout the later books of the *Annales* the sorts of things that were deemed worthy of honorary triumphs, and often seems to emphasize how little these generals actually did.

The first example of one of these honorary triumphs, ironically, belongs to Corbulo. While building a fort in the territory of the Germans against whom he was campaigning, Corbulo is ordered to withdraw his troops. He does so, and his following actions are described thus:

> In order that the soldiers cast off their laziness, [Corbulo] had them dig a canal, twenty-three miles long, between the Meuse and the Rhine, by which the uncertainties of the ocean could be avoided. Nevertheless, Caesar bestowed upon him an honorary triumph, although he had denied him a war.

[37] Furneaux 1908 cites this passage, along with 11.20.5 and 12.3.2 as examples of the "prodigality" with which triumphs were given out, specifically under Claudius and Nero (27-8). Suetonius also asserts this prodigality when he describes Claudius as giving *triumphalia ornamenta* to "very many, and very easily" (*tam multis tamque facile,* Suet. *Cl.* 24.3).

> *ut tamen miles otium exueret, inter Mosam Rhenumque trium et viginti milium spatio fossam perduxit, qua incerta Oceani vitarentur. insigne tamen triumphi indulsit Caesar, quamvis bellum negavisset.* (11.20.2)

The narrator's mockery of these actions being awarded an honorary triumph is clear. The original description of these actions stands as the clearest proof of this – the canal is dug between these rivers only because Corbulo's soldiers had been denied their war and had nothing else to do. Corbulo received a triumph for having his soldiers do busy work. The canal surely was legitimately helpful, but in no way deserving of such a high *military* honor. The narrator makes sure to draw this to his reader's attention in the final sentence: "Caesar bestowed upon him an honorary triumph, although he had denied him a war." This sentence clearly reminds the reader that Corbulo had somehow been awarded a military honor despite the fact that he was not engaged in a war.

That the narrator was citing this award specifically in an effort to draw attention to his ideas about the role of triumphs in the principate is made more evident when his account is compared to that of Dio. While in Dio's account, Corbulo is still recalled from his army specifically in order that he not gain any more renown (Κλαύδιος...τήν τε γὰρ ἀρετὴν αὐτοῦ...μαθὼν οὐκ ἐπέτρεψεν αὐτῷ ἐπὶ πλέον αὐξηθῆναι, Dio/Xiph. 60.30.4), the triumph that he receives for this year is pretty clearly described as having been awarded for his campaign against the Germans and not for the canal. Dio narrates the event thus: "Even so, he nonetheless obtained an honorary triumph. Having gotten his army back…he ordered his army to dig a canal all the way between the Rhine and the Meuse" (τιμῶν μέντοι ἐπινικίων καὶ ὡς ἔτυχε. πιστευθεὶς δὲ πάλιν τὸ στράτευμα...διετάφρευσε δι' αὐτῶν πᾶν τὸ μεταξὺ τοῦ τε Ῥήνου καὶ τοῦ Μόσου, Dio/Xiphil. 60.30.6). The order of the narration of this story in Dio's account makes it very clear

that Corbulo is awarded this triumph *before* returning to his army and having them dig the canal between the Rhine and the Meuse. This, then, suggests that Tacitus has shaped his account of this event specifically in order to highlight the cheapness of honorary triumphs in the principate of Claudius (and later of Nero).[38]

If the narrator's opinion of the nature of honorary triumphs was not clear from the previous example, he makes sure to clarify in the very next section:

> Not much later, Curtius Rufus obtained the same honor because he had opened up a mine for mining silver in Mattiacan territory. The profit from it was slight and short-lived, but the work was destructive to the legions…Because similar things were being suffered throughout many provinces, [the soldiery] composed a secret letter in the name of the armies, begging the emperor that he grant the honorary triumphs to [the generals] *before* an army was entrusted to them.
>
> *Nec multo post Curtius Rufus eundem honorem adipiscitur, qui in agro Mattiaco recluserat specus quaerendis venis argenti; unde tenuis fructus nec in longum fuit, at legionibus cum damno labor… quia plures per provincias similia tolerabantur, componit occultas litteras nomine exercituum, precantium imperatorem, ut, quibus permissurus esset exercitus, triumphalia ante tribueret.* (11.20.3)

