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A Commentary on Selected Chapters of Tacitus *Annales* 13

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Abstract

The following thesis provides a commentary on chapters 15–25 (inclusive) of Tacitus *Annales* 13 which form part of Tacitus’ annalistic narrative of the years AD 55 and 56, narrating the murder of Britannicus and its aftermath, Junia Silana’s conspiracy against Agrippina, Pallas’ and Burrus’ alleged plot against Nero, measures taken to quell unrest in theatres, and the suicide of Julius Montanus. The commentary is on a similar scale to those of Malloch (2013) on *Annales* 11 and Woodman (2018) on *Annales* 4 which are published in the *Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries* series (often termed the ‘orange’ series), with the eventual aim being (time and finances permitting) to publish a commentary on the entirety (58 chapters) of *Annales* 13; I have already written commentary sections on chapters 1–14, 26–30, 42–43 and 49 (which due to space constraints I have been unable to include in my doctoral thesis) with a publishable commentary on the entire work in mind. As required by the genre, the bulk of the commentary consists of detailed notes on specific *lemmata*, outlining points of linguistic, literary, historical and textual interest (including parallel passages, allusions and evaluations of conjectural emendations where necessary) in a given lemma. While it is not possible to include a complete critical text of *Annales* 13 with a critical apparatus within the constraints of the 80,000-word doctoral thesis, I have collated the primary manuscript in which *Annales* 13 is preserved (the eleventh-century Laurentianus plut. 68.2, known to Tacitean scholars as the ‘Second Medicean’ or M and available to consult online) from afresh for the entirety of *Annales* 13 and have established a text of my own which can be observed in the *lemmata*; I have clearly indicated in my textual notes where my text differs from either the primary manuscript or the most recent critical edition (the Teubner of Wellesley [Leipzig 1986]) and have explained my reasons for deviating from these. I have also consulted those *codices recentiores* which have been digitised by the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana and the Vatican Library; as their archetype survives, these are useful only as sources of conjectures. My notes on *lemmata* are preceded by four introductory sections (as would be found in a published commentary) which set out broader interpretative themes in *Annales* 13, namely the government of the Neronian principate, Tacitus’ depiction of women and gender roles, Tacitus’ language and style, and the manuscript tradition of *Annales* 11–16; I will produce in due course an introductory section on the structure of the annalistic narrative of *Annales* 13, which will be a useful counterpart to the planned commentary on the whole book. It is hoped that, while a complete commentary on *Annales* 13 is not possible within the constraints of a doctoral thesis, a balance between detailed textual analysis and consideration of broader literary and historical themes can be achieved.

All dates subsequently given in the work are AD unless otherwise indicated. Abbreviations of classical authors and texts follow the conventions of the most recent volume of the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (Berlin 2017); other abbreviations will be explained in the following key.

Edward Millband
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Key to Abbreviations

<i>AE</i>	<i>L'Année Épigraphique</i>
<i>ARA</i>	Carandini, A., Carafa, P. eds. 2013. <i>Atlante di Roma Antica: Biografia e ritratti della città</i> . 3 rd edition. Milan.
<i>BMCRE</i>	Mattingly, H. ed. 1923. <i>Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum: Volume 1: Augustus to Vitellius</i> . London.
<i>BNP</i>	<i>Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World: Antiquity</i> (15 volumes; Leiden, 2006–2011).
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>G-G</i>	Gerber, A., Greef, A. 1903. <i>Lexicon Taciteum</i> . Leipzig.
<i>H-S</i>	Hofmann, J. B., Szantyr, A. 1965. <i>Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik</i> . Munich.
<i>ILS</i>	Dessau, H. ed. 1892–1916. <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> (2 volumes; Berlin).
<i>Inscr. Eph.</i>	<i>Die Inschriften von Ephesos</i> (8 volumes; Bonn, 1979–1984).
<i>Inscr. Fayoum</i>	Bernand, E. 1975. <i>Receuil des inscriptions grecques du Fayoum</i> . (3 volumes). Leiden.
<i>K-S</i>	Kühner, R., Stegmann, C. 1912. <i>Ausführliche Grammatik der lateinischen Sprache: Zweiter Teil: Satzlehre</i> . 2 nd edition. Hanover.
<i>Neue-Wagener</i>	Neue, F., Wagener, C. 1892–1902. <i>Formenlehre der lateinischen Sprache</i> (2 volumes; Leipzig).
<i>OLD</i>	<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i>
<i>PIR</i>	<i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani</i>
<i>RIC</i>	Sutherland, C. H. V. ed. 1984. <i>The Roman Imperial Coinage</i> . 2 nd edition. London.
<i>Schanz-Hosius</i>	Schanz, M., Hosius, C. 1907. <i>Geschichte der römischen Literatur bis zum Gesetzgebungswerk des Kaisers Justinian</i> . Munich.
<i>TLL</i>	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i> (11 volumes; Leipzig/Berlin, 1900–2017)
<i>Vogt Alex.</i>	Vogt, J. 1924. <i>Die alexandrinischen Münzen. Grundlegung einer alexandrinischen Kaisergeschichte</i> . Stuttgart.

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The Government of the Empire under Nero

Tacitus' depiction of the government of the Roman empire under Nero centres around the relationship between the emperor and three other interlinked organs of state, namely the Senate, imperial appointees and the military. The Augustan settlement of 27 BC provided for a 'restored' Republic, whereby despite the presence of a dynastic emperor, Augustus, as a *de facto* head of state, the Senate regained (*de iure*, at least) the majority of the legislative functions which it had enjoyed under the republican system prior to the civil wars; it also acquired some new judicial functions.¹ In the Augustan rhetoric, the emperor was conceived not as a monarch, but rather as the *princeps senatus*, 'the leading man of the Senate'.² This was in itself a republican term used to denote the most senior serving senator (generally a senior consular).³ Although the phrase was not used in antiquity, the conception of the emperor as *primus inter pares* is helpful in determining how his relationship *vis-à-vis* the Senate was originally conceived. The emperor was himself a consular senator who enjoyed the same privileges as all other senators of that rank. He had the right to hold the office of consul; he was entitled to offer *sententiae* during the *interrogatio* whenever he was not presiding, like any other senator.⁴ The Senate, however, conferred upon every emperor powers greater than those exercised by any other member of the House: he was granted perpetual *tribunicia potestas* which afforded him the right to intervene in senatorial proceedings whenever he wished and to veto those *sententiae* and *senatusconsulta* which he felt to be at odds with the interests of justice (*ius intercessionis*).⁵

Moreover, the emperor was granted *consulare imperium* in Rome, enabling him to summon the Senate, preside over it and propose motions for discussion (*ius primae relationis*) even when he was not consul,⁶ and *proconsulare imperium* (the powers exercised by a *proconsul* or provincial governor for a one-year term under the Republic) outside the *pomerium* for an unlimited period.⁷ This made the emperor the *de iure* governor of all Roman territory; under the Augustan settlement of 27 BC, however, it was agreed that (except in times of crisis) the emperor would not interfere in the governance of a limited number of provinces termed *publicae prouvinciae* whose day-to-day administration fell to the Senate's representatives under the corporate body's general oversight.⁸ These powers were confirmed by a *senatusconsultum* on the day of the emperor's accession; this became a *Lex de imperio* once it had been ratified by the *comitia*, codifying within Roman law the powers which the Senate had granted to the emperor.⁹ It is not difficult to see the paradox inherent in this arrangement:

¹ Garnsey 1970: 17, Brunt 1977: 114, 116, Talbert 1984: 164, 460–1, Drinkwater 2019: 21.

² For the term, cf. *RG* 7.2 (for its Greek equivalent, cf. Dio 53.1.3).

³ Talbert 1984: 164.

⁴ Brunt 1977: 114, Talbert 1984: 164–5, Drinkwater 2019: 21, 84.

⁵ Cf. 43.5, *RG* 10 and see further Brunt 1977: 96–9, Talbert 1984: 165, Drinkwater 2019: 83–4.

⁶ Cf. Dio 53.32.5. The emperor was also the only senator with the right to propose a *relatio*, a motion for discussion, when he was not present at a meeting of the Senate; he generally communicated by letter his request for a *relatio* to be brought. See further Talbert 1984: 165.

⁷ Brunt 1977: 99.

⁸ For the term *publicae prouvinciae*, cf. 4.2. For the division of provinces under the Augustan settlement, cf. Strab. 3.4.20, 17.3.25, Dio 53.12.1 and see further Talbert 1984: 393, Bowman 1996: 345–6. Governors for these provinces continued to be appointed by lot from among the praetorian senators (in the case of the lesser public provinces) and the consulars (in the cases of Africa and Asia); see Bowman 1996: 369–70. Imperial intervention was required if the Senate was unable to appoint a suitable governor; cf. 3.32.1–2, 35.1–3 with Woodman-Martin 1996: 283–4. The so-called 'Cyrene edicts' illustrate well the extent of the emperor's intervention in the government of a public province; see further De Visscher 1940: 62–9, Oliver 1989 no. 8, Lintott 1993: 115–16, Hurler 2019: 126.

⁹ Brunt 1977: 99, 1984: 429, Drinkwater 2019: 83–4.

no emperor could accede to the Principate unless the Senate had agreed to grant him perpetual *tribunicia potestas*, *consulare imperium* and *proconsulare imperium*, and sovereignty lay *de iure* with the Senate and the Roman people as it did under the Republic, but once an emperor had received his powers, it was impossible to depose him without insurrection or civil war.¹⁰ Furthermore, if an emperor had acceded to the Principate as a result of civil war, the Senate had no choice but to issue a decree which granted him his powers and confirmed his accession.¹¹

For the majority of the Principate's early history, emperors used their autocratic power sparingly; realising that the Senate could never feasibly be disbanded, they saw the Augustan settlement of 27 BC as an effective way to end civil strife in the long term, and realised that stability in the Roman state relied upon the emperor's developing a cordial working relationship with the Senate, the military and the Roman people.¹² As a result, emperors were generally keen (at least at the start of their respective principates) to uphold the traditional legislative functions of the Senate. In *Annales* 13 Tacitus shows how the Neronian Senate fulfilled a productive role in enacting legislation and bringing members of the senatorial order to justice, without undue interference (or indeed interest) from the emperor. The first four years of Nero's principate (sometimes termed the *Quinquennium Neronis*)¹³ were marked by a discernible return to republican ideals of *libertas*; Nero initially strove to act as the *ciuilis princeps*.¹⁴

The Form of the Neronian Principate

Nero's *dies imperii* is recorded as 13th October, 54, the day of Claudius' death, on which the Senate passed a decree confirming his accession to the Principate and granted him *tribunicia potestas* and *proconsulare imperium*.¹⁵ This senatorial decree was then ratified by the *comitia* on 4th December which legally codified his powers under a *Lex de imperio Neronis*.¹⁶ Tacitus records that following the state funeral of Claudius on 18th October, Nero addressed the Senate with an oration (probably composed by Seneca) which set out the proposed nature of his future relationship with the corporate body.¹⁷ He promised that he would restore to the Senate the judicial role which it had regularly fulfilled under Augustus and Tiberius, namely the trial of senators (who would have the opportunity to be tried by their peers) and of criminals of other social classes who had committed serious crimes (particularly *maiestas*) against the Roman state; Claudius had increasingly deprived the Senate of this judicial role by trying senators by himself (accompanied by his wife and select members of his *consilium*)

¹⁰ Brunt 1977: 116, Drinkwater 2019: 84. Although Wiseman (2019: 10–12) correctly asserts the continued sovereignty of the Senate and people under Augustus, he seems to underestimate the evidently monarchical nature of Augustus' position.

¹¹ See further Brunt 1977: 106–7 on the cases of Otho, Vitellius and Vespasian.

¹² Drinkwater 2019: 21, 84. Consular senators who commanded large armies as *legati* in imperial provinces posed a particularly significant risk to the *princeps*' security. On the emperor's need to ensure the goodwill of the *plebs* see also Yavetz 1988: 12, 34, Horsfall 2003: 39–40, Drinkwater 2019: 10–11.

¹³ Cf. Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 5.2 (who attributes the term to Trajan). For detailed discussion of the implications of this term, see Lepper 1957: 95–103, Murray 1965: 41–61, Griffin 1976: 423–6, Cizek 1982: 93, Griffin 1984: 37–8, 43, Rudich 1993: 11, Drinkwater 2019: 27 n. 177.

¹⁴ 4.2–5.1. Nero wears the *corona ciuica*, a symbol of the citizen body's liberty, on coins from 55; cf. *RIC* I² p. 148 nos. 1–3 and see further Griffin 1976: 115, 1984: 62, 120, Drinkwater 2019: 22 n. 130. On the virtue of *ciuitas* see further Wallace-Hadrill 1982: 32–48.

¹⁵ The precise date is recorded in the *Acta Arualia*, for which see Brunt 1977: 98–9.

¹⁶ Lintott 1965: 281–2, Brunt 1977: 99.

¹⁷ 2.3–3.1, 4.1–5.1

intra cubiculum.¹⁸ Claudius' practice was interpreted not only as a dishonour to the imperial Senate (depriving it of an established function and removed from its members their right to be tried by their peers) but also as an anathema to the interests of justice: the fate of the accused would no longer be dictated by the prevailing opinion of the senators (who numbered between 400 and 600)¹⁹ but rather the prejudices of the emperor, the influential members of his *domus* and his protégés, which no defence-speech by the accused, however articulate, could counteract.

Nero's promise (in Tacitus' words) to separate his domestic business from that of the state (4.2 *discretam domum et rem publicam*) was an extension of the proposed moratorium on trials *intra cubiculum*. On account of their considerable personal wealth (every senator's census rating equalled or exceeded one million sesterces)²⁰ and vast estates, all senators counted among their household staff a number of freedmen tasked with secretarial and administrative work (including book-keeping and answering correspondence); since the emperor was himself a senator, none of his peers would have objected to the fact that his household contained libertine secretaries, except in those cases when the emperor allowed his freedmen secretaries' sphere of influence to extend beyond the private home and into the business of the state, such as in the financing of building projects or the regulation of the *aerarium*; such intrusions (by freedmen such as Callistus, Pallas and Narcissus) had become widespread in the last years of Claudius.²¹ While the blurring of boundaries between the emperor's household and the state was (to a degree) inevitable given the emperor's *de facto* status as head of state (*pater patriae*) as well as *paterfamilias*,²² the excessive intrusion into the *res publica* by members of the imperial household ineligible for senatorial office (specifically freedmen and women) was felt to threaten the magistrates' traditional roles and thereby the senatorial order's dignity, particularly as such persons were accountable only to the emperor, not to the Senate.²³ During the same address to the Senate, Nero curried favour with the House by relieving quaestors-elect of the burden of staging gladiatorial shows,²⁴ thereby not only removing an unattractive financial imposition but also encouraging greater competition for the first magistracy in line with republican ideals; strong candidates were no longer debarred from the magistracy on financial grounds. While the senators were undoubtedly encouraged by the new emperor's promises of greater *libertas*, any hopes of a restored Republic must necessarily have been disappointed.

¹⁸ 4.2–5.1. Cf. the trial *intra cubiculum* of D. Valerius Asiaticus, presided over by Claudius in 47, described by Tacitus at 11.1–4. The trials of C. Cassius Chaerea in 41 and Appius Silanus in 42 may also have been conducted *intra cubiculum* (Jos. *AJ* 19.268–9); see further Malloch 2013: 65–6. On the role of the emperor's *consilium*, a development of the republican practice whereby a magistrate consulted selected close *amici* prior to making a decision with significant implications for the state (cf. Vell. 2.127.1–3), see Crook 1955 *passim*, Wallace-Hadrill 1996: 283–95, Paterson 2007: 121–56, Eager 2016: 9–13, 24–8.

¹⁹ For the total membership of the Senate and the numbers likely to be present at a given meeting, see Talbert 1984: 132–4, 137.

²⁰ Talbert 1984: 47–8.

²¹ Cf. 11.29.1, 38.4, 12.25.1, 53.2, 57.2.

²² On the title of *pater patriae* and its ideological implications see Alföldi 1971 *passim*, Wallace-Hadrill 1982: 37, Strothmann 2000 *passim*, Severy 2003: 158–86, Stevenson 2009a: 97–108; in emulation of Augustus' initial refusal of the title (he only accepted it in 2 BC; cf. *RG* 35.1) and in a display of *ciuilitas*, Tiberius refused the title outright (1.72.1 with Goodyear 1981: 138), while Nero deferred acceptance of the title (first granted by the Senate on his accession in October 54) until after Cn. Domitius Corbulo's successes in the Parthian campaign late in 55 (*RIC* I² p. 149 nos. 8–9, Sen. *Clem.* 1.14.2, Suet. *Nero* 8.1 with Braund 2009: 317, Drinkwater 2019: 22).

²³ Drinkwater 2019: 84. On the excesses of the imperial freedmen see further Mouritsen 2011: 93–101, 104–109.

²⁴ 5.1.

Magistracies

On Tiberius' accession, the responsibility for appointing candidates to all magistracies (except for those for which the candidates were chosen by lot, such as the governorships of public provinces) was transferred to the Senate alone, with the resultant suppression of the *comitia* for this purpose.²⁵ The senators voted for candidates as they did for legislative proposals.²⁶ For the consulship, for which (from Tiberius' principate onwards) all candidates were recommended by the emperor by a process known as *commendatio*, the emperor never recommended more candidates than there were posts to fill in any given year.²⁷ The Senate's vote was therefore a formality; imperial consuls are (*de facto*) better deemed as being appointed by the emperor than the Senate.²⁸ The emperor offered the consulship to his protégés of praetorian rank as a benefit of his patronage;²⁹ at times, he strategically offered it to influential senators (generally those of patrician lineage or outstanding military prowess, or whose dissident tendencies he sought to restrain)³⁰ whose loyalty he coveted; the ordinary consulship, which enabled the office-holder to give his name to a calendar year, was an honour frequently bestowed upon these men.³¹ One such senator was L. Antistius Vetus (*PIR*² A 776), Nero's dynastic rival Rubellius Plautus' father-in-law,³² who was ordinary consul with Nero himself from January 1st to February 28th 55.³³

Although the consuls' influence was overshadowed by the emperor's, since the latter's *consulare imperium* enabled him to preside over the Senate and to propose motions (a prerogative termed the *ius primae relationis* by modern scholars)³⁴ even when he was not consul,³⁵ they nonetheless retained their traditional prerogatives as presidents of the Senate and were tasked with offering a vote of thanks to the emperor on assuming office;³⁶ the magistracy's *dignitas* was in no way diminished. The emperor's holding of the ordinary consulship, as Nero did on four occasions during his principate (in 55, 57, 58 and 60),³⁷ could

²⁵ 1.15.1 *tum primum e campo comitia ad patres translata sunt*; see further Woodman 1977: 225–7, Brunt 1984: 429, Talbert 1984: 342.

²⁶ Cf. Plin. *Ep.* 3.20.1–8 and see further Sherwin-White 1966: 260–2, Talbert 1984: 343–4.

²⁷ The consuls always had to serve in pairs in accordance with republican tradition, but the emperor himself would sometimes serve as *consul ordinarius* (Gallivan 1978: 419, Talbert 1984: 164). Under the Principate from Tiberius to Nero, the *consules ordinarii* (one of whom could have been the emperor) typically served from 1st January to 30th June, being replaced by two *suffecti* on 1st July; on occasions, the *ordinarii* might serve only until 28th February, being replaced on 1st March by two *suffecti*, who were in turn replaced by two more *suffecti* on 1st July. Nero served as ordinary consul for the whole year in 57 (Gallivan 1974: 291); an ordinary consulship lasting the whole year was otherwise an exceptional honour which the emperor could bestow upon a distinguished senator (as in the cases of Junius Silanus and Cornelius Sulla under Claudius, in 46 and 52 respectively; see further 23.1n., Gallivan 1978: 408–9, 425, Malloch 2013: 55). The imperial Senate never refused to appoint a candidate who (through patronage) had the explicit approval or recommendation of the emperor (Saller 1982: 43, Talbert 1984: 342, 1996: 327, Lendon 1997: 186–8).

²⁸ Woodman 2018: 90–1.

²⁹ Cf. Sen. *Ira* 3.31.2 and see further Wallace-Hadrill 1996: 296, Duncan-Jones 2016: 6–7.

³⁰ A Pompeian wax tablet (*tab. cer. Pomp.* 15) records that Nero awarded the dissident Thrasea Paetus with a suffect consulship in the final months of 56, possibly with the intention of curbing his dissident instincts; see further Syme 1958: 1.559, Rudich 1993: 32–3, Strunk 2015: 49.

³¹ Talbert 1984: 22, 274.

³² For Nero's distrust of Rubellius see 19.3n.

³³ 11.1, CIL 4.5513; see further Gallivan 1974: 290.

³⁴ The term is not found in any ancient source (Talbert 1984: 165).

³⁵ Dio 53.32.5.

³⁶ Cf. 11.1, Plin. *Paneg.* 4.1; Pliny delivered the *Panegyricus* as a vote of thanks to Trajan on assuming his suffect consulship in September 100 (see further *PIR*² P 490).

³⁷ 11.1, 31.1, 34.1, 14.20.1, Suet. *Nero* 14.1.

perhaps be interpreted as a sign of both respect for tradition and *ciuilitas*, since it showed that he was willing to see himself as his consular colleague's equal.³⁸

Whereas appointments to the consulship were little more than formalities, there remained a degree of competition among candidates for the lesser magistracies.³⁹ Attaining even the quaestorship, aedileship and plebeian tribunate brought *dignitas*, although by the middle of the first century the offices were devoid of many of their traditional functions;⁴⁰ advancement through the *cursus honorum* remained an essential desideratum for most senators (particularly as the praetorship and consulship were prerequisites for governorships of public provinces and for being appointed *legatus Augusti pro praetore*).⁴¹

Legislative Debates in the Senate

The Senate's traditional legislative role was retained under the Principate, and twice-monthly meetings, on the Kalends (1st) and Ides (13th or 15th), were stipulated for discussing legislative proposals.⁴² The presiding consul retained the right to put forward legislative proposals for debate in the *relatio*.⁴³ The emperor (through *consulare imperium*) had the right to summon the Senate whenever he wished; he therefore exerted disproportionate influence over the Senate and (to an extent) compromised the body's *libertas*. Although the Senate generally approved the emperor's proposals without opposition, there were exceptions to this norm: if transmitted *senatores* at 50.2 is the true reading, Tacitus suggests that Nero (in 58) proposed to the Senate the ending of indirect taxation in order to appease provincials oppressed by *publicani*;⁴⁴ the Senate did not approve the proposal because of its dire consequences for the empire's finances. Nero therefore modified his proposal,⁴⁵ and the mutual co-operation between emperor and Senate in this instance shows the emperor's willingness to work with the corporate body in the interests of good government.⁴⁶

³⁸ Cf. 11.1 and see further Bradley 1978: 91–2, Goodyear 1981: 140, Wallace-Hadrill 1982: 39, Griffin 1984: 62, Talbert 1984: 201, Woodman 2013: 155, Drinkwater 2019: 22–3.

³⁹ Cf. 14.28.1 (on competition for the praetorship in 60) and see further Talbert 1984: 342–3, Lendon 1997: 186.

⁴⁰ At 28.1–29.2, Tacitus records several alterations which Nero made to these lesser magistrates' prerogatives: he reduced the judicial powers of aediles at Rome and transferred the responsibility for the accounts of the public treasury from *quaestores aerarii* (chosen by lot from among the quaestors in republican fashion) to *praefecti* whom he himself appointed from among the *praetorii*, perhaps with the aim of more effective financial administration. See further Millar 1964: 34, Saller 1982: 45–6, Griffin 1984: 57, Drinkwater 2019: 23.

⁴¹ Hopkins 1983: 149–56, Duncan-Jones 2016: 3–7.

⁴² See further Talbert 1984: 213, Drinkwater 2019: 24. Meetings on the Ides of March were avoided, as the day was considered ill-omened following the assassination of Julius Caesar on this date in 44 BC (Suet. *Iul.* 88.2, Dio 47.19.1). The mid-March meeting generally took place on 14th March; cf. *Hist.* 1.90.1, *Dig.* 5.3.20.6 and see further Talbert 1984: 209 n. 71.

⁴³ On the structure of senatorial debates see Talbert 1984: 240.

⁴⁴ Syme 1958: 1.416, Griffin 1984: 92, Woodman 2004: 270 and Günther 2013: 116 advocate this interpretation. Syme and Griffin (loc. cit.) interpret the *adulatio* inherent in the senators' praise for Nero's *magnitudo animi* (50.2) as a sign that they aired their disapproval of Nero's proposal in a meeting with the emperor present, and felt compelled to couch their disagreement with the emperor in the language of *adulatio*. Perhaps *senatores* may refer not to a meeting of the full Senate but rather to a *consilium* consisting of senators close to the emperor; this interpretation is preferred by Crook 1955: 46, Brunt 1966: 86 n.72, Millar 1977: 259, Talbert 1984: 172–3. Even if the latter interpretation is correct, it can still be concluded that senators were prepared to contradict the emperor's wishes when they felt them to contravene the state's interests. Lipsius (1574 ad loc.) emends *senatores* to *seniores*, but the paradox is not evidently faulty. For a summary of this passage's difficulties, see Drinkwater 2019: 23 n. 137.

⁴⁵ 51.1.

⁴⁶ Syme 1958: 1.416, Griffin 1984: 92, Drinkwater 2019: 23.

Many legislative debates in the Senate concerned routine matters such as granting permission to a provincial city to increase the number of gladiators allowed to participate in spectacles above the statutory maximum.⁴⁷ In such uncontentious debates, it was fully expected that there would be no opposition to the *relatio*. It was therefore surprising that Thræsea Paetus opposed such a motion.⁴⁸ His critics took the view that his objection to the proposal was motivated by self-indulgence,⁴⁹ but his objecting to an unimportant proposal reveals an important, if regrettable, truth about the Senate's role under the Principate: senatorial liberty had become constrained by the emperor's presence to such an extent that it could, for the most part, only be exercised in debates surrounding routine proposals in which the emperor took no interest.⁵⁰ A more favourable interpretation of Tacitus' account might contend that by exercising his *libertas* in the discussion of a routine motion, Thræsea was reinvigorating the spirit of *libertas* which was gradually becoming lost among an increasingly servile body of senators, in the hope that when the circumstances allowed, senators might regain the confidence to deliver opposing *sententiae* during discussions of matters of lasting importance to the state.⁵¹

The Senate's loss of *libertas* was already apparent in 56. A preliminary discussion was held in the Senate regarding the significant question as to whether the patrons of misbehaving freedmen should be given the right to annul their emancipation.⁵² Although a majority of senators approved of this suggestion, the consuls Volusius and Scipio were unwilling to make a formal *relatio* in Nero's absence.⁵³ The consuls therefore referred the proposal to Nero who summoned his *consilium* to discuss it, since he felt that he had insufficient knowledge of the matter to formulate an edict or *relatio*.⁵⁴ Nero was advised to abandon the proposal and communicated this with the Senate by letter. The Senate thereby deprived itself of an opportunity to enact legislation without imperial intervention.⁵⁵

The Senatorial Court

One of the most widely attested functions of the Senate under the Principate was its function as a court of law.⁵⁶ There is no evidence for the Senate's ever having performed this function under the Republic; senatorial trials began to occur sporadically during the triumviral period and early Augustan principate, becoming more regular towards the end of that principate.⁵⁷ Tacitus records several significant senatorial trials which took place during the principates of Tiberius and Nero; *Annales* 13 contains Tacitus' account of the trial of Suillius Rufus for extortion and *calumnia* in 58.⁵⁸ The Senate's function as a court perhaps developed because there was no concept of public prosecution at Rome; embassies and private citizens regularly brought matters of a semi-judicial nature before the Senate under the Republic as well as the

⁴⁷ The emperor is unlikely to have been present at these debates nor taken an interest in them (Talbert 1984: 240, Drinkwater 2019: 24–5).

⁴⁸ 49.1.

⁴⁹ 49.2; see further Heldmann 1991: 213, Rudich 1993: 33, Strunk 2017: 106–7.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Hist.* 2.91.2, Plin. *Paneg.* 54.4, *Ep.* 4.12.3, Dio 54.23.8 and see further Griffin 1984: 91–2, Talbert 1984: 262, 458–9, Drinkwater 2019: 24–5.

⁵¹ Rudich 1993: 32–4.

⁵² 26.1.

⁵³ For the senators' reluctance to take the initiative when the emperor was absent, see Griffin 1984: 92.

⁵⁴ 26.2; see further Crook 1955: 45–6.

⁵⁵ Griffin 1984: 91–2.

⁵⁶ Garnsey 1970: 17, Talbert 1984: 460–1.

⁵⁷ Talbert 1984: 461.

⁵⁸ 43.1–5; cf. also 3.49.1–50.4 (the trial of Clutorius Priscus in 21) with Woodman-Martin 1996: 357–9 ad loc., 14.48.1–49.3 (the trial of the praetor-elect Antistius Sosianus in 62).

Principate.⁵⁹ Under the private legal system, the victim or witness of a crime was required to denounce the suspected perpetrator either to the *praetor* (who presided over a public jury-court or *quaestio*) or a magistrate with authority to summon the Senate (including, under the Principate, the emperor) in accordance with a practice termed *delatio*.⁶⁰ A magistrate in office could not denounce a citizen in his own right, but appointed a private citizen as *delator* on his behalf.⁶¹ If the accused was a magistrate, he remained immune from prosecution unless he could be forced to resign.⁶² If he was felt by the consul or emperor to have a case, the *delator* was granted permission to bring a prosecution and leave for gathering evidence (which could last up to a year) known as *inquisitio*.⁶³ Since no clear demarcation was made between the Senate's legislative and judicial functions under the Principate, the hearing was conducted like any other senatorial debate. The charges against the accused were set out by the presiding consul in the *relatio*; the *actiones* or set-speeches by the *delator* and the accused (or, if these parties were not senators, their senatorial advocates) then followed, before other senators gave *sententiae* as to the accused's guilt or innocence in order of seniority and the presiding consul put these to the vote.⁶⁴ *Sententiae* implying the accused's guilt often contained suggestions for penalties of varying degrees of severity.⁶⁵

Since the Senate was concerned predominantly with its own members' wrongdoing, the majority of those whom it tried were themselves senators.⁶⁶ The only notable exceptions were those accused of *maiestas* or of crimes against senators, or those whose suspected criminality had caused a public scandal.⁶⁷ Roman senators often felt that their conduct would be viewed more sympathetically by their peers,⁶⁸ although those found guilty of murder still typically met with the full force of the law.⁶⁹

The Equestrian Service and Law Enforcement at Rome

The Principate brought significant new opportunities for members of the equestrian order, the lesser aristocracy whose members' census rating was at least 400,000 sesterces (to be contrasted with the senator's million).⁷⁰ Whereas senators continued to follow the traditional *cursus honorum*, equestrians who sought public office followed a separate but parallel career consisting of a variety of posts dependent entirely upon imperial patronage which can be divided into three approximate stages, the *militia* (which encompassed such posts as tribunes and cohort prefectures within a legion, an auxiliary unit or the Praetorian Guard), the procuratorships (which encompassed the office of *procurator fisci* as well as presidial procuratorships in minor imperial provinces) and the four great prefectures of the Roman

⁵⁹ Talbert 1984: 463. The Senate's function in dispensing justice may also have developed from its capacity to declare a citizen a public enemy, which is attested from the late Republic onwards (cf. Cic. *Cat.* 1.13, Sall. *Cat.* 44.6).

⁶⁰ Talbert 1984: 480–1.

⁶¹ *Dig.* 5.1.48; see further Talbert 1984: 480 and n.6.

⁶² Cf. 44.5 (the case of the plebeian tribune Octavius Sagitta who had murdered his lover Pontia).

⁶³ Cf. 43.1, 44.5, Plin. *Ep.* 6.5.2; see further Talbert 1984: 480–1. There is possibly also evidence for the *inquisitio* at 3.70.1 (which records the trial of Caesius Cordus for *repetundae* in Crete and Cyrene in 22); Cordus had been denounced by the provincials a year earlier (3.38.1). See further Woodman-Martin 1996: 471.

⁶⁴ Talbert 1984: 486–7.

⁶⁵ Cf. 14.48.2–49.3, describing the *sententiae* given during the trial of Antistius Sosianus in 62.

⁶⁶ Garnsey 1970: 18–20, Talbert 1984: 467.

⁶⁷ Garnsey 1970: 31, Talbert 1984: 467–8.

⁶⁸ Bleicken 1962: 53–4, Garnsey 1970: 20.

⁶⁹ Cf. 44.5 (Octavius Sagitta) and see further Garnsey 1970: 31.

⁷⁰ Hor. *Epist.* 1.1.57, Plin. *NH* 33.32, Porph. ad Hor. *Serm.* 1.8.39 with Wiseman 1970: 75, 81, Demougin 1988: 16.

state, those of the *uigiles*, *annona*, the Praetorian Guard and Egypt.⁷¹ These last four prefectures, created by Augustus, were the greatest imperial *beneficia* which the equestrian could hope to attain and the pinnacle of his career;⁷² as well as administrative and military expertise (acquired in earlier stages of the equestrian career)⁷³ they demanded the utmost loyalty to the *princeps*, since dereliction of duty by any one of these officials could potentially bring about the emperor's destruction, either directly or as a result of unchecked civil unrest.⁷⁴

The prefect of Egypt was the governor of a major imperial province, responsible for its revenues and armies as well as judicial duties;⁷⁵ a trusted confidant of the imperial family with military experience (as in the case of Nero's first prefect Burrus)⁷⁶ was appointed praetorian prefect, responsible for the nine praetorian cohorts which served as the imperial *domus*' bodyguard and prevented popular unrest at Rome.⁷⁷ The *praefectus annonae* (an office fulfilled by Faenius Rufus from 55 to 62)⁷⁸ was responsible for keeping accounts and overseeing trade routes across the Mediterranean in order to ensure Rome's corn supply, whose failure would undoubtedly result in popular insurrection against the emperor,⁷⁹ while the *praefectus uigilum* commanded the seven *cohortes uigilum* (all of whose members were freedmen) whose primary role was the detection and extinguishing of fires in Rome but which also (together with the praetorian and urban cohorts) ensured the upholding of law and order in the capital (although these men were not armed).⁸⁰ Like their praetorian counterparts, the urban cohorts (which numbered three in total under Nero) consisted entirely of freeborn soldiers, but were commanded by the *praefectus urbi*, a senior consular senator who had already served as *proconsul* in either Africa or Asia (as well as *legatus* in an imperial province) whose appointment was a *beneficium* resulting from imperial patronage.⁸¹

Provincial Administration

Although the *lex de imperio* granted the emperor *proconsulare imperium* in all territory outside the *pomerium*, the responsibility for governing certain provinces which were felt to be sufficiently pacified (termed public or 'senatorial' provinces) was delegated to the Senate in order to uphold the corporate body's traditional functions.⁸² The public provinces at the start of Nero's principate were (from west to east) Baetica, Gallia Narbonensis, Africa, Sicily,

⁷¹ On the equestrian career see Pflaum 1961 *passim*, Demougin 1988 *passim*, Sablayrolles 1999: 351–99, Duncan-Jones 2016: 91–3, Davenport 2019: 170–92, 253–369.

⁷² Cf. Dio 53.15.3, 55.10.10, 26.4 and see further Millar 1963b: 198, Saller 1982: 49, 101–3, Davenport 2019: 170–8.

⁷³ The expertise required of a prefect of Egypt is amply demonstrated by its Neronian governor Ti. Claudius Balbillus (22.1n.); see further Brunt 1975: 124–47, 1983: 61–3, Demougin 1988: 731–2.

⁷⁴ Saller 1982: 99, Brunt 1983: 63.

⁷⁵ See pp. 16–17.

⁷⁶ 20.1n.

⁷⁷ On this prefecture see further Keppie 1996: 384–7, Bingham 2013 *passim*, De La Bédoyère 2017: 58–60, Davenport 2019: 173–6. The emperor and certain other prominent members of his *domus* also enjoyed the protection of a quasi-mercenary German bodyguard (for which see 18.3n. *Germanos*).

⁷⁸ 22.1n.

⁷⁹ On the *praefectus annonae* and his duties see further Pavis d'Escurac 1976 *passim*, Rickman 1980: 79–93, Herz 1988: 69–85, Eck 2006: 49–57, Davenport 2019: 177–8; on the logistics of the corn supply, Garnsey-Saller 2015: 109–14, 127 with bibliography.

⁸⁰ Strab. 5.3.7, Suet. Aug. 25.2, Dig. 1.15.3, Dio 55.26.4–5 with Keppie 1996: 385, Sablayrolles 1996: 26–37, Mouritsen 2011: 72 n. 27, Fuhrmann 2012: 116–17, Davenport 2019: 176–7.

⁸¹ Millar 1977: 338–9, Keppie 1996: 385, Fuhrmann 2012: 117. On the law-enforcement activities of praetorian and urban cohorts see further 24.1n; on the origins of the urban prefecture see Welch 1990: 53–69.