In this section, the narrator makes clear his belief that the awarding of honorary triumphs was getting out of hand and also asserts that the Roman army was aware of it as well. First of all, his

[38] Whether or not Dio used Tacitus is very difficult to tell – Goodyear 1972, in discussing their relationship, concludes that "In this situation one must despair of certainty" (180).

description of the mine's profits as "slight and short-lived" shows that, on top of the fact that this was, as above, not a military action, it was not even a very useful one. Further, its characterization as "destructive to the legions" makes this action seem even less beneficial. The attitude of the soldiers toward these ridiculous triumphs is exhibited in the narrator's description of them writing a letter to Claudius and asking him to grant generals their triumphs before they subjected their armies to such tasks.[39]

There are also generals in the later books of the *Annales* who obtain honorary triumphs for their military achievements, though even these men are portrayed as having not done as much to earn their triumphs as one would expect. Pomponius Secundus, governor of Upper Germany, is one of these examples. His military accomplishments against the Chatti do not seem necessarily deserving of a triumph. He splits his army into two forces – one force surrounds (*circumvenere,* 12.27.3) the Chatti and frees some Roman soldiers who had been taken captive, but are not described as actually causing any harm to the Chattan soldiers. The other half of his forces do meet the Chatti in a battle, but when they return to camp, Pomponius prepares them for a Chattan counterattack. Pomponius' preparation of his army for a counterattack implies that the original battle was not terribly damaging to the Chatti's forces, else they would not have had the option of a counter. The Chatti eventually surrender to the Romans, but the narrator specifically mentions that this was due to their realization that they had enemies pressing upon them not only from the Roman side, but from the Cheruscan as well (*illi metu, ne hinc Romanus, inde Cherusci… circumgrederentur, legatos in urbem et obsides misere,* 12.28.2). It is here that the narrator says that Pomponius was awarded an honorary triumph for his actions, which the

[39] Malloch 2013 describes the soldiers as "complaining about the bestowal of military rewards for non-military achievements" (300).

narrator has above described as the surrounding of some enemies and the freeing of some slaves on one side (with no implication of any battle taking place), and a relatively minor victory on the other. The narrator further belittles Pomponius' achievement with his closing remarks about the triumph, calling it "a modest part of his fame in posterity, among whom the renown of his poems surpassed it" (*modica pars famae eius apud posteros, in quis carminum gloria praecellit*, 12.28.2). That a triumph, honorary or otherwise, could be a "modest part" of somebody's fame truly speaks to the diminished importance of the triumph in the principate.

Though the narrator's contempt toward the awarding of this triumph is not nearly as blatant as his feelings toward Corbulo's and Rufus' triumphs (described above), the implication that Pomponius' actions were not *militarily* worthy of a triumph is still likely. When used in a military context, *circumvenio* never specifically entails killing in the *Annales*. It is sometimes specifically opposed to killing (i.e., *caesi aut circumventi*, 3.74.2), sometimes accompanied with a different verb that indicates that killing took place (i.e., *navium quasdam…circumvenere barbari, praefecto cohortis et plerisque auxiliarium interfectis*, 12.17.3), and often is virtually identical to *circumsideo* (e.g., 12.16.2, 12.50.2). Further, the *circumventi* are often explicitly shown to have survived their surrounding (e.g., 1.65.6, 12.14.2-3), and only rarely is their fate left ambiguous (14.32.2, 15.4.2), but this ambiguity seems to be due to the fact that the *circumventi* are not men of much significance in either instance. So from the standpoint of numbers of soldiers, Pomponius' actions against the Chatti do not seem to have accomplished much.