⁸² Suet. Aug. 47.1, Dio 53.12.2–3, 32.5; see further Millar 1966: 157, Talbert 1984: 392–3, Hurllet 2019: 126.

Macedonia, Achaëa, Crete with Cyrene, Cyprus, Asia and Bithynia with Pontus.⁸³ All other provinces, including newly-annexed territories, were imperial provinces. The public provinces were governed by senatorial *proconsules* in accordance with republican practice, except that the *proconsul* in most cases commanded no legions;⁸⁴ under the Principate, the lots by which *proconsules* were assigned to provinces were drawn in the January of each year, with the *proconsul* expected to arrive in his province no later than 15th April.⁸⁵

The administration of public provinces was largely routine under the Principate. Therefore, the governors of all such provinces (except Africa and Asia) were chosen by lot from among the *praetorii* (often the more senior *praetorii*, who had held the rank for five or more years and were not otherwise engaged in official duties) rather than the *consulares*;⁸⁶ the political ability and experience of *consulares* was probably thought to be wasted on such provinces, while senior *praetorii* could gain from the office valuable political experience which might ensure their appointment to the consulship by the emperor. The governorships of Asia and Africa continued to be deemed prestigious appointments until well into the second century;⁸⁷ the lot for these was reserved for the two most senior *consulares* who were not otherwise engaged in official duties; generally, these men would have held the consulship between eight and fifteen years previously.⁸⁸ Since the emperor legally held *proconsulare imperium* in all territory outside the *pomerium*, he could bring any public province back under his control at any point; convention dictated that when he did so, he granted the Senate a (preferably pacified) province in return.⁸⁹ Nero granted the Senate the province of Sardinia with Corsica in return for Achaëa (which he liberated) in 67.⁹⁰

Most imperial provinces were at the furthest bounds of the empire (such as Britain, Lusitania and Syria), although some (such as Raetia and Noricum) were strategic territories on the northern boundaries of Italy. Although *de iure* governor, the emperor alone could not have overseen their administration nor the command of the legions or legionary detachments stationed within them (as all imperial provinces had). He therefore subdivided these provinces into two categories (with Egypt a special case), delegating the administration of minor imperial provinces in which only legionary detachments were stationed (such as Noricum, Sardinia and Mauretania) to an equestrian presidial procurator,⁹¹ and that of major imperial provinces in which full legions were stationed (such as Britain, Hispania Tarraconensis, Upper and Lower Germany and Syria) to a high-ranking senator, known as a *legatus Augusti pro praetore*; the latter were generally men of considerable military experience drawn from among the *praetorii* or (particularly in the case of the most volatile

⁸³ Talbert 1984: 395, Bowman 1996: 369–70.

⁸⁴ Suet. *Aug.* 47.1; see further Millar 1966: 156, Talbert 1984: 392–3, Keppie 1996: 387–9, Goodman 1997: 103. After 27 BC most public provinces no longer had legions stationed within them (although detachments of troops often remained), since they were generally territories which had been pacified for a considerable length of time. The only exceptions were Dalmatia, which reverted to imperial control in 22 BC (Dio 54.4.1), and Africa, which retained one legion until 38 (Dio 59.20.7).

⁸⁵ This date is suggested by an edict of Claudius, recorded by Dio 60.17.3, for which see further Talbert 1984: 207–8.

⁸⁶ Cf. Dio 53.4.12; see further Millar 1981: 155, Talbert 1984: 349.

⁸⁷ Cf. Fronto p. 161.1.

⁸⁸ Gallivan 1974: 299, Talbert 1984: 349. Junius Silanus (*PIR*² I 833), the *proconsul Asiae* murdered at the start of Nero's principate in October 54 (1.1, Plin. *NH* 7.58, Dio 60.27.1), had been ordinary consul for the whole year in 46; see further Gallivan 1978: 408–9.

⁸⁹ Bowman 1996: 345–7.

⁹⁰ Pausanias 7.7.13.

⁹¹ Vipsanius Laenas was presidial procurator in Sardinia until 56 (30.1); on the office (whose official Latin title was *procurator et praefectus*) see further Faoro 2011 *passim*, Davenport 2019: 312–3.

provinces) *consulares*.⁹² Egypt and its legions were entrusted to an equestrian *praefectus* because the province was deemed too risky an appointment for a senatorial legate.⁹³ These *de facto* governors, whether of equestrian or senatorial rank, were accountable to the emperor alone;⁹⁴ they also oversaw the financial administration within the province. Presidial procurators typically did so by themselves, administering both the emperor's private estate (*fiscus*) and the imperial revenues (*uectigalia*), whereas *legati* and the *praefectus Aegypti* tended to concern themselves with the *uectigalia*, with one of the emperor's equestrian *procuratores* in charge of the *fiscus*.⁹⁵ They also fulfilled judicial responsibilities and the command of the province's armies, whether whole legions or detachments.⁹⁶ The governorship of an imperial province was deemed a more prestigious appointment for a Roman senator than that of a public one (Africa and Asia excepted), especially since it was dependent upon securing the emperor's patronage.⁹⁷

The emperor often chose to appoint as *legati* in imperial provinces those *consulares* who were of outstanding military prowess,⁹⁸ leaving other consulars such as Junius Silanus to take the lot for the governorships of Asia and Africa.⁹⁹ Presidial procurators and *legati* in imperial provinces (as well as the *praefectus Aegypti*) would preside for as long as the emperor required them to; the emperor's judgment was sometimes arbitrary.¹⁰⁰ By the time of Nero's fall in 68, his former friend and future emperor Otho (who joined his fellow *legatus* Galba's revolt in Spain) had been Lusitania's *legatus* for around ten years, having been entrusted with the province by Nero during 58.¹⁰¹ Otho's long tenure of this post was perhaps due more to Nero's grudge against him (as a rival lover of Poppaea Sabina) than any military necessity;¹⁰² although he was judged by both Tacitus and Suetonius to be a remarkably upright governor, Otho was a man of little military experience and perhaps (exceptionally) only a *quaestorius* when appointed *legatus* aged 26.¹⁰³ C. Ummidius Quadratus (*PIR*² V 903), despite his relative lack of prowess, was remarkably retained by Nero as *legatus Syriae* until his death in 60, when Nero replaced him with Cn. Domitius Corbulo.¹⁰⁴

The demarcation of public and imperial provinces was never totally rigid in practice: while provinces could be categorised as either public or imperial, this did not mean that the

⁹² Bowman 1996: 369–70, Duncan-Jones 2016: 55–60. Syria was perhaps the most prestigious imperial province to be awarded to a Roman senator, generally reserved for senior *consulares* with considerable military experience (Millar 1977: 311–12, Talbert 1984: 22, Bowman loc. cit.).

⁹³ Brunt 1975: 124, Davenport 2019: 172–3.

⁹⁴ Ulp. *Dig.* 1.16.8, 18.4.

⁹⁵ Demarcations between *uectigalia* and *fiscus* in imperial provinces were never entirely rigid; see further Meloni 1966: 186, Brunt 1975: 136–41, 1983: 52–58, Millar 1977: 175–201, Bowman 1996: 364–5, Rathbone 1996: 314–16, Goodman 1997: 101, Ando 2006: 179–80, Faoro 2011: 69–70.

⁹⁶ Ulp. *Dig.* 1.18.6.8; see further Meloni 1966: 186, Millar 1966: 157, Brunt 1975: 131–2, Eck 1988: 102–17, Davenport 2019: 314.

⁹⁷ Saller 1982: 44–5, Wallace-Hadrill 1996: 296–7.

⁹⁸ As in the cases of Antistius Vetus and Pompeius Paullinus in Upper and Lower Germany (53.2 with Eck 1985: 23–4) and Cn. Domitius Corbulo in Syria (14.26.2).

⁹⁹ Tacitus (1.1) suggests that Silanus' apathy was proverbial.

¹⁰⁰ Ulp. *Dig.* 1.16.8, Dio 53.13.6; see further Meloni 1966: 186, Millar 1966: 157, Bowman 1996: 347, Davenport 2019: 314–15.

¹⁰¹ 46.3, *Hist.* 1.13.3, Suet. *Otho* 3.2, 4.1, Dio 61.11.2.

¹⁰² Barrett 1996: 181, 298 n.2.

¹⁰³ 46.3, Suet. *Otho* 3.2.

¹⁰⁴ 8.2, 9.3, 12.54.3–4, 14.26.2. On Ummidius' lack of prowess see Syme 1979: 293 with evidence there cited. The consular P. Anteius (a friend and protégé of Agrippina who had secured her patronage) was earmarked for the governorship of Syria but never sent there, perhaps because Nero did not want Corbulo's opportunities for glory to be diminished by a rival (22.1n.).

administration of imperial provinces could never be influenced by the Senate, nor that of public provinces by the emperor.¹⁰⁵ If an imperial province's governor committed extortion, the provincials typically appealed to the Senate, not the emperor, to secure an advocate to bring about the governor's prosecution.¹⁰⁶ In this way the Cilicians brought their *legatus* (Cossutianus Capito) to justice for extortion in 57;¹⁰⁷ the Lycians did likewise against Eprius Marcellus in the same year (although he was acquitted).¹⁰⁸ Vipsanius Laenas, Sardinia's presidial procurator, was almost certainly convicted of *repetundae* and exiled by the Senate.¹⁰⁹ Equally, Nero interfered in the affairs of public provinces in 57, when he issued an edict forbidding all provincial governors and their subordinates (including those in public provinces) to stage a gladiatorial or theatrical spectacle.¹¹⁰ While Tacitus himself approved of this measure because it eliminated a source of corruption, it somewhat deprived the Senate of the liberty to make decisions affecting those provinces for whose administration it was responsible.

Women and Gender Roles

A striking feature of Tacitus' account of the first four years of the Neronian principate is the prominence of the women of the imperial *domus* within the narrative. For Tacitus, to a far greater extent than Suetonius or Dio Cassius, the women of the Neronian *domus* are essential driving forces behind the politics of the Neronian principate, significantly influencing not only those decisions made by the emperor which determined the future of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, such as those pertaining to marriage and the imperial succession, but also those which affected the wider *res publica*, such as the granting of donatives to the military, the hearing of embassies, and the appointment of senators to governorships in imperial provinces, and equestrians to the great prefectures of the Roman state. Tacitus employs a gendered discourse to emphasise the unprecedented levels of political power which the imperial women exercised within not only the *domus* but also the *res publica* under Nero, and the concomitant (or perhaps even consequent) emasculation of the traditional power bases at Rome, namely the Senate, its *princeps* and the military.¹¹¹ While the Tacitean conception of gender is at times nuanced and subtle,¹¹² Tacitus' Neronian narrative frequently seems to exploit the gendered correlation between the intrusion of masculinised *duces feminae* (Agrippina and Poppaea Sabina) into the public sphere,¹¹³ Nero's own effeminate character

¹⁰⁵ Millar 1966: 158–9, Lintott 1993: 115–16, Ando 2006: 179, Hurler 2019: 126.

¹⁰⁶ Since extortion was often carried out to recover previous expenditure and repay long-standing debts, senators sympathised with the practice somewhat, and imposed only lenient sentences such as *relegatio*. See further Garnsey 1970: 20, 115–16, Talbert 1984: 28–9, 473, 481.

¹⁰⁷ 33.2. The Cilicians' advocate was Thræsea Paetus (*PIR*²C 1187), a fact not mentioned by Tacitus until he narrates Thræsea's trial at 16.21.3.

¹⁰⁸ 33.3. The Senate is unlikely to have taken the Lycians seriously; one year later, Eprius was chosen by lot as *proconsul* of Cyprus (*AE* 1956: 186). Governors and their subordinates convicted of *repetundae* in provinces were generally debarred from entering the lot for future provinces; cf. the case of Hostilius Firminus (Plin. *Ep.* 2.12.2 with Whitton 2013: 188).

¹⁰⁹ 30.1; see further Pflaum 1961: 1044, Demougin 1992: 437.

¹¹⁰ 31.3; for other instances of the application of imperial edicts to public provinces, see Millar 1966: 161.

¹¹¹ For this view see also Santoro L'hoir 1994: 19, Ginsburg 2006: 50, Schulz 2019: 101.

¹¹² Tacitus often emphasises the performative aspects of gender, namely those traits which the Romans tended to associate with stereotypically masculine and feminine behaviour rather than biological sex; the adjective *uirilis* is to be understood in this way at 6.25.2, 12.7.3, 14.15.1, *Dial.* 26.2 (of oratorical styles), *Hist.* 1.72.1. Tacitus' predication of the adjective *muliebris* and adverb *muliebriter* of female actions is nonetheless suggestive of his belief in at least a partial correlation between innate and acquired traits. See further Adams 1972a: 235, 244, Woodman-Martin 1996: 293–4, Damon 2003: 247, Challet 2013: 3–4, Woodman 2017: 195–6.

¹¹³ On Tacitus' *duces feminae*, cf. also 3.33.3 with Woodman-Martin 1996: 296.

and the impending disaster for both the Julio-Claudian dynasty and the *res publica*.¹¹⁴ By employing a narrative of gender role reversal, Tacitus conveys the abnormal, unprecedented, and even transgressive behaviour of both the leading men of the state (the emperor, senators, prominent equestrians and imperial freedmen) and the imperial women under the Neronian principate,¹¹⁵ and the way in which this behaviour contributed to that regime's downfall.

When news of the Parthian invasion of Armenia reached Rome shortly after Nero's accession, Tacitus records the Roman people's concern that the new emperor was singularly unsuited to the demands of his office; the man with overarching responsibility for the security of a world empire was an immature and ill-disciplined hedonist,¹¹⁶ only 16 years of age and subject to his mother's whims. Tacitus employs a gendered description of the emperor's position to convey this popular anxiety: *igitur in urbe sermonum auida...quod subsidium in eo qui a femina regetur...anquirebant* (6.2). Tacitus' use of the passive voice (*regetur*), modified by the ablative of agent *a femina*, emphasises two kinds of role reversal: first, the subversion of political and legal hierarchy, since the *princeps*, although entitled both to seek and to heed the advice of others, by definition cannot submit to any other citizen (man or woman); second, the subversion of normative Roman gender roles which have their basis in the traditional conception of the *paterfamilias*,¹¹⁷ the oldest living male ascendant of a Roman *domus*, who legally exerted *patria potestas* over all other members of his *domus* (younger male relatives, his wife and other women of his household, children, slaves and freedmen). The *paterfamilias*' power encompassed judicial prerogatives such as the right to try other members of his household for alleged crimes and to impose penalties (including exile and, in exceptional cases, capital punishment).¹¹⁸ In the Roman moralist's view, the ideal aristocratic *paterfamilias* was married to the ideal *matrona*, who embodied such virtues as the maintenance of order within the *domus*, and the raising of children with aristocratic *mores*.¹¹⁹

The normative role of *paterfamilias* in *Annales* 13 is assumed at 32.2 by the former legate of Britain, A. Plautius, who (aided by a familial *consilium*) tries his wife Pomponia Graecina on a charge of witchcraft and subsequently acquits her. Nero, by contrast, is depicted at 6.2 as an enervated *paterfamilias*,¹²⁰ submitting to female authority (that of his mother Agrippina), which emphasises the political and legal paradox whereby the *paterfamilias* obeys a woman's orders, and another citizen dictates to the *princeps*. Agrippina can, conversely, be seen as adopting normative masculine behavioural traits, since she is the more powerful participant in

¹¹⁴ Roman moralists saw effeminate men as possessing inordinate appetites for both perverse sexual relations and material possessions to the extent that social order and propriety were compromised; cf. Sen. *Contr.* 1.pf.8–9. This view corresponds with the normative conception of masculinity (*uirtus*) at Rome (discussed by Edwards 1993: 81, Williams 2010: 145–8, Challet 2013: 63–5) whereby self-control was its essential constituent (cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 2.48); a lack of self-control was suggestive of an inability to attain *uirtus*, of which the corollary was effeminacy of character.

¹¹⁵ On the wider theme of severe moral transgression leading to the near-total dereliction of traditional values and *Romanitas* in Neronian Rome, see Henderson 1989: 173–94, Woodman 1998: 168–189.

¹¹⁶ Cf. 2.1, 3.3.

¹¹⁷ Pomeroy 1975: 150–4, Edwards 1993: 29, Späth 2011: 139, 2012: 435–8, Challet 2013: 21–2, Schulz 2019: 102.

¹¹⁸ *Dig.* 48.8.5; see further Garnsey 1970: 119–20, Saller 1997: 133–53.

¹¹⁹ This conception of the *matrona* is reflected in the Augustan iconography of the empress Livia, whereby she is depicted as undertaking domestic duties; cf. Suet. *Aug.* 73 and see further Pomeroy 1975: 169, Purcell 1986: 78–105, Bauman 1992: 106, Challet 2013: 21.

¹²⁰ A Julio-Claudian *paterfamilias* who submits to a woman is, by definition, an enervated emperor; for the analogy of *paterfamilias* and *pater patriae* (the imperial title assumed by Augustus in 2 BC), cf. *RG* 35.1 and see further introduction p. 10, Edwards 1993: 29, Saller 1997: 151–2.

the relationship with her son, exerting control over him;¹²¹ since she is shown by Tacitus to overrule the *princeps*, ostensibly the most powerful citizen at Rome, she might paradoxically be deemed the most powerful person in the *res publica* at this point. A superficially attractive reading of Tacitus' depiction of Nero and his mother at 6.2 is that their gender roles have undergone a near polar reversal: Nero, who is the *paterfamilias* and *princeps* only nominally, is now the woman, and Agrippina the man; Nero is the dominated one, and Agrippina the *dominatrix*.¹²² The anecdote at 15.37.4 which recalls how Nero dressed as a veiled bride in a mock marriage to a freedman named Pythagoras supports Nero's being viewed as undergoing a gender role reversal and acting the 'woman' in power relationships.¹²³ However, one should regard Tacitus' conception of Nero's and Agrippina's gender roles in *Annales* 13 as much subtler; they do not necessarily accord with a stereotypical masculine–feminine binary,¹²⁴ but rather can be situated on a sliding scale between the ideals of masculinity and femininity,¹²⁵ at the ends of which stand the putative ideal *uir* (as *paterfamilias*) and *matrona*,¹²⁶ neither of whom necessarily exist in real-life Roman society.¹²⁷ Both Nero's traits and those of Agrippina occupy intermediate points on the sliding scale; the effete Nero, although still evidently masculine in the light of his status as a Roman emperor, often exhibits behavioural traits which are at variance with Roman expectations of the ideal *uir*, while Agrippina, although still evidently feminine in the light of her status as a mother,¹²⁸ possesses some behavioural traits which might be deemed masculine.¹²⁹ This situation is not inherently ruinous to Roman society until Agrippina acquires so many masculine traits, and Nero so many feminine ones, that the power gradient between *princeps* and subject is entirely subverted, as Tacitus suggests might be the case at 6.2.¹³⁰

An extension of the theory whereby the Roman *uir*, in order to behave in accordance with the masculine ideal (*uirtus*), must exert control over his female sexual partner and the women of his household is that whereby he must exert control over himself, upholding the virtue of self-discipline.¹³¹ The ideal concept of *uirtus* has etymological connotations of masculinity as well as valour and excellence;¹³² Tacitus consistently depicts Nero as being deficient in it. Throughout *Annales* 13, Nero's uncontrolled sexual appetites, combined with his excessive enthusiasm for the arts and his conspicuous consumption, suggest that he lacks the self-control necessary to attain, or even come close to, ideal *uirtus*.¹³³ already at 2.1, Seneca and

¹²¹ This application of normative theory (whereby control is an inherent aspect of masculinity) is especially apposite if, as Tacitus recommends, one follows Cluvius Rufus' version of the incest story at 14.2.1–2, whereby Agrippina herself incited Nero (whose resolve was weakened by drunkenness and over-eating) to have intercourse with her, thereby taking the normative male (active) role in the sexual relationship.

¹²² Pomeroy 1975: 170, Santoro L'hoir 1994: 19, Barrett 1996: 150, Ginsburg 2006: 50, Schulz 2019: 103. For a Roman conception of male and female as polar opposites, cf. Quint. *Inst.* 9.4.23.

¹²³ The same anecdote is also found at Suet. *Nero* 29.2, although Suetonius suggests that the freedman was called Doryphorus. On the mock marriage and its significance, see further Woodman 1998: 186–9, Champlin 2003: 160–1, Drinkwater 2019: 313.

¹²⁴ Späth 2011: 139, 2012: 443, Challet 2013: 9, Schulz 2019: 103.

¹²⁵ This conception of a sliding scale is based on that of Butler (1999: 22–33), applied to a Roman context by Challet (2013: 10).

¹²⁶ As conceived by Cicero at *Tusc.* 2.48.

¹²⁷ McDonnell 2006: 128–34, Williams 2010: 145–8, Späth 2012: 443.

¹²⁸ See 21.2n.

¹²⁹ Späth 2012: 443, Challet 2013: 10.

¹³⁰ Santoro L'hoir 1994: 19.

¹³¹ McDonnell 2006: 128–34, Williams 2010: 145–8, Späth 2011: 130–6, Schulz 2019: 103.

¹³² Maltby 1991: 649.

¹³³ Späth 2011: 139. Both sides of the senatorial debate from 21 (3.33–34) which addresses the question as to whether governors' wives should be forbidden from accompanying their husbands to their provinces stress that *luxuria* and *auaritia* are stereotypically feminine characteristics and therefore the anathema to *uirtus* (see further

Burrus concede that the only way to control Nero is to allow him certain pleasures (*uoluptatibus concessis retinerent*), while his artistic and sporting interests (3.3), although suggestive of some level of erudition,¹³⁴ are at odds with the aristocratic *uirtus* which Tacitus suggests (3.2) to be fostered through disciplined rhetorical training. Just as Nero is portrayed as being weak and reliant upon his mother and advisors in executing important decisions on which the safety of the *res publica* depends (6.2), he is depicted as relying upon Seneca as a ghost-writer for his important speeches (3.2), unlike all previous *principes* who were highly skilled in oratory. The suggestion that he is not fully in control of his own *domus* or *res publica* is present in the opening words of *Annales* 13 (1.1 *prima nouo principatu mors Iunii Silani proconsulis Asiae ignaro Nerone per dolum Agrippinae paratur*), which recall 1.6.1 *primum facinus noui principatus fuit Postumi Agrippae caedes*; this intratextual allusion suggests that just as Tiberius was ignorant of the murder of Agrippa Postumus at the start of his principate,¹³⁵ so Nero was ignorant of a dynastic murder contemporaneous with his accession, that of Silanus. The implication, therefore, is that Nero, like Tiberius (who sought to share with others the burdens of empire),¹³⁶ is not in control of his *domus*, nor of Julio-Claudian dynastic succession, at the start of his principate.¹³⁷

Although Nero has been married to Octavia since 53, he shows no genuine affection for her, perhaps because of her inability (12.2) to fulfil his sexual desires, and he is unable to resist the sexual attraction of the freedwoman Acte (12.1–2), who later (14.2.1) comes to the assistance of Seneca in curbing Nero's incestuous intercourse with his mother; Nero is therefore depicted as submitting to the controlling influence of a freedwoman in a reversal of both social and gender hierarchies.¹³⁸ When he hears from Paris (the freedman of his aunt Domitia) the allegation whereby Agrippina was conspiring against him, he acts irrationally and without self-control, resolving in his drunken stupor to execute Agrippina summarily (20.1–3) before Burrus curbs his irrationality. Further concession to pleasure and a conspicuous lack of sound judgement on Nero's part is shown by Tacitus' accounts of his nocturnal brawls (25.1–3, 47.1–2). Nero's tyrannical *saeuitia*—exemplified by his poisoning Britannicus in 55 (15–17), his attacking, and subsequent destruction of, the *laticlavius* C. Iulius Montanus during the following year (25.2), and his relegation of Cornelius Sulla to Massilia on spurious grounds in 58 (47.3)¹³⁹—is a further corollary of his lack of self-control.¹⁴⁰

Woodman-Martin 1996: 284–6). This conception of *uirtus* as being dependent upon self-control is also found in Stoic doctrine; cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 2.48, Sen. *Const. Sap.* 19.2.

¹³⁴ Cf. 3.3 *et aliquando carminibus pangendis inesse sibi elementa doctrinae ostendebat*. At 14.15.1 Tacitus stresses the effeminacy of the aristocrats' conduct, and the extent of their deviation from aristocratic *mores*, when they sang on stage, inspired by the theatricality of their patron Nero (*non nobilitas cuiquam, non aetas aut acti honores impedimento, quo minus Graeci Latiniue histrionis artem exercerent usque ad gestus modosque haud uiriles*).

¹³⁵ As argued convincingly by Martin 1955: 123–8, Woodman 1998: 32–7.

¹³⁶ Woodman 1998: 158–9.

¹³⁷ Martin 1981: 162, Barrett 1996: 150, Ginsburg 2006: 50, Drinkwater 2019: 172.

¹³⁸ *Annales* 13 provides a paradigmatic example of a man who succumbs to his sexual desires, namely Octavius Sagitta, the plebeian tribune who is executed for murdering his lover in a fit of passion in 58 (44.1–5); see further Challet 2013: 64.

¹³⁹ Perhaps as a symptom of his lack of self-control, Nero entertained the delusion whereby the consular senator Cornelius Sulla (cos. 52; see further *PIR*² C 1464), who was in fact a man of placid and unambitious character (47.3 *maxime... despecta et nullius ausi capax natura*), was conspiring against him.

¹⁴⁰ Späth 2011: 139, 2012: 443, Schulz 2019: 103–104.

Although he strives at times to behave like an ideal man by asserting his lawful *potestas* and thereby attempting to restore social hierarchy,¹⁴¹ he is continually thwarted in doing so by his lack of moderation and sound judgment. His hasty and tendentious assertions of dominance over Agrippina therefore do not succeed:¹⁴² he rashly removes Agrippina's favourite freedman Pallas from the secretarial post *a rationibus* (14.1), then withdraws her personal bodyguard and removes her from the *Palatium* when he suspects her of forming an anti-Neronian faction following the murder of Britannicus (18.3), only to find himself appointing Agrippina's equestrian and senatorial protégés to important prefectures and provincial governorships once the allegations of conspiracy are proved to be false (22.1). Tacitus implies that however much Nero seeks to assert his own lawful *potestas*, he cannot fail to be swayed by his mother's *dominatio*.¹⁴³ The assassination of Agrippina in 59 (14.8.5) does not, however, enable Nero to act like an ideal man to any greater extent:¹⁴⁴ liberated from the controlling influence of his mother, he becomes unable to exercise any degree of self-control, and succumbs almost immediately to theatrical pleasures (14.15.4) which are an affront to the dignity of his principate; his sexual pleasures and conspicuous consumption are major themes in the narrative of the later years of his principate, as exemplified by the banquet of Tigellinus (15.37.1–4) and his construction of the *domus aurea* in 64 (15.42.1).¹⁴⁵

A further corollary of Nero's not wholly masculine behaviour is his reliance upon poison as a murder weapon in his plot to assassinate Britannicus (15.1–17.3); his character is thereby assimilated to that of two imperial women (his mother and Livilla), both of whom used poison to commit dynastic murders (12.66.1, Suet. *Tib.* 62.1), as well as the convicted poisoner Lucusta, upon whom he relies for the preparation of the deadly potion (15.3), and Medea in Greek mythology, whose paradigm perhaps initially gave rise to the ancient view that poison was a feminine weapon.¹⁴⁶ The male poisoner can therefore be construed as one who has not achieved sufficient *uirtus* to commit murder in a manly way (by employing his bodily vigour). The use of poison in the *Annales* brings about a further subversion of normative social and gender hierarchies, as a distinguished Roman general (Germanicus [2.74.2]), an emperor (Claudius [12.66.1–2]) and an heir to the Principate (Britannicus) are all destroyed by a weapon which low-born women (such as Martina [2.74.2] and Lucusta [15.3, 12.66.2]) have at their disposal.

¹⁴¹ Edwards 1993: 29.

¹⁴² As Poppaea also saw (14.1.1–3), the only way for Nero to end Agrippina's *dominatio* once and for all (and thereby exert his own *potestas* over both *domus* and *res publica*) was to have Agrippina assassinated. Nero himself remarks that the Principate would only be entrusted to him on the day of Agrippina's death (14.7.5).

¹⁴³ It is therefore puzzling that Agrippina disappears from *Annales* 13 entirely after the end of 55 (21.6 provides the last reference to her in *Annales* 13), not to reappear in Tacitus' narrative until 14.1.1, where once again Nero is described as being under her thumb (*qui iussis alienis obnoxius non modo imperii, sed libertatis etiam indigeret*; cf. 14.1.3 *cupientibus cunctis infringi potentiam matris*). If Nero had been under her control for nearly five years, as this passage suggests, one wonders why she is absent from Tacitus' narrative (which includes much description of domestic affairs, including the start of his affair with Poppaea in 58 [45–6]) for the whole of 56, 57 and 58. One can only speculate, but perhaps Nero had made some kind of compromise with his mother, only for his mistress Poppaea (who perhaps regarded Agrippina as a major obstacle to their future marriage; see further Ginsburg 2006: 46–7) to exert her own malign influence by suggesting that the destruction of Agrippina was a pre-requisite for his assertion of *potestas* (14.1.1–3).

¹⁴⁴ This is contrary to Nero's own expectation immediately prior to sanctioning his mother's assassination (14.7.5).

¹⁴⁵ See further Woodman 1998: 168–189.

¹⁴⁶ For a detailed discussion of this paradigm see 15.5n. *sed Nero lenti sceleris impatiens minitari tribuno*.

Agrippina's masculine traits can be read as a foil to the perceived effeminacy of her son.¹⁴⁷ One evidently masculine attribute of Agrippina is her fulfilling the priesthood of the deified Claudius (2.3 *flamonium Claudiale*), in line with Livia's fulfilment of that of the deified Augustus (1.8.1). Agrippina's greatest assertion of masculine behavioural traits is in her intrusion into the (normatively masculine) domains of the government of the *res publica*, which is far more frequent and conspicuous than that of any other Julio-Claudian woman. In Tacitus' narrative of 54 (5.1), she achieves what no woman has done before by listening to a meeting of the Senate (while it is convened in the Latin library within the temple of Apollo on the Palatine), hidden from the senators' view by a specially installed curtain. Although she is unable to prevent the desecration of Claudius' *acta*, the ability to listen to a meeting of the Senate is nonetheless depicted as an exceptional and unprecedented honour for a Roman woman.¹⁴⁸ A more conspicuous and jarring invasion of the masculine sphere is described by Tacitus at 5.2, when Agrippina comes close to causing a scandal by attempting to mount Nero's tribunal and address the Armenian deputation from the same platform as the emperor (Seneca only narrowly manages to prevent this by instructing Nero to dismount from his tribunal to greet his mother);¹⁴⁹ *et praesidere simul parabat* suggests that she conceived of herself as a *socia imperii*,¹⁵⁰ of equal status to her son.¹⁵¹ The attempted mounting of the tribunal is an act of transgression;¹⁵² Agrippina, in attempting to show herself as the emperor's equal, is intruding into the male sphere to an extent to which it is improper for any Roman woman to do so. She thereby threatens to undermine (in front of the Armenian ambassadors who look to Rome as a paradigm of order and stability) the very social

¹⁴⁷ Schulz 2019: 104, 106; *pace* Schulz, one should exercise caution in describing Agrippina (and other imperial *duces feminae*) as more than masculine, since her actions do not even meet the requisite criteria for the imputation to her of masculinity. Rather, Agrippina should, like her mother, perhaps be characterised as displaying some more masculine behavioural traits which render her behaviour closer to that of the stereotypical Roman man than that of any other imperial woman (and considerably closer than that of the ideal *matrona*). For this view, see further Späth 2012: 447–8.

¹⁴⁸ The syntactic parallelism and assonance of *quod uisum arceret, auditus non adimeret* (with *auditus* emphatically positioned at the beginning of its clause) helps to emphasise the unprecedented nature of Agrippina's privilege.

¹⁴⁹ The fact that under Claudius, Agrippina was present before the conquered British chiefs as they sued for peace in 50 (12.37.4) is remarkable, but perhaps less of a transgression (although Tacitus here remarks *nouum sane et moribus ueterum insolitum, feminam signis Romanis praesidere*): she sat at a separate tribunal, and therefore could not be construed by the Britons as acting as a *socia imperii* nor undermining the *auctoritas* of Claudius. Dio (61.3.3–4) reads the incident before the Armenian deputation as marking a turning point in Agrippina's relationship with Nero, at which Seneca and Burrus (Tacitus does not record the latter as playing any part in the incident) showed themselves to be a more powerful influence over the young emperor than his mother; this reading is not attractive in the light of the power which Agrippina continues to exert in the Tacitean narrative of 55.

¹⁵⁰ The suggestion that Agrippina was conceived as a *socia imperii* at Rome during the early part of Nero's principate is borne out by numismatic evidence; a series of gold and silver coins minted at Rome in the final weeks of 54 (*BMCRE* 1.200 nos. 1–3) depicts the head of Agrippina superimposed over that of Nero on the obverse; only Agrippina's titles are visible on the obverse, while Nero's are relegated to the reverse along with the image of the *corona ciuica*. In a later issue from early 55 (*BMCRE* 1.201 nos. 7–8), jugate heads of Nero and Agrippina appear on the obverse, with Nero's head in front of his mother's; Nero's titles appear on the obverse, with Agrippina's relegated to the reverse. This represents less of an honour for Agrippina, but is still exceptional by the standards of any imperial woman (Bauman 1992: 194, Ginsburg 2006: 72, Drinkwater 2019: 48). Nero's speech to the Senate after her assassination (written by Seneca) also accuses Agrippina of striving after *consortium imperii* (14.11.1). For the question as to whether Tiberius' mother Livia similarly acted as a *socia imperii* between 14 and her death in 29 see Woodman 1998: 159, 2017: 292–3.

¹⁵¹ Barrett 1996: 165, Ginsburg 2006: 39.

¹⁵² For this interpretation, see Barrett 1996: 165; Santoro L'hoir (1994: 23) interprets Agrippina's presence before the conquered Britons under Claudius in 50 (12.37.4) in the same way.

hierarchy on which the stable *res publica* depends.¹⁵³ The conception of Agrippina's behaviour as transgressive is further strengthened by Nero's justification of Agrippina's murder at 14.11.1 (written by Seneca), whereby he claimed rightly to have eliminated a woman who was striving after an unconstitutional *consortium imperii*, and whose improper assertions of masculine power were a threat to both masculine authority and the stability of the *res publica* (14.11.1 *quanto suo labore perpetratum ne inrumperet curiam, ne gentibus externis responsa daret!*).¹⁵⁴ That Agrippina had entered the masculine domain to the extent that she had become (*de facto*) a *socia imperii* is supported by the Senate's decrees following her death (14.12.1), whereby the measures enacted (such as the inclusion of her birthday among the *dies nefasti*) recall memory sanctions, as if she were herself a hated emperor.¹⁵⁵

Agrippina's tendency to behave like a man is further conveyed by her being the only character in *Annales* 13 to be granted an extended speech in *oratio recta* (21.2–5), when she opposes the charges of conspiracy levelled against her by her rivals Junia Silana, Domitia and their clients; *oratio recta* is otherwise granted only to prominent male characters (emperors, generals and leading senators) in the *Annales*. Agrippina is similarly the only character in *Annales* 14 to be granted *oratio recta* (14.8.3, 5) before the speech of C. Cassius Longinus at 14.43.1–44.4.¹⁵⁶ During her speech in *oratio recta*, Agrippina emphasises the extent to which she participates in the masculine affairs of state, as contrasted with the extent of her rivals' frivolity;¹⁵⁷ Agrippina emphasises how Domitia was concerned with her Baian villa's fishponds while she was entering the masculine sphere of imperial politics, securing the imperial succession for her son (21.3). An unexpected result of this is that Agrippina depicts herself as a worthier aristocratic *matrona*, especially since she shows herself to understand the responsibilities of motherhood far better than the childless nymphomaniac Silana (21.2).¹⁵⁸ That Agrippina's voice is given prominence at the expense of Nero's in *Annales* 13 is perhaps suggestive of the power dynamics within the *domus*, whereby Agrippina possibly exerted a greater influence over the *res publica* than any other member until her death (or at least the end of 55).¹⁵⁹ This interpretation is supported by the fact that in the narrative immediately following her speech in *oratio recta*, she is shown to be a prominent source of patronage (22.1), ensuring that her favourite equestrians (Faenius Rufus, L. Arruntius Stella and Ti. Claudius Balbillus) were elevated by Nero to high prefectures, and that one of her favourite senators (P. Anteius) was appointed to the governorship of Syria: although Nero was *de iure* responsible for these appointments, they were almost certainly the result of

¹⁵³ For the view that the image of Rome as a paradigm of stability in the eyes of foreigners relied upon the presence before them of the emperor and leading senators (as representatives of 'old Rome'), see Bauman 1992: 194. That an imperial woman could not, by definition, be a public representative of Rome's traditional aristocracy is already suggested by 12.37.4 (*nouum sane et moribus ueterum insolitum, feminam signis Romanis praesidere*); see further Pomeroy 1975: 169, Challet 2013: 160.