To further diminish the importance of Pomponius' triumph, the only other actions taken against the Chatti by a Roman army that are narrated in the *Annales* are led by none other than Germanicus, who also earns a triumph for his efforts. Germanicus' actions against the Chatti are

significantly more noteworthy than Pomponius' – he burns down their capital city (1.56.4), and he later sends Gaius Silius against them with a force of 30,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry (2.25.1) and, though the result of this campaign is not specifically described, their very limited presence in the rest of the work implies that the Chatti were severely weakened by this defeat. The contrast between the narrator's descriptions of Germanicus' large-scale, and possibly devastating, operations against the Chatti and the much smaller, and far less devastating, actions of Pomponius Secundus also draws a strong contrast between the sorts of actions that warrant an honorary triumph, and this contrast does not reflect positively upon the progression of the principate.

The negative effect that these honorary triumphs are described as having on the military state of the principate is made even worse by the way that many generals are described as reacting once they have attained a certain level of success. It is frequently the case that a general begins putting forth much less effort in his military duties thereafter. A specific example of this phenomenon is described by the narrator in the case of Publius Ostorius. Ostorius is described as winning a number of battles in Britain and being awarded an honorary triumph for doing so. After this honor, the narrator comments that his affairs had been successful until that point, but began to waver shortly thereafter (*prosperis ad id rebus eius, mox ambiguis*, 12.38.2).

Though the author attributes this twist of fate to the defeat of Caratacus (either because the Romans believed the chief threat had been removed, or because the Silures began fighting harder because of his death, 12.38.2), the actions of Ostorius' successor, Aulus Didius, seem to characterize the attitude that imperial generals had toward their various successes: "Didius, heavy with age and because of his great supply of honors, considered it sufficient to act through aides and to ward off the enemy" (*Didius, senectute gravis et multa copia honorum, per*

*ministros agere et arcere hostem satis habebat,* 12.40.5).[40] Here the narrator is specifically attributing Didius' lack of offensive effort to the fact that he had already attained a certain level of success. He is not lacking in manpower, nor is there a lack of enemies to fight – he stops fighting "because of his great supply of honors."

The easy acquisition of honorary triumphs, as well as the generals' reactions to their acquisitions of these triumphs, seem to be indicative of generalship in the Claudian and Neronian principates as described by Tacitus. Both of these factors can be seen as reactions to the notion that generals needed to keep their popularity at a level inferior to that of the *princeps* – the easier acquisition of triumphs being a reaction from the side of the *princeps* to satisfy his generals' need for some tangible evidence of their success, and the reaction to the acquisition of the triumphs from the side of the generals to temper the degree of their success. More often than not in the *Annales,* the combination of these two factors leads to generals who, militarily, do not do much.

## Corbulo

The exception to this sluggishness in generalship is Domitius Corbulo – he, unlike any other generals as described in the *Annales,* is successful in his campaigns and also retains them for long periods of time. This is due to the specific way in which he balances his traditional military victories with his more diplomatic victories and his deference to the *princeps.*

[40] Furneaux 1908 calls *multa copia honorum* an ablative of quality (110), but surely there is also some degree of causality expressed here, as well as with *senectute gravis.* Otherwise neither phrase contributes any additional meaning to the sentence, and Tacitus is surely not one to use unnecessary words.