¹⁵⁴ Agrippina's excessive participation in, and influence over, the affairs of state ran contrary to Nero's promise to the Senate on his accession that the affairs of *domus* and *res publica* would be kept separate as far as was possible (4.2 *discretam domum et rem publicam*). The excessive intrusion of the women and freedmen of the *domus* into the *res publica* was a grievance often levelled by Roman senators against the Claudian principate; cf. 4.2, 11.2.1, 12.7.3 *uersa ex eo ciuitas, et cuncta feminae oboediebant*, Sen. *Apoc.* 13.5.

¹⁵⁵ Bauman 1992: 204, Flower 2006: 189–96.

¹⁵⁶ Devillers 1994: 253. Nero does not speak in *oratio recta* in the *Annales* until he opposes Seneca's retirement (14.55.1–56.2), three years after Agrippina's death.

¹⁵⁷ For frivolity as a negative feminine trait, see Challet 2013: 63.

¹⁵⁸ On motherhood as the *matrona*'s key virtue, see Pomeroy 1975: 183–4, Challet 2013: 96. On the negative stereotype of the aged nymphomaniac, see 21.2n.

¹⁵⁹ Barrett 1996: 177.

Agrippina's own patronage (21.6 *praemia amicis obtinuit*), and the influence which she was able to exert over the emperor at that time.¹⁶⁰

In the narrative of 54 and 55, Agrippina appears alongside, and in competition with, Nero's *amici* Seneca and Burrus as a *de facto* ruler of the empire, railing against Seneca and Burrus (14.3) in her desire for control over the immature emperor and, by extension, the *res publica*.¹⁶¹ In criticising Seneca's and Burrus' advice in front of Nero, she intrudes into the male sphere (and thereby shows her ability to control Nero) by denying the two counsellors' claims to *uirtus*, tendentiously suggesting that they are weak and therefore effeminate, the former through his duplicitous (and hence unmanly) words (*professoria lingua*; see *OLD professorius*) and the latter as a result of his physical deformities (*trunca...manu*).¹⁶² Her otherwise tendentious and puzzling expression of support for Britannicus' claim to the Principate (14.2) and her transgressive courting of the praetorians' support (in opposition to the emperor, her own son) on the basis of her being the admired Germanicus' daughter (14.3) can be explained as an attempt to secure her political influence over the state.¹⁶³

The transgressive nature of Agrippina's behaviour at this point is cited by Nero (14.11.1) as a justification of her murder: for a woman to demand the loyalty of the praetorians as if she were herself *imperator* was an unwelcome and excessive intrusion into the masculine sphere; being *imperator* was a masculine office. The phrase *in feminae uerba*, implying the gendered opposition between *femina* and *uir*, emphasises this intrusion (*adiciebat crimina longius repetita...iuraturas...in feminae uerba praetorias cohortes*).¹⁶⁴ Tacitus' suggestion that Agrippina was seeking the support of aristocrats to form *partes* following the death of Britannicus (18.2 *nomina et uirtutes nobilium...in honore habere, quasi quaereret ducem et partes*) is suggestive of her undertaking a feminine political operation to remove Nero, comparable to the alleged anti-Tiberian *partes* of her mother (4.40.3) and to the conspiracy of Sempronia who, already known for *uirilis audaciae facinora*, joined the *partes* of Catiline against the *res publica* (Sall. *Cat.* 25.1).¹⁶⁵

The fact that Agrippina, like Sempronia, would need a male leader to realise her plans, combined with there being no real prospect of Agrippina's alleged conspiracy's being realised, shows that no matter how much she strives to intrude into the masculine political domain, she fails to succeed in doing so, and requires the cooperation of a man to regulate

¹⁶⁰ For patronage as a useful gauge of Agrippina's power and influence (and influence at court generally), see further Saller 1982: 45, Barrett 1996: 177, Drinkwater 2019: 154.

¹⁶¹ Barrett 1996: 150, 170.

¹⁶² For duplicitousness as a stereotypically feminine trait, cf. 13.3 *insidias mulieris semper atrocis, tum et falsae* and see further Challet 2013: 67.

¹⁶³ Being the daughter of Germanicus (a plausible paradigm of martial *uirtus*) and Agrippina the Elder (another *dux femina* who showed the masculine traits of a general in quelling the German mutiny at 1.69.2), Agrippina the Younger is likely to have viewed both parents as courageous role-models acting within a normatively masculine sphere of activity. Barrett 1996: 170 emphasises how Agrippina's courting of military support here (from among the praetorians) recalls her mother's courting the support of the mutinous German legions, potentially against Tiberius, by plying them with gifts; cf. 1.69.1 *sed femina ingens animi munia ducis per eos dies induit militibusque, ut quis inops aut saucius, uestem et fomenta dilargita est* and see further Goodyear 1981: 124–5, Späth 2012: 447–8, Challet 2013: 81.

¹⁶⁴ Challet 2013: 81. On this opposition, see also Adams 1972a: 243–5.

¹⁶⁵ On the similarity of Agrippina and Sempronia see also Santoro L'hoir 1994: 24. On Tacitus' assimilation of his character of Poppaea Sabina to that of Sempronia at 45.2, see further Syme 1958: 1.353, 1981a: 47, Martin 1981: 168, Goodyear 1982: 275.

and execute her designs.¹⁶⁶ Agrippina's inability to come close to attaining *uirtus* is illustrated further by the invocation of negative gender stereotypes in Tacitus' depiction of her, suggesting that Agrippina, for all her aspiration to behave like a man, cannot rid herself of those negative traits deemed by Romans to be inherently feminine:¹⁶⁷ the pejorative connotations of *muliebriter* can be read alongside those of *fremere* at 13.1 (*sed Agrippina libertam aemulam, nurum ancillam aliaque eundem in modum muliebriter fremere*)¹⁶⁸ as implying the negative character trait whereby Agrippina took undue offence at Nero's courting Acte, lacking the emotional restraint which would be expected of the ideal man exhibiting self-control. Agricola, one of the Tacitean men who comes closest to attaining ideal *uirtus*, is shown as acting *neque...muliebriter* (Agr. 29.1) in response to his infant son's death; his emotional response can perhaps be considered the opposite of Agrippina's.¹⁶⁹ The elegiac associations of *blandimenta* in the Acte episode also show how the Tacitean Agrippina continues to uphold stereotypically feminine norms of behaviour:¹⁷⁰ in elegy, *blandimenta* or *blanditiae* were associated with the specious words of women who sought to lead their lovers away from the path to *uirtus* and even force them to submit to their control (in a manner recalling the Homeric Calypso and Circe).¹⁷¹ Agrippina employs *blandimenta* to force Nero to submit to her (13.2), by luring him into believing that he has the use of her bedroom to enjoy his illicit affair. Nero's advisors later warn him of Agrippina's insincerity, by suggesting that she conforms with the stereotypically feminine trait of duplicitousness (13.3 *et proximi amicorum metuebant orabantque cauere insidias mulieris semper atrocis, tum et falsae*).

The introduction of Poppaea Sabina at 45.1–46.3 can be read as a narrative device which anticipates the next major feminine political operation of the *Annales*,¹⁷² namely Poppaea's scheme to establish her own *dominatio* over the emperor by bringing about the destruction of Nero's mother Agrippina (14.1.1–3) and first wife Octavia (14.60.2) before securing the emperor's hand in marriage (*ibid.*), events which frame the narrative of *Annales* 14. While Poppaea is eminently capable of playing a masculine role (comparable with that of the Sallustian Sempronia, but with much greater impact upon the progression of the events depicted by the historical narrative) by exerting control over the weak emperor and urging him both to divorce Octavia and end Agrippina's influence (14.1.1–3), she is also portrayed (like Agrippina) as exerting a malign influence over the emperor through her use of *blandimenta* (46.2); she too is a match for Nero in her lust (*ibid.*), an inherently feminine trait.¹⁷³ The compatibility of Nero's personality with Poppaea's, insofar as vanity and sexual

¹⁶⁶ In this way, Agrippina and the other Tacitean imperial women are to be contrasted with the barbarian *dux femina* Boudicca (for whom cf. 14.31.1–37.2), who can exert power over a subject population independent of any male authority (14.35.2 *id mulieri destinatum: uiuerent uiri et seruirent*).

¹⁶⁷ Barrett 1996: 207, Challet 2013: 66, Woodman 2017: 195–6.

¹⁶⁸ For *fremere* governing an indirect statement with ellipsis of the infinitive, meaning 'to be enraged that...', cf. Agr. 27.1, *Hist.* 4.24.1, Liv. 1.17.7 and see further TLL 6.1.1284.35–61.

¹⁶⁹ See further Woodman 2014: 232–3. For the negative associations of the adjective *muliebris* with weakness and lack of self-control, see further Adams 1972a: 244.

¹⁷⁰ For Tacitus' use of elegiac diction to illustrate the gendered opposition between Nero and Agrippina, see also Ginsburg 2006: 44, Santoro L'hoir 2006: 152.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Prop. 1.15.41–2, Ov. *Am.* 2.9.45–6, 2.19.17–18, 3.7.11, 3.11.31–32, *Ep.* 13.153–4; for the woman's specious *blandimenta* elsewhere in Latin literature, cf. Sen. *Contr.* 12.5, Petron. 113, Apul. *Apol.* 98. For the view that the effeminate Nero was easily swayed by his female relations' *blandimenta* in their quest for control over him, cf. 12.64.3 *Lepida blandimentis ac largitionibus iuuenilem animum deuinciebat*. For *blandimenta* and *blanditiae* meaning 'specious words', see TLL 2.2028.68–2029.29, 2.2034.37–80.

¹⁷² Goodyear 1982: 275.

¹⁷³ Cf. Caecina Severus' *sententia* to this effect, as recorded in the senatorial debate at 3.33.3, and see further Woodman-Martin 1996: 295, Challet 2013: 64–5.

proclivity were concerned, was thought by Tacitus to spell disaster for the state (45.1 *non minus insignis eo anno impudicitia magnorum rei publicae malorum initium fecit*); this opening sentence provides the link with the preceding narrative of Octavius Sagitta (44.1–5), a senator ruined by his irrepressible lust,¹⁷⁴ while looking forward to Nero's dynastic murders and proclivity towards vice which characterise much of the domestic narrative of *Annales* 14. The union of these two immoral characters (combined with Nero's lack of an heir and subsequent dereliction of dynastic responsibilities) can therefore be read as bringing about the loss of *uirtus* at Rome, and thereby the enervation of both the imperial *domus* and the *res publica*.

Tacitus' often hostile attitude towards women might be explained by the fact that as an imperial senator who sought to uphold the longstanding privileges and prerogatives of his class, he was justifiably unsettled by the blurring of the boundaries between *domus* and *res publica*, and by the intrusion of the imperial household's women, freedmen and other non-senators into a political sphere in which traditionally they had no business.¹⁷⁵ The commonplace in imperial rhetoric whereby the emperor was not a monarch but rather the *princeps senatus* under a restored Republic (of which the corollary was that the emperor's *domus* could not be construed as differing from any other senator's household)¹⁷⁶ was perhaps responsible for senators' uneasiness about the blurring of these boundaries. Tacitus' criticism of imperial freedmen for their excessive influence within the *res publica*, employing similar language to that with which he criticises women, shows that his main concern is not these persons' gender, but rather their intrusion, as members of a private household without a magistracy or any form of *potestas*, into the public domain. Tacitus illustrates this fact at 14.1, where he accuses both Agrippina and Pallas of wielding a similar kind of power which is in both cases excessive and unconstitutional: just as Agrippina is accused of *superbia muliebris*, so Pallas is accused of exercising his power *uelut arbitrium regni*; Agrippina's *superbia* perhaps parallels Pallas' *tristis adrogantia* (for which cf. 2.2).¹⁷⁷ Agrippina is further shown to depend upon the freedman Pallas' influence for her own (14.1 *Nero infensus iis, quibus superbia muliebris innitebatur*), which suggests that feminine *potentia* is a facet of the *domus*' intrusion into public life. Tacitus' characterisation of the imperial women of *Annales* 13 should therefore be understood as an expression of political change: it is through the depiction of the imperial women's intrusion into the *res publica* that Tacitus emphasises the change in Rome's power base, from the Senate and magistrates to the imperial *domus* itself. It is through the narrative of gender role reversal, and subversion of normative gender, that Tacitus effectively conveys this blurring of *domus* and *res publica*, of private and public (contrary to Nero's promise at 4.2), and the concomitant (or perhaps consequent) decline of the Roman state.

Tacitus perhaps sees the increased influence of imperial women as being symptomatic of the reality of the Principate: far from being a continuation of the Republic, the Principate brought to Rome a monarchical system of government, whereby the affairs of the ruling dynasty could no longer be viewed in isolation from the state (as the domestic affairs of aristocrats

¹⁷⁴ Henderson 1989: 189.

¹⁷⁵ See Goodyear 1981: 363 ad 2.55.5–6 (on Piso's wife Plancina), Syme 1981a: 49–51, Wallace 1990: 3573–4, Woodman-Martin 1996: 296, Challet 2013: 81–3, 106. On the excessive influence of imperial freedmen see Mouritsen 2011: 93–101, 104–109.

¹⁷⁶ Brunt 1977: 116, Drinkwater 2019: 84.

¹⁷⁷ Both Pallas and Agrippina are characterised by avarice, a trait uncondusive to Roman *uirtus*: Agrippina coveted the wealthy and childless Junia Silana's estate (19.2), while Pallas was suspected of financial mismanagement within the *fiscus* (14.1).

could under the Republic). The similarity with which Tacitus depicts the influence of women and that of freedmen, by employing similar lexical fields of arrogance and unconstitutional power, shows that Tacitus is critical of women chiefly because, like freedmen, they make manifest the monarchical reality of government under the Principate.

Language and Style

Tacitus' distinctive, often idiosyncratic Latinity is a major theme of the commentary on *Annales* 13. The following sections offer an overall exposition of Tacitus' written style in terms of his characteristic sentence structure, lexical usages, wit and allusivity as manifested by *Annales* 13; fuller general accounts of Tacitean Latinity are given by Wölfflin 1867, Draeger 1882, Woodcock 1939: 11–33, Syme 1958: 1.340–63, 2.711–45, Kohl 1960, Kuntz 1962, Voss 1963, Ogilvie-Richmond 1967: 21–31, Adams 1972b: 350–73, Goodyear 1972: 334–50, Martin 1981: 214–35, Ash 2007: 14–26, 2018: 22–7, Oakley 2009: 195–211, Woodman 2014: 30–5.

Sentence Structure

Tacitus' preferred sentence structure in his historical works accords with his wider stylistic aims, namely the adoption of a Sallustian style suited to his role as a sceptical historian who solicits a heightened intellectual response from his readers. He rejects the two competing historical styles, on the one hand the expansive style exemplified by Livy,¹⁷⁸ and on the other the encomiastic style praised by Cicero and exemplified by Velleius' narrative of Augustus and Tiberius.¹⁷⁹ Although somewhat different from each other, both these styles are marked by the superficially attractive *concinnitas* created by periodic sentences which was felt by the sceptical historian to encourage the reader's meek acceptance of an established narrative;¹⁸⁰ the Sallustian style, with its brevity, jarring antitheses, pointed epigrams and sudden *uariatio*,¹⁸¹ encouraged more careful reading and a sceptical interpretation of the narrative, as though reality was different from appearance.¹⁸² It is therefore unsurprising that Tacitus looks to Sallust as a model for an effective sentence structure.

The rejection of the period allows Tacitus to construct sentences of varying lengths and structures as appropriate to the pace of his narrative and the level of emphasis which he wishes to confer.¹⁸³ Simple sentences are an ideal vehicle for Tacitus' characteristic *sententiae* because they lend them an aphoristic quality; cf. 19.1 *nihil rerum mortalium tam instabile ac fluxum est quam fama potentiae non sua ui nixa<e>*. Simple sentences, often exhibiting especial brevity through the ellipsis of *esse*, can confer an especial degree of

¹⁷⁸ On the Livian sentence see Ogilvie 1965: 17–21, Oakley 1997: 128–42.

¹⁷⁹ The encomiastic style shows considerable rhetorical and declamatory ornamentation, especially in its use of pleonasm and pointed antithesis. Cf. Cic. *de Orat.* 2.64 and see further Syme 1958: 1.341, Gilmartin 1974: 222, McDonald 1975: 3, Woodman 1988: 124–6, 139–40, Dominik 1997: 64–5, Oakley 2020: 213–15.

¹⁸⁰ Ogilvie 1965: 19, McDonald 1975: 3–6, Dominik loc. cit., Oakley 1997: 128–36, 2020: 227–33.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Seneca's judgment on Sallust's style at *Ep.* 114.17, which mirrors Dionysius' (*Thuc.* 24, 51, 53) on Thucydides. On Sallustian brevity cf. also Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.82.

¹⁸² Woodman 1988: 117–28. Style and content in Tacitean historiography are therefore intrinsically linked (Goodyear 1972: 46, Woodman 1998: 231), as they are in Sallust, Livy and Velleius.

¹⁸³ Tacitus appears to praise the free and flowing (*prompta ac profluens*) eloquence of Augustus, the vigorous but obscure oratory of Tiberius (*ualidus sensibus*), the *uis* of Gaius and the *elegantia* of Claudius in equal measure (3.2); that his own style, designed to solicit an intellectual response from the reader at every juncture, would provide a combination of incisive *uis*, occasional obscurity and flowing *elegantia*, as achieved through judicious structuring of sentences, has been argued by Gilmartin (1974: 218–222).

emphasis upon a given action; cf. *ibid. statim relictum Agrippinae limen*. The employment of simple sentences in adversative asyndeton is a particularly effective means of creating vividness (*enargeia*) as well as a pointed antithesis, since the two antithetical main verbs ensure that equal emphasis is conferred upon differing or opposing elements of a scene or explanations of an event (impossible in a period which requires subordination);¹⁸⁴ see also 16.3n. *trepidatur a circumsedentibus, diffugiunt imprudentes*.

Complex sentences in Tacitus do not generally follow the structure typical of Livy and Velleius, in which an ordered series of adjuncts and subordinate clauses culminates in the main clause, but rather a different structure (employed by Sallust) known as the appendix sentence or *phrase à rallonge*,¹⁸⁵ whereby the main clause (which contains the main verb, sometimes elliptically) is set out first before being modified by a series of loosely appended subordinate clauses or participial adjuncts, which sometimes take the appearance of afterthoughts. The *phrase à rallonge* thereby enables the historian to shift the emphasis from the thought or action conveyed in the main clause to one which is conveyed in a subordinate clause or participial adjunct, allowing him to focus the reader's attention upon unexpected conclusions or details which might otherwise have been overlooked; it is often in the appendages of a Tacitean *phrase à rallonge* that one finds an important nuance or shade of meaning not conveyed by the main clause, with the result that doubt is cast upon the truth which the main clause conveys. *Annales* 13 contains many examples of this highly effective narrative technique which accords well with Tacitus' literary aims of creating drama and *enargeia*, questioning previously accepted truths and building a sense of irony. Three conspicuous examples (with analysis) are as follows:

2.1 *hi [sc. Burrus et Seneca] rectores imperatoriae iuventae et, rarum in societate potentiae, concordēs diuersa arte ex aequo pollebant, Burrus militaribus curis et seueritate morum, Seneca praeceptis eloquentiae et comitate honesta, iuuantes in uicem, quo facilius lubricam principis aetatem, si uirtutem aspernaretur, uoluptatibus concessis retinerent*. The main clause (*hi...pollebant*) with embedded parenthesis (*rarum...potentiae*) signifies that Nero's advisors Seneca and Burrus exerted equal influence over the young emperor by different means; the two parallel clauses *Burrus...morum* are predicative and epexegetic of *hi*, with the nominatives *Seneca* and *Burrus* each followed by two instrumental adjuncts modifying *pollebant*;¹⁸⁶ the equipoise of the two instrumental adjuncts mirrors the concept being described (namely harmony between Nero's two counsellors), achieving mimetic syntax. The subject *hi* is further modified by a participial adjunct (*iuuantes...retinerent*) with embedded conditional clause *si...aspernaretur*. The sentence's main emphasis is thereby conferred upon the information in the participial adjunct, namely that Seneca's and Burrus' partnership ensured the application of two different skill-sets to the young emperor's counselling; the embedding of the conditional clause allows the words *uoluptatibus concessis retinerent* to stand in the emphatic final position and provide an apposite summary of Seneca's and Burrus' policy.

31.1 *Nerone iterum L. Pisone consulibus pauca memoria digna euenere, nisi cui libeat laudandis fundamentis et trabibus quis molem amphitheatri apud campum Martis Caesar*

¹⁸⁴ On this technique see further Voss 1963: 24–6.

¹⁸⁵ This term was coined by Chausserie-Laprée (1969: 283–336); see also Martin 1981: 221–3, O'Gorman 2000: 3–5, Damon 2003: 29 and n. 185, Ash 2007: 20.

¹⁸⁶ As often in Tacitus, the first two of these instrumental adjuncts (referring to Burrus) follow a chiasmic structure: *militaribus curis* (instrumental ablative noun following the adjective which qualifies it) *et seueritate morum* (instrumental ablative noun preceding the defining genitive which modifies it).

exstruerat uolumina implere, cum ex dignitate populi Romani repertum sit res inlustres annalibus, talia diurnis Urbis actis mandare. The ablative absolute *Nerone...consulibus* (the conventional annalistic dating formula) modifies the main clause's verb *euenerere*, providing the initial impression that little of interest to a historian occurred in 57; the information in the subordinate clauses which follow provides a more nuanced perspective on Tacitus' stance; the conditional clause *nisi...implere* provides a clarification of Tacitus' judgment presented as an ironic critique (possibly directed at the elder Pliny; see 20.2n.) of historians who impart such trivia as an amphitheatre's structure. The concessive clause *cum...mandare* takes the reader to the heart of the question as to what material is worthy of annalistic historiography, stressing both Tacitus' own approach to history and his predecessors' naivety. The sentence-final position of *diurnis Urbis actis mandare* emphasises that trivia belong in the daily gazette rather than historiography.

43.3 *ille [sc. Suillius] nihil ex his sponte susceptum, sed principi paruisse defendebat, donec eam orationem Caesar cohibuit, compertum sibi referens ex commentariis patris sui nullam cuiusquam accusationem ab eo coactam.* The main clause conveys Suillius' refutation before the Senate of the charges levelled against him (namely extortion and *calumnia*), whereby he argues that he merely followed Claudius' orders. *Enargeia*, and the sense of a heated exchange in the Senate, is created by the appended temporal clause *donec...cohibuit* which conveys the emperor's intercession;¹⁸⁷ the participial adjunct in which the present participle *referens* qualifies *Caesar* and governs an indirect statement *compertum sibi...ex commentariis patris sui* (which in turn governs a further indirect statement *nullam cuiusquam accusationem ab eo coactam*) emphasises that Nero (perhaps disingenuously) maintained that his predecessor had not ordered any prosecutions and that Suillius' defence was baseless.

Tacitus further creates a sense of the unexpected by constructional *uariatio*, whereby the grammatical construction is unexpectedly changed midway through a sentence, resulting in *inconcinnitas* (and in the most extreme cases *anacoluthon*); this is a development of a Sallustian technique which serves, yet again, as a sceptical historian's reaction against the speciously elegant encomiastic style (of which *concinnitas* is a key feature). *Variatio* is pervasive throughout *Annales* 13 and all other works of Tacitean historiography,¹⁸⁸ but some conspicuous examples of the technique are worthy of discussion: at 1.1 the sequence *non quia...uerum* is read instead of the expected *non quia...sed quia*. At 15.3 *urgentibusque Agrippinae minis, quia nullum crimen neque iubere caedem fratris palam audebat, occulta molitur pararique uenenum iubet*, one explanation of Nero's decision to murder Britannicus is conveyed by a causal ablative absolute, the other by a causal clause introduced by *quia* (see further n. ad loc.). At 16.4 *quippe sibi supremum auxilium ereptum et parricidii exemplum intellegebat*, the verb *intellegebat* needs to be understood as governing both an indirect statement (*sibi...ereptum*) and a direct accusative object (*exemplum*). At 19.3 *non uetera et saepius iam audita deferens...sed destinauisse eam Rubellium Plautum, per maternam originem pari ac Neronem gradu a diuo Augusto, ad res nouas extollere, deferre* governs both a direct accusative object (*non uetera et...audita*) and an indirect statement (*sed destinauisse...extollere*). At 21.6 *sed ultionem in delatores et praemia amicis obtinuit*, the complement of *ultio* is a prepositional phrase (*in* + accusative) whereas that of *praemia* is a dative of advantage. At 54.4 *quod comiter a uiscentibus exceptum quasi impetus antiqui et*

¹⁸⁷ On this use of *donec* in historical prose see Chausserie-Laprée 1969: 633–40.

¹⁸⁸ For a comprehensive exposition of Tacitean *uariatio* see Sörbom 1935.

bona aemulatione, the subject is modified by a genitive of description (*impetus antiqui*) and an ablative of quality (*bona aemulatione*).¹⁸⁹

Another way in which Tacitus both maintains the reader's attention and violates expectations is in his variation of standard syntactic structures. This is a pervasive feature of Tacitus' style (influenced not only by Sallust but also poets from the Augustan period onwards) in all his historical works; some selected examples from *Annales* 13 will suffice. He subverts the conventional rules for constructing indirect commands by construing *iubere* with a clause (as if it were *imperare* in standard Latin) and *impellere* with an accusative of the person ordered and infinitive (as if it were *iubere*; see 15.2n., 19.4n.); construes *mos habetur* as if it were *mos est* (16.1n.); construes *arguere* as governing an accusative of the person accused and a causal clause where the standard construction has *arguere* governing an accusative of the person and a genitive of charge (18.1n.); freely uses disyllabic prepositions such as *iuxta*, *coram* and *extra* in anastrophe in accordance with poetic practice (15.5n. *cubiculum Caesaris iuxta*, 21.1n. *Seneca coram*, 47.2 *urbem extra*).¹⁹⁰ *Consentire* meaning 'to conspire to do something' governs a final clause (on the analogy of *coniurare* and *conspirare*) whereas in standard Latin it governs an infinitive (23.1n.); the deverbative abstract *experimentum* governs an indirect question (in the sense 'proof whereby'), perhaps on the analogy of the verb *experiri* and the noun's near-synonym *documentum*, whereas elsewhere it governs an objective genitive (24.1n.); *increpare* (meaning 'to castigate someone for being...') governs an accusative of the person and a predicative accusative (42.2 [sc. *Suillius*] *Senecam increpans infensum amicis Claudii*),¹⁹¹ whereas in the standard construction, *increpare* governs an accusative of the person and a causal clause (*TLL* 7.1.1053.31–9). Some of Tacitus' syntactic constructions have a distinctly archaising flavour: in the *Annales* he more often construes the verb *egere* with an archaic genitive complement, as was the norm in pre-Ciceronian Latin,¹⁹² than with the standard ablative.¹⁹³ He also makes use of the distinctly archaising construction whereby *ire* governs the supine to mean 'to set out to do something', restored by conjecture at 17.2 (see n.) but also attested at 4.1.1, *Hist.* 2.6.2, in Sallust and in Livy.

Tacitean sentences frequently exhibit syllepsis, whereby a lexeme needs to be understood in two or more different senses depending upon which of two or more constituents it governs.¹⁹⁴ Cf. 15.2n. *quo euolutum eum sede patria rebusque summis significabatur*, where *euolutum* should be understood slightly differently depending upon whether it governs *sede patria* or *rebus...summis*; 16.1n. *propria et parcioire mensa*, where *mensa* is to be understood literally when qualified by *propria* but metaphorically when qualified by *parcioire*; 17.2n. *stupro prius quam ueneno pollutum*, where *pollutum* has a more metaphorical sense when governed by

¹⁸⁹ Cf. 5.1.1 *Iulia Augusta...aetate extrema, nobilitatis...clarissimae* (if the text is sound; see Woodman 2017: 52 for discussion), 6.15.1 [sc. *Vinicius*] *equestri familia erat, mitis ingenio et comptaefacundiae*, 12.2.3 *femina expertae fecunditatis, integra iuuenta* with Sörbom 1935: 77.

¹⁹⁰ The anastrophe of *extra* is paralleled only in poetry; cf. *Lucr.* 2.1045, *Juv.* 16.16, *Prud. Psych.* 612 and see further *TLL* 5.2.2060.48–52. For anastrophe of prepositions in literary Latin generally, see Malloch 2013: 66 (and bibliography there cited).

¹⁹¹ This variant construction is found elsewhere in Tacitus; cf. 6.7.2, 12.1 *Caesar modice tribunum increpans ignarum antiqui moris ob iuuentam*, 12.14.3, *Hist.* 2.44.1 with G-G 649a.

¹⁹² Already in Cicero, *egere* + abl. outnumbers *egere* + gen. by 93:2, while in the archaising Sallust, *egere* + gen. outnumbers *egere* + abl. by 7:4.

¹⁹³ In the *Agricola* and *Historia* Tacitus only construes *egere* with an ablative complement (he does not use *egere* at all in the *Germania* and *Dialogus*). In the *Annales* the genitive complement (for which cf. 3.2, 4.20.2, 12.49.1, 66.1) outnumbers the ablative (for which cf. 49.2, 12.5.3, 14.43.2) by 4:3.

¹⁹⁴ On syllepsis in Tacitus see Voss 1963: 16–17.

stupro than when governed by *ueneno*; 19.2n. *insignis genere forma lasciuiia*, where *insignis* needs to be understood in three subtly different senses ('glorious', 'outstanding' and 'notorious') depending upon whether it governs *genere*, *forma*, or *lasciuiia*. Syllepsis not only achieves the economy of diction necessary for Tacitus' desired brevity, but also keeps the reader engaged by creating an element of surprise, allows scope for wit, and contributes to the sense of an imperial rhetoric characterised by *dissimulatio* (whereby what one says differs from what one means) and ambiguities in which the meanings of words are no longer clear or secure.

Lexis

The concept that historiographical prose should employ lexis of a more elevated register than that of forensic oratory, epistolography and technical treatises was familiar in the Roman rhetorical schools of Tacitus' time.¹⁹⁵ Quintilian, a near-contemporary of Tacitus, had suggested that historiography was the prose genre closest to poetry,¹⁹⁶ and should therefore freely admit the archaic, recondite and otherwise artificial lexemes employed by poets in order to elevate the stylistic level above that of everyday communication among educated Romans. The concept that stylistic elevation is proper to the genre of historiography was already known in classical Greece: at ps.-Longin. *De Subl.* 31 it is suggested that Herodotus acquired lexical usages and modes of expression from Homeric epic, the most artificial genre of literature. It is through meticulous lexical choice, necessitating the judicious employment of the archaic, the recondite and the poetic and the eschewal of the mundane, the hackneyed and the vulgar, that the writers of historiography of both Greece and Rome achieved the *dignitas* for which their genre came to be known.¹⁹⁷

In the first century BC, Cicero, Caesar and Varro had made significant contributions to the refinement of the Latin prose lexicon, eliminating anomalous morphological forms and obsolete lexemes.¹⁹⁸ Whilst these developments were beneficial to forensic oratory, the technical treatise and the *commentarius* on account of the impression of artlessness and precision which they afforded, they gave rise to a hackneyed and regularised lexicon unsuited to historiography, a genre which relies upon originality and a sense of the unexpected to maintain its reader's interest. For this reason, Sallust (when writing his first work, the *Bellum Catilinae*, around 42 BC) employed a radically different lexicon inspired by that of Ennius (as Herodotus' had been by that of Homer) as well as the weighty orators and annalists of the second century BC, especially Cato the Elder.¹⁹⁹ Although he reverted to the periodic sentence structure characteristic of Cicero and Caesar, Livy took inspiration from Sallust for his rich lexicon which made liberal use of archaisms, poeticisms and other artificial

¹⁹⁵ Tacitus' lexical selectivity is a significant topic which has several full expositions (Syme 1958: 2.711–42, Goodyear 1968: 22–31, Adams 1972b: 350–73); this section provides merely an exposition of the most striking lexical usages in *Annales* 13 and their literary origins.

¹⁹⁶ Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.31 *est [sc. historia] enim proxima poetis*. For a similar view, cf. Cic. *de Orat.* 3.153–4 (where Antonius suggests that artificiality of diction is required to elevate the stylistic level of historical writing above that of mundane annals to that which closely resembles belletristic Greek historiography, as exemplified by Herodotus and Thucydides).

¹⁹⁷ For *dignitas* as a concept in historiography, see further Russell 1964: 181–2, Goodyear 1972: 342–3, Woodman 1983: 55, Oakley 1998: 137–8.

¹⁹⁸ Oakley 1997: 145 n.178.

¹⁹⁹ Skard 1933: 22, Woodman 1977: 33–4.

lexemes;²⁰⁰ Velleius' and Curtius' lexica are broadly similar.²⁰¹ While his extant *Naturalis Historia* is not a work of historiography, Pliny the Elder also produced a history of Rome (the now fragmentary *a fine Aufidi Bassi*)²⁰² and the lexicon of his extant work is typical of the post-Sallustian historiographical genre.²⁰³ It is not, therefore, surprising that Tacitus' lexical usages in all his extant works (except for the *Dialogus*, whose more Ciceronian lexicon suits its dialogic context) largely follow Sallustian precedent.

Tacitus, however, is no slavish imitator of Sallust nor any other historian, and his lexicon is at the same time both more varied and more judicious. Tacitus avoids some of Sallust's grandiloquent excesses,²⁰⁴ while simultaneously broadening his lexicon with recondite usages, *hapax eiremena*, poeticisms and other artificialities not found in Sallust nor any of his predecessors in the historical genre.²⁰⁵ While Tacitus' lexicon undergoes constant refinement throughout his historical *oeuvre* (the *Agricola*, *Germania*, *Historiae*, *Annales*), with lexemes continually discarded in favour of new, more apposite usages, Syme's theory whereby Tacitus employed a more overtly Ciceronian, less Sallustian lexicon in the later *Annales* (11–16)²⁰⁶ is not supported by the lexical evidence, analysed at length by Adams (1972b: 350–73); one should rather posit that Tacitus, as a consummate stylist, continually adapted his lexical choices to suit the tone and context of individual passages, all of which leave a unique impression on the reader; a corollary of this is the fact that all Tacitean stylistic considerations are driven by a penchant for the unexpected and a studied avoidance of tedium, which explains the historian's need to vary those lexical usages (whether standard or artificial) which had become trite through over-use. The differing frequency of a given lexeme in *Annales* 11–16 compared with that in the *Historiae* and Tiberian hexad is therefore unlikely to be meaningful (*pace* Syme), since all Tacitean lexical choices are contextually dependent.²⁰⁷

Many artificial lexemes which are unattested in extant first-century BC prose are employed by Tacitus for the first time in *Annales* 11–16, while many usages which are more generally acceptable in belletristic Latin prose are discarded by the historian in these books. *Annales* 13, far from showing any tendency towards more Ciceronian usages, amply demonstrates the refinement, richness and appropriateness of Tacitus' historical lexicon with its multiple influences. *Annales* 13 contains numerous archaisms which recall both Ennius and the grandiloquent republican orators, affording the historian's narrative a solemn grandeur appropriate to its moralising ends, and often allowing the historian to establish a link with a more dignified republican past through his use of language; it is therefore not surprising that the noble consular senator and victim of Agrippina Junius Silanus (1.1) and the innocent Pomponia Graecina (wife of the former governor of Britain, A. Plautius, at 32.2) are

²⁰⁰ Livy, however, becomes slightly more sparing in his employment of artificial lexemes in the Third Decade, and demonstrably more so in the Fourth and Fifth, employing them only where such a usage is particularly apposite in the context (Adams 1974: 62, Murgia 1993: 97, Oakley 1997: 146–7).

²⁰¹ Woodman 1977: 43–4, Atkinson 1980: 43–8, Oakley 2020: 215–19.

²⁰² See 20.2n.

²⁰³ Healey 1987: 3–24.

²⁰⁴ Syme 1958: 2.731–2.

²⁰⁵ Some Tacitean artificialities may be inspired by Augustan and post-Augustan poetry; see further 15.5n., 16.2n., 17.1n., 17.3n., Baxter 1971: 93–107, 1972: 246–9, Woodman 1998: 74–7, 119–24, 232–3, 2017: 224, Ash 2007: 16, Keitel 2008: 705, Joseph 2012: 3–12.

²⁰⁶ Syme 1958: 1.359–62.