In a traditional military sense, Corbulo's Syrian campaigns are successful throughout. In the year 58, he captured the Armenian stronghold of Volandum, as well as other smaller fortifications (13.39.1), and later in that same year he completely destroyed the Armenian capital of Artaxata (13.41.2). In the year 60, he captured the city of Tigranocerta as well as the stronghold of Legerda, before marching his army into Syria (14.23-26). These traditional military successes are accompanied by traditional military motivations – Corbulo's reason for the destruction of Artaxata is described thus by the narrator:

> …because it was not able to be held without a significant force because of the size of its walls, and we did not have enough resources which could be divided for maintaining the garrison and pursuing the war, nor, if it were left intact and unprotected, was there any usefulness or glory in having captured it.
>
> *quia nec teneri poterant sine valido praesidio ob magnitudinem moenium, nec id nobis virium erat, quod firmando praesidio et capessendo bello divideretur, vel, si integra et incustodita relinquerentur, nulla in eo utilitas aut gloria, quod capta essent.* (13.41.2)

This is the sort of motivation that one would expect from a Julius Caesar or a Germanicus – there is no glory in leaving Artaxata behind to be enjoyed by the enemies, so it must be destroyed. Corbulo, a general who had already received an honorary triumph (11.20.2), was pursuing further glory.

What the narrator seems to portray as the chief reason for Corbulo's continued pursuit of glory going unpunished is the fact that he tempers these glorious military victories with much more subtle, diplomatic ones. For example, in the aftermath of the capture of Legerda, the

narrator describes Corbulo as arranging his troops in such a way that his enemy would have to give up on fighting a war with the Romans: "after he had sent forth Verulanus the legate with the auxiliaries and he himself had hastened the legions, [Corbulo] compelled [Tiridates] to depart from afar and dismiss the hope of a war" (*praemisso cum auxiliis Verulano legato atque ipse legionibus citis abire procul ac spem belli omittere subegit,* 14.26.1). It seems unlikely that this action, coming in the immediate aftermath of the captures of multiple enemy strongholds, was taken due to a lack of confidence in the odds of his army's success. In fact Ash, in her discussion of the differences between Tacitus' Corbulo and the one described in Frontinus' *Strategemata*, describes Tacitus as "draw[ing] attention to Corbulo's subversive but efficient fighting techniques, where intimidation supercedes direct military action."[41] The above-described scene of the aftermath of the sack of Legerda perfectly illustrates this – instead of committing to another battle, Corbulo intimidates his foes into a hasty retreat. What seems likely, then, is that in describing the motivation for this action the narrator is able to emphasize Corbulo's use of a more moderate style of generalship in which he tempers his successes through, amongst other devices, intimidation, lest his popularity exceed a safe level.

That the narrator is making an effort to describe Corbulo as purposely restraining his success is evident throughout *Annales* 15 in particular – he is often portrayed as having thoughts that indicate just this. Upon hearing that the Parthian king Vologaeses was planning an assault on the Romans in Armenia, Corbulo first sends out two legions to defend the province, secretly advising them to act with composure, rather than haste (*occulto praecepto, compositius cuncta quam festinantius agerent,* 15.3.1). Immediately thereafter, he sends a letter to Nero, letting him

[41] Ash 2006: 370, where she points out Frontinus' narration of the siege of Tigranocerta, at which Corbulo is described as beheading one of the captured Armenian nobles and launching his head, via ballista, into the midst of a war council, which causes an immediate surrender of the city (Frontin. *Str.* 2.9.5).

know that Armenia needed its own general, because hostilities were about to break out there. The reason that he does this, the narrator comments, is because "he obviously preferred to have a war than to fight one" (*quippe bellum habere quam gerere malebat, scripseratque Caesari proprio duce opus esse, qui Armeniam defenderet,* 15.3.1). This sentence is interesting in a couple of ways. First, the narrator's use of the adverb *quippe* could potentially be making a strong statement about his beliefs about military matters under the principate. A very plausible reading of the sense of this adverb could be that Corbulo "obviously" preferred to have a war at hand for administrating, rather than to fight one, because he realized that fighting an additional successful war would bring him to a level of renown that was not safe for him, whereas having a war at hand would allow him the opportunity for further diplomatic affairs.[42] Second, Corbulo's characterization as immediately requesting that the coming war be given over to a different general speaks to the change in generals' attitudes. Where in the republic we would see Marius trying to pull some strings in order to steal the command against Mithridates from Sulla, to whom it had been voted by the senate, here we see Corbulo voluntarily requesting that a different general be appointed to fight a war that had shown up right on his own doorstep. This must have been motivated by the same thinking that led Aelius Gracilis to warn Lucius Vetus not to lead his army into another's province, lest he bring danger upon himself (and that wasn't even for a campaign!). It seems that the narrator assumes a level at which a general's fame started to endanger his life, and describes his characters as reacting to this idea. Corbulo is further described as having some idea of this when he sends word to Vologaeses "thinking that his

[42] Miller 1973: 49: "the phrase could (just) mean that Corbulo wanted to avoid open warfare with Parthia: but…it seems likely that Tacitus is presenting Corbulo as ambitious. If he completed the campaign or suffered defeat (both possible in *bellum gerere*), he might be recalled: to keep it simmering (*habere*) would ensure that he was needed to supervise it." This description coincides perfectly with my proposal of Corbulo's realization that diplomacy is equally as important to generalship as actually fighting, with the additional benefit of not endangering him with the *princeps.*

fortune ought to be restrained, even though his affairs were successful" (*quamvis secundis rebus suis, moderandum fortunae ratus,* 15.5.1).

The description of Corbulo's attitude toward generalship paints a picture of a general who realizes that diplomacy is just as important as tactics, and that his diplomatic successes will not arouse the amount of danger that his military ones might have. Corbulo's belief that diplomacy and battle are two equal halves of the same whole is demonstrated in his reaction to his associate Caesennius Paetus' military failures. When Vologaeses, having defeated Paetus' army, requests that his peace talks with Corbulo take place at the same location at which he had defeated Paetus, Corbulo is described as thinking that "the dissimilarity of the result would increase his own glory" (*dissimilitudo fortunae gloriam augeret,* 15.28.2). Here we see the narrator portraying Corbulo as specifically equating the glory that Paetus lost in battle with the glory that he himself would gain through a successful negotiation.

## Why Corbulo?

Corbulo is described by the narrator as quite an anomaly in the later books of the *Annales.* He continues to win significant battles even after he is awarded an honorary triumph, he fights in numerous campaigns across a span of many years, and he is able to strike a balance between diplomacy and battle that keeps him from being deprived of his army and called back to Rome. Though through his portrayal of other generals the narrator seems to suggest that the military has become useless under the principate, with many either obtaining an honorary triumph and then resting on their laurels or even never giving much effort in the first place, his

description of Corbulo shows that there is still hope for some continued renown for the Roman military.

Corbulo's career is, as described by the narrator, very similar to that of Germanicus.[43] Consul at a relatively young age (Germanicus was 27, Corbulo 32), they each received their first command in Lower Germany and fought campaigns against the Cherusci, from which they were both recalled before completion, but for which they received triumphs nonetheless. After a brief respite in Rome, they both were then sent to settle affairs in Armenia. Tacitus' emphasis on Corbulo as the paragon of the new imperial style of generalship also seems to be motivated by factors other than the historical facts of his long-enduring exploits and their similarities to those of Germanicus, though. Corbulo and Germanicus are also both described quite similarly in regards to their personalities as generals.

One point that the narrator describes both Germanicus and Corbulo as having emphasized to their soldiers is the importance of adhering to the "traditional ways." In the speech that the narrator attributes to Germanicus in his address to the revolting German legions, the very first thing he asks the soldiers is "Where is your soldierly self-restraint? Where is the honor of traditional discipline?" (*ubi modestia militaris, ubi veteris disciplinae decus,* 1.35.1). One of the first actions Corbulo is described as taking when he arrives among the legions of Lower Germany, who are described as "unaccustomed to work and labor" (*operum et laboris ignavas*), is that he "led them back to the traditional ways" (*veterem ad morem reduxit,* 11.18.2). Surely, taking into account the description of the legions as lazy, we are supposed to recognize that a