²⁰⁷ If any trends in lexical change can be detected, they rather suggest (*pace* Syme) that Tacitus shows increased archaising tendencies as he moves from the *Historiae* to the *Annales*, and from the Tiberian hexad to the Claudian and Neronian books. See further Goodyear 1972: 334–5.

described as *insons*.²⁰⁸ This is an archaic and grandiloquent synonym of *innocens* unattested in Cicero but revived by Sallust and used as a conscious archaism by epic and tragic poets from Virgil onwards as well as Livy, Valerius Maximus, Curtius and Tacitus,²⁰⁹ when used to describe the avaricious Eprius Marcellus at 33.3, the archaising adjective has a piquant irony which *innocens* would not convey as pointedly. *Claritudo*, an archaising synonym of common *claritas*, recalls Cato, Sisenna and Sallust (23.1n.) and is apt for Sulla's descent from republican nobility. *Apisci*, the archaic simple form of the common compound *adipisci* (21.3n.) which achieves pointed paronomasia with Domitia's *piscinas* in the preceding clause, is used in Agrippina's *oratio recta* to convey the solemnity of her preparing Nero for the Principate;²¹⁰ fifth-declension *plebes* (24.1) ironically lends a republican moralising tone to the narrative of the theatrical *licentia* so typical of Nero's principate. As an archaising writer, Tacitus also freely employs those lexemes which had wide currency in the first century BC but were obsolete by his own time, such as the frequentative verb *uentitare* (18.3n.) and the compound *deligere* (16.1, 29.1).

Poetic lexemes are especially common in the book's dramatic and tragic narratives, including those of the murder and funeral of Britannicus (15–17), the suicide of Julius Montanus (25.2) and the Armenian expedition (34–41). The poetic usage of simple *rapere* for compound *eripere* (16.2n. *ut uox pariter et spiritus...raperentur*) strengthens a Virgilian allusion, enabling the depiction of Britannicus' death in tragic Virgilian language,²¹¹ while Nero, feigning a lack of concern over his stepbrother's collapsing at the table, is described as being *reclinis* in an apathetic pose (16.3n.). Tacitus similarly uses common lexemes in artificial senses normally restricted to poetry; *saeva* is predicated of *mors* (Britannicus' death; see 17.2n.) in the sense 'shocking', while *polluere* (17.2n.) is used in its artificial poetic sense 'to rape' and *pererrare* (25.1n.) has its transitive poetic sense 'to wander over'. Tacitus uses the neuter plural substantive *auia* to denote the pathless tracts of Armenia (37.3); the adjective *auius* ('pathless') is probably an Ennian coinage,²¹² a more recondite synonym of *inuius* which is common in hexameter verse but (except in quotations) only admitted in prose by historians (Sallust, Livy, Velleius, Curtius, Tacitus, Florus) and other writers of the late first and second centuries AD who permit artificialities (Frontinus, the pseudo-Quintilianic *Declamationes*, Suetonius, Apuleius).²¹³ Only Velleius (once), Tacitus (eleven times), Florus and Apuleius (once each) admit *auia* as a neuter plural substantive meaning 'pathless tracts', a recondite usage otherwise restricted to the most elevated poetry.²¹⁴

Many Tacitean usages are not easily classified as archaic or poetic, but are nonetheless far removed from the everyday educated register of the early second century AD, and

²⁰⁸ As is Junius Silanus' son at 15.52.3.

²⁰⁹ Tacitus uses *insons* 15 times elsewhere in his historical works (3.67.1, 4.13.3, 20.4, 22.3, 6.48.4, 11.26.2, 14.44.3, 58.2, 15.52.3, 65.1, 73.1, 16.10.4, 24.2, *Hist.* 2.13.1, 3.14.1); *innocens* occurs 22 times (1.22.1, 48.2, 2.48.3, 77.2, 4.28.3, 33.3, 34.2, 44.1, 16.29.2, *Agr.* 16.5, 45.2, *Hist.* 1.6.1, 9.2, 21.2, 30.3, 37.2, 56.1, 82.1, 2.37.2, 3.70.2, 4.7.2, 3). The frequency of *insons* is highest in the Neronian *Annales* (in which it outnumbers *innocens* by 10:1), perhaps because the emperor's destruction of innocent *nobiles* is such a prominent theme in these books. On its distribution, see further Adams 1972b: 357–8, Oakley 2005: 174, Malloch 2013: 402–3.

²¹⁰ On the composition and function of *oratio recta* in Tacitus see 21.2n.

²¹¹ Tacitus, in line with poets, often prefers the simple verb form to its compound equivalent (especially if the latter is in common use), perhaps for its directness; see 15.1n. *turbatus*, Syme 1958: 2.726, Adams 1972b: 363. On the Virgilian allusion see pp. 38–9 and nn. 235–6.

²¹² Skard 1933: 27–8.

²¹³ On its distribution see further Oakley 2005: 260.

²¹⁴ The substantive *auia* is restricted to epic (Virgil's *Aeneid*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Lucan, Valerius Flaccus, Silius, Statius' *Achilleid*) except for one instance in Martial; see further *TLL* 2.1447.82. Tacitus' usage, like Velleius', is probably inspired by epic precedent; see further Ash 2007: 334, Woodman 2014: 280.

conspicuous for their rarity or artificiality (or both). The comparative *metuentior* (derived from a present participle) has a Ciceronian flavour (cf. the analogous *amantior*) but is rare in extant Latin, being paralleled only in Ovid and Silius (25.3n.). Artificial frequentative forms (whose semantics are not discernibly frequentative) are common, such as *imperitare* (32.3, 42.1), used 23 times elsewhere by Tacitus, but otherwise attested only in Plautus (twice), Accius, Lucretius (once each), Sallust (six times), Horace (four times), Virgil (once), Livy (ten times), Curtius (twice), Silius and Apuleius (once each). Adjectival *suetus* meaning ‘customary’ (for which cf. 8.1, 42.3, 46.3 and see further *OLD suetus* 2) has a total of 25 attestations in Tacitean historiography but is rare elsewhere, being found only in Sallust (3 times),²¹⁵ Virgil (three times), Horace (once), Livy (three times), Curtius (once), the younger Seneca (once in prose, once in verse), Lucan (twice), Valerius Flaccus (once), Statius (fourteen times), Silius (ten times), Juvenal (once) and Apuleius (twice). In his historical works, Tacitus shows a strong preference for the artificial *ualidus* (for which cf. 3.2, 8.3, 15.4, 18.1, 22.2, 25.3, 39.1, 41.2, 55.1) over the standard *firmus* (not used after *Annales* 4), with the former outnumbering the latter by 122:10; in the *Dialogus*, he uses *firmus* three times, *ualidus* never.²¹⁶ This distribution suggests that Tacitus, ever the consummate stylist, upholds the generic distinction between oratorical dialogue (requiring lexis of the everyday educated register) and historiography (requiring elevated and artificial lexis) and favours the lexeme most appropriate to each genre.²¹⁷ *Hapax eiremena* and extreme lexical rarities (particularly compounds) are a distinctive feature of Tacitus’ style, as he strives to select a strikingly apposite term (or in some cases perhaps even coins one) to describe an unprecedented or unusual situation; hence Britannicus’ drink is *praecalida* (a compound adjective otherwise unattested before late antiquity; see 16.2n.) and Junia Silana was for a long time *Agrippinae...percara* (*percarus* is a rare compound; see 19.2n.), while autocracy (*regnum*) is described using the extremely rare privative compound *insociabile* which facilitates an allusion to Curtius (17.1n.).²¹⁸

Use of Wit

Among writers of historiography in antiquity, Tacitus is the most renowned for his use of wit.²¹⁹ This need not necessarily imply that Tacitus is a humorous writer (although many passages of his historiography convey a subtle grim humour);²²⁰ rather it is the case that, following precedents set by Sallust,²²¹ the younger Seneca and the orators (both declamatory and forensic) of the first century AD (but to a greater extent than any of his predecessors),²²² Tacitus exploits the rhetorical possibilities of the Latin language to create a sense of irony and to emphasise the absurdity of the political situations which he narrates. Although difficult

²¹⁵ For the usage in Sallust, see further Skard 1933: 52.

²¹⁶ G-G 470, 1735–6.

²¹⁷ On the difference in register between *ualidus* and *firmus*, see further Adams 1974: 59, Murgia 1993: 93–4. Poets also uphold this distinction, with *ualidus* preferred in epic, *firmus* in lower genres such as elegy, invective and epigram; in the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid uses *ualidus* 17 times alongside 3 instances of *firmus*, while in the elegiac *Heroides* and *Ars Amatoria*, *firmus* outnumbers *ualidus* by 8:2 and 4:1 respectively.

²¹⁸ Cf. the equally rare *dissociabilis* at *Agr.* 3.1. Ovid also has a penchant for such compounds (cf. *innabile* at *Met.* 1.16). On Tacitean *hapax eiremena* see further Miller 1970: 111–19.

²¹⁹ For a detailed discussion and categorisation of Tacitus’ uses of wit throughout his historical *oeuvre*, see Plass 1988 *passim*. On the difficulties of defining wit, see *ibid.* 6–7.

²²⁰ Such grim humour is especially pervasive in Tacitus’ narrative of the murder of Britannicus (15–17) and tragicomic depiction of the suicide of Julius Montanus (25.2).

²²¹ On wit in Sallust see especially Latte (1935), Syme 1964: 240–74, Woodman 1988: 124–8; on Tacitus’ adoption of Sallustian epigram, Woodman 1988: 164–8.

²²² Plass 1988: 11–14. On Seneca’s use of wit see Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.129–30 with Laureys 1991, Williams 2015: 137–9.

to define, wit (for the purposes of Tacitean literary criticism) can be understood as any linguistic usage which creates a sense of the ironic, the unexpected or the absurd.²²³ Much of Tacitus' wit is expressed in the form of epigrams—pithy, pointed, often paradoxical expressions which use language to show a dichotomy between appearance and reality or to reveal a hidden truth; some epigrams take the form of generalised gnomic *sententiae* (for which see 19.1n.) which can be made universally applicable to all situations in Roman imperial politics, while others are only relevant to the immediate narrative context. All epigrams, whether their field of reference is specific or general, are designed to emphasise (often in a sharply moralising tone) accepted views on Roman politics and society as well as the nature of virtue and vice; they serve both a moralising function in suggesting that the reality of a political situation may differ from its outward appearance,²²⁴ and a historiographical function in outlining the historian's (often surprising at face value) attitude to a given situation, and how he might expect his ideal reader to interpret the events which he describes.²²⁵

Tacitus at all times seeks to show the Principate to be a system of government which is founded upon dissimulation (whereby one's words do not reflect one's true political understanding), since imperial rhetoric upholds the paradox whereby the emperor can be *primus inter pares*. Tacitus therefore frequently exploits the connotations of words to create double meanings and innuendo;²²⁶ this is a conspicuous feature of his rhetorical technique in *Annales* 13 and throughout his *oeuvre*, as is exemplified by the allusion to the imperial paradox in the narrative of the aftermath of Britannicus' murder, where Tacitus suggests (17.1n. *facinus cui plerique etiam hominum ignoscebant, antiquas fratrum discordias et insociabile regnum aestimantes*) that despite the gods' wrath against Nero, the majority of the Roman people relied upon their inner understanding of the Principate as a monarchy to come to terms with the crime. The force of the ironic *etiam* is perhaps that even the people, for all their naivety, understood the political reality of the situation (and were therefore prepared for morality to be sacrificed on the altar of political expediency), whereas the gods—for whom political expediency among mortals is irrelevant—cared only for upholding justice and punishing wrongdoing.²²⁷

An instance of perverted logic resulting in paradox is found at 31.3, where Tacitus, employing the rhetorical figure *para prosdokian* (violated expectation), writes *nam ante non minus tali largitione quam corripendis pecuniis subiectos adfligebant, dum quae libidine deliquerant ambitu propugnant*; the apparently absurd notion whereby a provincial governor could commit injustice by giving gifts to the provincials (as *largitione...subiectos adfligebant* implies) requires the reader to understand (as Tacitus' ideal imperial reader would) that such acts of *largitio* are merely a corollary of the corruption implied by *quae libidine deliquerant ambitu propugnant*.²²⁸ In a further conflation of virtue and vice, Tacitus suggests that awards

²²³ Plass 1988: 6–7.

²²⁴ O'Gorman 2000: 3.

²²⁵ On Tacitus' ideal reader, who should be a senator who favours sceptical interpretations of history, see Sinclair 1995: 34–40, O'Gorman 2000: 9–10.

²²⁶ Heubner 1964: 136, Lefèvre 1970: 82, Bastomsky 1982: 151–3, Plass 1988: 62–4, 139, Marincola 1997: 93–5, O'Gorman 2000: 11–14.

²²⁷ On the epigrammatic force of *etiam* see 17.1n.

²²⁸ Plass 1988: 51. On Tacitus' use of the rhetorical figure *para prosdokian* see also Voss 1963: 73–5, Plass 1988: 13, 28–31, 50–4. The language of paradoxical expressions exhibiting *para prosdokian* (such as 31.3, 53.1 and 45.1 cited) has a distinctly epigrammatic quality, achieved by the use of comparative particles and correlative phrases (often *magis...quam* or *minus...quam*) to create pointed antitheses; cf. 3.32.2 *Lepidum*

such as triumphal insignia had lost their significance under the Principate to the extent that it was more honourable for a legate to preserve peace than to fight (53.1 *quietae ad id tempus res in Germania fuerant, ingenio ducum, qui peruulgatis triumphis insignibus maius ex eo decus sperabant, si pacem continuauissent*). Perhaps the most conspicuous instance of perverted logic in *Annales* 13 is at 45.1, where Tacitus suggests that Nero's lover Poppaea Sabina possessed everything except a morally upright character (*huic mulieri cuncta alia fuere praeter honestum animum*); Tacitus' language (*huic mulieri cuncta alia fuere praeter*) creates an expectation that Poppaea is endowed with numerous virtues, only to subvert this by suggesting that she in fact has no virtues at all.²²⁹ Tacitus thereby subverts imperial rhetoric which (through *dissimulatio*) blurs the very boundaries between virtue and vice.

The eventual result of *dissimulatio* is that the significance of words and actions becomes obscure; even apparently innocuous words and actions have malicious implications, as is conveyed by Tacitus' use of antithetical explanations coupled by the disjunctive *an* or *uel* in accordance with the rhetorical figure *dubitatio*, whereby the syntax shows both explanations to be equally plausible, but the second (generally subversive) explanation is tacitly understood to be the most likely. Cf. 9.1 *et Vologaeses, quo bellum ex commodo pararet, an ut aemulationis suspectos per nomen obsidum amoueret, tradit nobilissimos ex familia Arsacidarum*, 12.2 *quando [sc. Nero] uxore ab Octauia...fato quodam an quia praeualent inlicita abhorrebat*, 19.1 *statim relictum Agrippinae limen, nemo solari, nemo adire praeter paucas feminas, amore an odio incertum*, 45.3 *rarus in publicum egressus [sc. Poppaeae], idque uelata parte oris, ne satiaret adspectum uel quia sic decebat*. *Dubitatio* skilfully conveys the notion that the true significance of events differs from their apparent significance; see further 19.1n. Another form of innuendo exploited by Tacitus to imply the far-reaching implications of political change is temporal innuendo, often signalled by the collocation of the adverbs *etiam tum*, and used to imply the comparison of a degenerate present with a more virtuous past;²³⁰ cf. 18.2 (with n.), 50.3.

Paronomasia is frequently exploited as a device for creating epigrammatic wit; at 21.3 (see n. ad loc.), the contrast between Domitia's frivolous tending of fishponds and Agrippina's serious involvement in the affairs of the Roman state is neatly expressed by the word-play in *piscinas* and *apiscendo imperio*, while the etymological word-play *potiente rerum...poteram* at 21.5 (see n. ad loc.) allows Tacitus' Agrippina (in her *oratio recta*) to dispel any notion that she could have supported Britannicus, despite the historian's unsettling claims to the contrary at 14.2. Tacitus' exploitation of the ironic connotations of words (often involving etymological word-play in both Latin and Greek) is further illustrated by his use of onomastic irony,²³¹ which sometimes conveys a profound sense of nominative determinism.²³² Agrippina is assisted in her plot to assassinate Junius Silanus (1.2) by the equestrian *procurator Asiae* P. Celer, whose *cognomen* has apposite connotations since swiftness was a

<m>item magis quam ignauum, 14.21.3 *laetitiae magis quam lasciuiae dari paucas totius quinquennii noctes*, *Hist.* 1.49.2 [sc. Galba] *alieno imperio felicius quam suo* with Voss loc. cit.

²²⁹ This rhetorical strategy of perverted expectation has its origins in Sallust's depictions of noble women perverted by relations with Catiline, including Aurelia Orestilla (*Cat.* 15.2 *Aureliae Orestillae, cuius praeter formam nihil unquam bonus laudauit*) and Sempronia (*Cat.* 25.3 *sed ei [sc. Semproniae] cariora semper omnia quam decus atque pudicitia fuit*). See further Goodyear 1982: 275, Boyd 1987: 197–9, Syme ap. Santangelo 2016: 173.

²³⁰ Woodman-Martin 1996: 403.

²³¹ On onomastic irony in Tacitus see also Henderson 1989: 168–9, 189, Woodman-Martin 1996: 491–3, Woodman 1998: 220–2, 2017: 50–1, Malloch 2013: 419, 461. On onomastic irony in literary Latin more generally see Ingleheart 2014: 51–72.

²³² See Henderson's (1989: 168–9) analysis of significant names.

desirable trait in a poisoner (see 15.5n. *lenti sceleris impatiens*); the ironic connotations of his *cognomen* are again exploited at 33.1, where Tacitus records Nero as prolonging his trial until he died of old age so that he could not be convicted of extortion in the province. It is significant that the only freedman to be executed for *calumniā* following the false allegations of conspiracy levelled against Agrippina was called Atimetus (his name means ‘despised, dishonoured’ in Greek; see 19.4n., 22.2n.), while the equestrian appointed *praefectus annonae* at Agrippina’s behest in 55 was Faenius Rufus, whose gentile name suggests both *faenum* (‘hay’) and *faenus* (‘loan’); see further 22.1n.