[43] Ash 2006, though she does not attribute the similarity in their careers to Tacitus' purposeful characterization of these men, also points out the similarity: "The careers of Germanicus, Corbulo, Antonius Primus, and Agricola, despite individual differences, all follow similar broad trajectories" (375).

chief aspect of the *veterem morem* to which Corbulo led his armies was a renewed sense of discipline. So we see here that both of these generals, upon first arriving among their new troops, notice their soldiers' lack of discipline and they both recall the traditional (*vetus*) ways of the army in order to fix this problem.

Germanicus and Corbulo share some similarities on the battlefield as well. One important trait that they share is that they are both portrayed as having such well-executed systems of information-gathering that they can anticipate their enemies' attacks. An example of Germanicus' preparation is provided in this description from his German campaign: "None of this was unknown to [Germanicus]. Places and plans, things both disclosed and hidden, he knew, and he turned the strategies of the enemies into their own destruction" (*nihil ex eis Caesari incognitum: consilia locos, prompta occulta noverat astusque hostium in perniciem ipsis vertebat,* 2.20.1). Corbulo's well-informed nature as a general is described in a much less detailed fashion: "[Tiridates] suddenly surrounded the Roman column, though our leader was not unaware" (*repente agmen Romanum circumfundit, non ignaro duce nostro*, 13.40.1). Although the description might not be as eloquent as that of Germanicus, the result is still the same – the battle that follows this statement is immediately followed by the complete destruction of the Armenian capital of Artaxata at Corbulo's hands. So both generals, in addition to emphasizing traditional discipline among the soldiery, are described as having been themselves disciplined in the management of their information-gathering, which leads to their success over their enemies.

Their emphasis on discipline did not make them only militarily successful, though. Their military successes reveal their popularity among the Roman people, who are described as being nervous about what the popularity of each of these men might result in. During Germanicus' triumph for the campaign against the Germans that he was forbidden to complete, the Roman

people are described as being overcome by a "hidden fear" (*occulta formido*) that Germanicus will not be long-lived, since "the loves of the Roman people are brief and unfortunate" (*breves et infaustos populi Romani amores,* 2.41.3). In a similar fashion, Corbulo's successful (though also incomplete) campaign against the Germans is described as being considered "inauspicious to some" (*apud quosdam sinistra*). The people to whom this thought is occurring proclaim "but if he succeeds, an outstanding man endangers peace and is grievous to a cowardly emperor" (*sin prospere egisset, formidolosum paci virum insignem et ignavo principi praegravem,* 11.19.3). Though there are other moments throughout the *Annales* in which the idea that success is frightening to the emperor is discussed, these are the only two instances in which the Roman people, in reaction to a specific success, lament the possibility of the successful general's downfall.

An additional, very particular, sort of popularity that these generals share is that exhibited by foreigners and, more specifically, enemies. When Germanicus dies, he (according to the narrator) is mourned throughout the empire: "Foreign nations and kings mourned: he exhibited such generosity toward his allies, such clemency toward his enemies" (*indoluere exterae nationes regesque: tanta illi comitas in socios, mansuetudo in hostes,* 2.72.2). Though the allegiance of the mourning foreigners is not explicitly described, the phrase immediately following seems to be included as a clarification of the reasons for the foreign peoples' mourning. If this is the case, then we can assume that the *socios* and the *hostes* are two subsets of the *exterae nationes regesque*, with their different reasons for mourning him being described. Germanicus' lack of clemency as described by the narrator throughout the German campaigns

seems to indicate that the narrator is going out of his way to describe Germanicus as likable to his enemies, even if it was not the case.[44]

Corbulo's popularity among his enemies is described much more straightforwardly. When Corbulo first arrived into the east, there was a dispute about whether an exchange of hostages with King Vologaeses in Syria should be conducted by Corbulo or by Quadratus, the governor of the province. Vologaeses' people are described as preferring to deal with Corbulo, a man "with a certain favor, even from his enemies" (*inclinatione quadam etiam hostium,* 13.9.2). He is later described in a similarly straightforward fashion: "Neither hostile nor odious was the name of Corbulo considered, even to the barbarians, and for this reason they believed that his counsel was trustworthy" (*non infensum nec cum hostili odio Corbulonis nomen etiam barbaris habebatur, eoque consilium eius fidum credebant,* 15.28.1). Corbulo's description as trustworthy to his enemies, unlike Germanicus', is supported by the narrative of the *Annales*. If it is the case, as argued above, that the narrator's description of Germanicus is not entirely true in this respect, then his effort to make that point about Germanicus can be seen as his creating one more example with which he could liken Corbulo and Germanicus.

As can be seen, Corbulo and Germanicus share many personal traits, all of which have to do with their style of generalship. Though in the "big picture" their actions are quite different (Germanicus charges forth into battle at every opportunity, in a very republican fashion, while Corbulo tempers his victories on the battlefield with victories at the negotiating table, the mark of the new imperial general), they are described by the narrator in a very similar fashion in the way that they conducted their campaigns on a smaller scale – they kept their soldiers disciplined,

[44] For further discussion on this, see Goodyear 1981 *ad loc*.

they kept themselves well-informed, the Romans worried about their well-being, and their enemies respected them.

It cannot be a coincidence that Corbulo, whom the narrator presents as the embodiment of the new imperial style of generalship, is both historically and literarily likened to Germanicus, Tacitus' "hero," throughout the *Annales*. The message that Tacitus seems to be imparting through this similarity is that, no matter how much generalship might have been forced to change during the principate, there was still hope of military glory. He seems to be trying to show, through his similar descriptions of Germanicus and Corbulo, that although there was an overwhelming number of examples of generals who gave themselves over to sluggishness and ditch-digging in order to win their renown under the principate, it was still possible for generals to win their renown through the sort of *virtus* that Germanicus had displayed during his campaigns.

An additional possible reason for the significance attributed to Corbulo in particular in the *Annales* is an effort on Tacitus' part to condemn Trajan's foreign policy choices concerning the Parthians.[45] While Trajan refuses to crown a Parthian as the king of Armenia but instead amasses a force to fight the Parthians over control of Armenia, Corbulo is described by the narrator of the *Annales* as acknowledging the potential conflict with the Parthians but eventually settling things with them diplomatically. The significant failure of Trajan's expedition, on which he would end up losing his life, surely provided to the Romans additional proof that peaceful dealings with the Parthians were the only plausible ones. This seems to be one of the strongest explanations for Tacitus' emphasis on Corbulo in the later books of the *Annales* – his successful

[45] For discussion of this aspect of Corbulo's presence, see Syme 1958, 492-7 and Vervaet 1999.

negotiations with the Parthians in Armenia would stand in stark contrast to the failed military campaign of Trajan and would reaffirm the idea that the only beneficial attitude to have toward the Parthians was a peaceful one.

## Conclusion

Corbulo's significant presence in the later books of the *Annales* seems to have been motivated by two factors, both of which emphasized his role as a military man who successfully conducted his business through negotiation with his enemies. From his early descriptions of Germanicus' campaigns, Tacitus' goal in his narration of military matters in the *Annales* has been to illustrate to his readers that military success was still very possible under the principate, but that it could not be achieved in the same way as it previously had been. He does this by tracing the progression from Tiberius' jealous attitude toward successful men, with specific emphasis on his attitude toward Germanicus, to Corbulo's new style of generalship and the longevity of his career under Nero. Corbulo's emphasis on negotiation, especially when viewed in contrast with Germanicus and Trajan's careers, strongly suggests that Tacitus wanted his readers to realize that military success in the age of the *princeps* was only achievable through peaceful means.

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