Allusivity

Tacitus frequently alludes to his predecessors Sallust, Livy and Curtius in order to affirm his place (sometimes agonistically) within a canon of Roman historians and to show that historiography deals with universal human experiences which recur throughout the ages.²³³ It is therefore significant that he uses the recondite adjective *insociabile* to qualify *regnum* at 17.1 (see n. ad loc.), thereby facilitating an allusion to the same phrase in Curtius (10.9.1) and allowing the expression to serve as a gnomic reflection, applicable to multiple ages, cultures and natures, on a fundamental quality of autocracy. His use of the contrastive adverbs *foris...domi* in successive clauses, contrasting events at Rome with those in the provinces, reflects a standard Livian dichotomy and stresses the applicability of traditional annalistic frameworks even under the Principate (25.1n.). It is very difficult not to see an allusion (conceptual if not verbal) to Sallust’s Sempronia in his description of Poppaea Sabina (45.2 *huic mulieri cuncta alia fuere praeter honestum animum*; cf. Sall. *Cat.* 25.3 *sed ei cariora semper omnia quam decus atque pudicitia fuit*);²³⁴ this thereby reinforces Tacitus’ adherence to the *saeva impudica* topos and his depiction of female vices from a traditionalist republican viewpoint. Although they do not constitute specific allusions, Tacitus’ use of archaising lexemes which recall Sallust (and, to a lesser extent, Livy) strengthens his position within the Roman historiographical canon.

Tacitus’ historiography frequently contains narratives invested with drama, tragedy and pathos; it is therefore unsurprising that significant poetic intertexts (with both epic and Senecan tragedy) can be found in his narratives, helping to characterise the events narrated by Tacitus as tragic and facilitating their analysis in accordance with a poetic framework. The narrative of Britannicus’ murder and funeral therefore contains frequent allusions both to tragic scenes in Virgil’s *Aeneid* and to Senecan tragedy; at 15.5, the predication of the adjective *lentum* of the noun *scelus* facilitates an allusion to Medea’s line at Sen. *Med.* 1016 *perfruere lento scelere, ne propera, dolor*, thereby enabling the association of Nero with the stereotype of the feminine poisoner (see n. ad loc.). At 16.2 *ut uox pariter et spiritus [eius] raperentur*, Tacitus recalls the fate of Dryops at the hands of the Sabine Clausus at Verg. *Aen.* 10.348 *uocem animamque rapit traiecto gutture*, itself an allusion to Hom. *Il.* 16.505,²³⁵

²³³ Woodman 1998: 231–6, 2017: 224, Ash 2012: 12–13. On the concept of intertextual allusion in Latin literature see especially Conte (1986), Conte and Barchiesi (1989), Hinds (1998), Whitton (2019). On the function of intertextuality as a means of striking a balance between tradition and innovation in historiography, see Woodman 1988: 127–8, Marincola 1997: 12–19. Intratextual allusion (to other passages within his historical *oeuvre*) is also a feature of Tacitus’ style; cf. 1.1 *prima nouo principatu mors* which recalls 1.6.1 *primum facinus noui principatus* and see further Goodyear 1972: 133, Martin 1981: 162, Woodman 1998: 26–7, 35, 70–85. Although Curtius’ date is contested, he is very likely to pre-date Tacitus (for this view see further Ash 2021: 330–46).

²³⁴ On Tacitus’ indebtedness to Sallust for his character-sketch of Poppaea at 45.1–4, see further Syme 1958: 1.353, 1981: 47, Martin 1981: 168, Goodyear 1982: 275.

²³⁵ Harrison 1991: 163.

thereby investing the poisoning of Britannicus with the pathos of a Virgilian death-scene and suggesting an ironic reversal whereby the last living descendant of Claudius (Claudius' son Britannicus; cf. 17.3) is himself destroyed.²³⁶ At 17.3 the predication of *acerbum* of *funus* perhaps constitutes an allusion to Verg. *Aen.* 6.428–9 (describing the dead children's souls in the Underworld) *quos dulcis uitae exsortis et ab ubere raptos | abstulit atra dies et funere mersit acerbo*; 6.429 is pointedly re-used of Pallas (a possible paradigm for Britannicus) at 11.28. The proliferation of Virgilian intertexts in the Britannicus death-scene encourages Tacitus' readers to feel the same pathos at the events described as the readers of Virgil would at the pitiful scenes of the Underworld and the battlefields of ancient Italy.

Tacitus not only establishes intertexts with Seneca the Younger's tragedies but also his philosophical works;²³⁷ these are especially significant in the later *Annales* (12–15) in which the younger Seneca is depicted as a character and plays a part in the very political history which Tacitus narrates; the Senecan flavour of certain Tacitean formulations therefore helps the historian to create an impression of a political sphere in which the younger Seneca's influence and precepts are ever present. At 32.3 *longa huic Pomponiae aetas et continua tristitia fuit*, the phrase *continua tristitia* recalls Sen. *Cons. Marc.* 1.5 in a comparable context of a woman's unbroken mourning, the only other instance of the epithet in extant Latin; at 34.1 *quamuis per luxum auitas opes dissipassent [sc. Aurelius Cotta et Haterius Antoninus]*, the expression *opes dissipare* is paralleled at Sen. *Brev.* 1.4 and perhaps constitutes an allusion to that text, since the contexts (whereby an avaricious or weak aristocrat squanders his inheritance) are the same.²³⁸ At 42.4, Tacitus' phrase (in *oratio obliqua* reporting the words of Suillius) *subitae felicitati submittere* may depict the *delator* Suillius Rufus' deliberate parodying of the philosophical language of his enemy Seneca, since Seneca often uses *felicitas* in the sense 'success' (*OLD* 2), at times (perhaps hypocritically) as a criticism levelled against Maecenas; cf. *Prov.* 3.10, *Ep.* 19.9.²³⁹

The Textual Tradition

Books 11–16 of Tacitus' *Annales* and books 1–5 of the *Historiae* survive together with the major works of Apuleius in an eleventh-century codex (Laur. plut. 68.2, commonly known by scholars as the 'Second Medicean',²⁴⁰ hereafter M) housed in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence.²⁴¹ The titles *Annales* and *Historiae* were first used in printed editions of the sixteenth century; the title of the work preserved by this manuscript as part of the paradosis is *Ab Excessu Diui Augusti* books 11–21.²⁴² M was written at Monte Cassino in

²³⁶ On the identification of the Virgilian Claudius with the ancestor of the *Gens Claudia*, and its wider significance in Julio-Claudian ideology, see Harrison 1991: 162–3, Oakley 2005: 357–61. On Virgilian intertexts in Tacitus generally see further Baxter 1971: 93–107, 1972: 246–9, Woodman 1998: 74–7, 119–24, 232–3, 2017: 224, Keitel 2008: 705, Joseph 2012: 3–12.

²³⁷ On Senecan intertexts in the later books of Tacitus' *Annales*, see especially Zimmermann 1889, Brinkmann 2002 *passim*.

²³⁸ Williams 2003: 122.

²³⁹ On this use of *felicitas* see further Brinkmann 2002: 37.

²⁴⁰ This is to distinguish it from the 'First Medicean' (Laur. plut. 68.1), a ninth-century Carolingian codex (probably written at Fulda) which preserves *Annales* 1–6; on this manuscript and the subsequent tradition of the Tiberian hexad see Tarrant ap. Reynolds 1983: 406–7.

²⁴¹ M has been digitised and can be consulted at <http://teca.bmlonline.it>; M's text of *Annales* 13 has been collated in full alongside the most recent critical edition (Wellesley 1986) for the purposes of this commentary.

²⁴² Syme 1958: 2.686–7, Ash 2007: 34–5, Martin 2009: 241–4, Bartera 2015: 165 n.20. The division of the extant *Ab Excessu Diui Augusti* into the *Annales* and *Historiae* was not made until the edition of Vertranius (1569); this became standard in all subsequent editions (Bartera 2015: 165 n.20).

south-central Italy in Beneventan minuscule;²⁴³ palaeographical evidence supports the dating of the codex to the early part of the abbacy of Desiderius (1058–1087), probably around 1060.²⁴⁴ Tacitus was not a widely-read author in the Middle Ages,²⁴⁵ and there is no evidence that any other text of these books existed;²⁴⁶ M was probably confined to Monte Cassino until the fourteenth century, when it was brought to Florence as scholarly interest in Tacitus increased significantly.²⁴⁷ Renewed Tacitean scholarship combined with M's near-illegibility led to the production of a comparatively large number of more legible copies in contemporary humanist script in fifteenth-century Italy.²⁴⁸

M's status as the archetype from which the 34 extant *recentiores* of *Annales* 11–16 and *Historiae* 1–5 (all written between 1430 and 1485)²⁴⁹ derive was not conclusively proved until Orelli (1848) collated it together with all the *recentiores* which were known to him for the purpose of his edition, although scholars since Lipsius (1574) had been aware of its importance. The source of the *editio princeps* of Vindelinius de Spira (Venice, 1472) and other early printed editions (Puteolanus [1476], Beroaldus [1515],²⁵⁰ Rhenanus [1533], Vertranius [1569]) is not M (which their editors did not even consult) but a fifteenth-century vulgate text based on those *recentiores* which were available to their editors, many of which were significantly more corrupt than M.²⁵¹ Editors between Lipsius and Orelli made use of M, occasionally determining it to be the *codex optimus*, but did not recognise its singular authority.²⁵² Modern editors of Tacitus (as termed in this commentary) are therefore Orelli and all his successors who regard M as the sole manuscript with authority.²⁵³ Extensive collation of all extant *recentiores* (significantly more than were available to Orelli) was carried out by Mendell (1954), Wellesley (1967, 1968, 1986), Weiskopf (1973), Dvořák (1975) and Römer (1976) in the twentieth century, with the precise relationships between the *recentiores* and their division into three groups (dependent upon where the text of *Historiae* 5 breaks off) being established for the first time.²⁵⁴ This work is primarily of interest to the student of Tacitus' fifteenth-century transmission; it has no bearing on the text's constitution, since M is now firmly established as the archetype. The *recentiores* are of no authority but remain useful to the textual critic as a source of good (occasionally brilliant) humanist

²⁴³ On the script see Lowe 1980 *passim*, Newton 2020a: 121–42.

²⁴⁴ Römer 1991: 2303, Malloch 2013: 9–10, Ash 2018: 27, Newton 2020b: 800. One can only speculate as to how a portion of the 30-book *Ab Excessu Diui Augusti* reached Monte Cassino, or how books 1–6 came to be parted from books 11–16, with books 7–10 and 22–30 (*Historiae* 6–14) as well as the start of book 11 and the end of book 21 (now *Historiae* 5) forever lost. Perhaps the division took place in late antiquity, when the change from papyrus roll to parchment codex coincided with renewed interest in Tacitus (an otherwise obscure author in antiquity and the Middle Ages) and saw the production of separate codices containing different portions of the *Ab Excessu Diui Augusti*; one of these late antique codices perhaps reached Monte Cassino (Newton 1999: 104–7).

²⁴⁵ On the late antique and medieval reception of Tacitus see Barnes 1998: 192–5, Martin 2009: 241–2, Bartera 2016: 115–16.

²⁴⁶ Bartera 2016: 116.

²⁴⁷ Römer 1991: 2304–5, Malloch 2013: 11–14, Bartera 2015: 161–2.

²⁴⁸ On M's awkward script cf. Poggio *Ep.* 3.15 with Tarrant 1983: 408; see also Magnaldi 2000: 113–14.

²⁴⁹ Wellesley 1967: 211, 1968: 303–4, 1986: x–xi.

²⁵⁰ Beroaldus was the first editor to combine *Annales* 1–6 with *Annales* 11–16 and *Historiae* 1–5 in the same volume, under the title *Ab Excessu Diui Augusti* 1–21; Rhenanus followed suit, as did Vertranius (although the last editor separated the *Annales* and *Historiae*, a practice which became standard thereafter). See further Bartera 2015: 161–2.

²⁵¹ Martin 2009: 248–9, Malloch 2013: 16.

²⁵² Bartera 2016: 119–20.

²⁵³ For this view see also Malloch 2013: 20, Bartera 2016: 120.

²⁵⁴ Mendell 1957: 325–6, Wellesley 1968: 303–4, Weiskopf 1973, Dvořák 1975, Römer 1976 *passim*, Malloch 2013: 20–1.

conjectures, some of which anticipate the work of later editors. This is how the *recentiores* have been used in this commentary.²⁵⁵ M's text is generally well preserved, with comparatively few major *cruces* or lacunae,²⁵⁶ although it is frequently marred by errors arising from false word division and the misreading of *capitalis*, suggesting that it was either a copy or (more likely) a descendant of a late antique exemplar in *scriptio continua*.²⁵⁷

M's singular authority was significantly challenged in the middle part of the twentieth century when Mendell discovered the *Codex Leidensis* (Leiden BPL 16B, a fifteenth-century humanist codex once owned by both Rudolphus Agricola and Theodorus Ryck) in Leiden University Library and collated it against M.²⁵⁸ Although this is a very late manuscript which almost certainly post-dates the *editio princeps*,²⁵⁹ Mendell was struck by the unusual quality of its readings; while the text was significantly more corrupt than that of M, with evident banalisations and interpolations as well as nonsensical renderings of proper names, it offered a number of plausible readings vastly superior to those in M which were suggestive of an independent tradition. His theory was acclaimed by Koestermann,²⁶⁰ who regarded the *Leidensis* as being equal in authority to M in his Teubner editions of 1960 (*Historiae*) and 1961 (*Annales*), but encountered widespread opposition and has now been disproved;²⁶¹ the *Leidensis* merely preserves a text derivative of M (which contains all of M's major *cruces* as well as its three significant inversions in the *Historiae*) but significantly more corrupt owing to scribal malpractice, often originating from unsuccessful attempts to emend M's awkward or corrupt passages.²⁶² The scribe (or that of a lost ancestor) is likely to have used several *recentiores* as exemplars, as there is significant horizontal contamination between the *Leidensis* (belonging to group II of the *recentiores* under Wellesley's scheme) and Wellesley's group III *recentiores*;²⁶³ it is highly likely that the scribe used these other *recentiores* (perhaps including some which are no longer extant) as sources of conjectures. The result of this scribal activity was the occasional good emendation, which renders the *Leidensis* valuable as a source of conjectures but nothing more.

²⁵⁵ See 15.1n. (*quidem* Vat. Lat. 1958, *quidam* M), 16.2n. (*ei* del. Vienna 49), 19.1n. (*incertum* Bodl. auct. F. 2.24, *incertas* M), 21.6n. (*spiritus* Leiden BPL 16B, *spm* M).

²⁵⁶ For a summary of the major *cruces* of *Annales* 13 and their possible solutions, see Wellesley 1983: 136–9, 1986: 149–52.

²⁵⁷ See further p. 85 nn. 354–5, Ash 2007: 35, Malloch 2013: 10.

²⁵⁸ Mendell 1954: 250–70, 1957: 325–44.

²⁵⁹ See further Tarrant 1983: 409, although his view that the *Leidensis* is a corrected copy of the *editio princeps* (following Hulshoff Pol 1953) seems misguided; for further discussion see Wellesley 1968: 302–20.

²⁶⁰ Koestermann 1960b: 92–115.

²⁶¹ Martin 1964: 109–119, Goodyear 1965: 299–322, 1970: 366–70, Römer-Heubner 1978: 159–174, Tarrant 1983: 408–9, Malloch 2013: 21.

²⁶² Goodyear 1965: 300–5, 1970: 369. The axiom of Maas (used to identify a *codex descriptus*) applies fully in the *Leidensis*' case (Reeve 2011: 222–3).

²⁶³ Wellesley 1968: 303–4, 1986: xx–xxi.

The Murder of Britannicus (15.1–17.3)

Tacitus details the planning, execution and aftermath of Nero's plot to murder his step-brother Britannicus (*PIR*² C 820), the son of Claudius and Messalina. The three main sources for the murder and funeral, Tacitus (15.1–17.3), Suetonius (*Nero* 33.2–3) and Zonaras' epitome of Dio Cassius (61.7.4, hereafter Dio) agree on the key details of the story, namely that Nero saw Britannicus as a threat to his principate and eliminated him treacherously, by means of poison, before giving him a brief and unceremonious funeral. Josephus (*AJ* 20.153) also records that Britannicus was assassinated, although he gives no further details about the murder. The accounts differ in subtle details: Tacitus and Dio stress that Nero's affair with Acte had led Agrippina to promote Britannicus as Claudius' rightful heir, thereby alarming the emperor and inducing him to plot Britannicus' murder. Suetonius (*Nero* 33.2) rather suggests that popular sympathy for Britannicus at the loss of his father led Nero to eliminate him. Tacitus (15.2) asserts that Nero considered Britannicus' Saturnalian lament at the loss of his throne libellous, Suetonius (*Nero* 33.2) that Nero was jealous of Britannicus' singing voice. Both the Saturnalia and Britannicus' singing are absent from Dio's brief account of the poisoning; he records neither the involvement of the poisoner Lucusta nor the presence of a *praegustator* at the fatal banquet.²⁶⁴ The *praegustator* is also absent from Suetonius' account. Dio nonetheless describes the discoloration of Britannicus' body as a result of the poison, a detail which is not found in either Tacitus or Suetonius, who rather stress the funeral's *celeritas* and *uilitas*, as though it were a prelude to that of Agrippina (14.9.1). Tacitus, perhaps to a greater extent than Suetonius and Dio, invites the reading of the whole account as a prelude to Nero's murder of Agrippina in 59 (narrated at 14.1.1–8.5). He pays careful attention to Agrippina's outward reaction to Britannicus' death, and skilfully depicts Agrippina's concealment of her true, inner reaction to the murder (16.4; cf. 14.6.1). Tacitus' Agrippina nonetheless appears an ambivalent character; in places, it is possible to infer that her alleged poisoning of Claudius (as recorded at 12.66.1–67.2) had inspired Nero to eliminate Britannicus in the same way (15.3n.). Tacitus is the only source to record Octavia's presence at the dinner (16.4) and her reaction to the murder, thereby alluding to Octavia's own downfall in 62 (14.60–4; cf. ps.-Sen. *Oct.* 982).

As Rudich and Keitel argue,²⁶⁵ Tacitus presents politically-motivated homicide as a pervasive theme in the history of the Neronian principate; his narrative of Britannicus' murder is the first of many emotionally-charged death scenes in *Annales* 13–16 in which Nero cruelly eliminates his political opponents. Britannicus' murder could perhaps be read against the mythological paradigm of that of Agamemnon,²⁶⁶ particularly given the common themes of the corrupted feast (Agamemnon was murdered at the table in the Homeric version of the myth which Seneca used in his *Agamemnon*; cf. Hom. *Od.* 11.419–21, Sen. *Ag.* 875) and the removal of the rightful ruler (as Britannicus claimed that he was [15.2]). Tacitus is perhaps inspired by tragedy in his use of the semantic fields of knowledge and ignorance, whereby he casts Nero's knowledge against his victims' ignorance.²⁶⁷ This tragic dichotomy is illustrated by the choral *sententia* at Sen. *Thy.* 401–3 *illi mors grauis incubat | qui, notus nimis omnibus | ignotus moritur sibi*. A mythological paradigm of poisoning to which Tacitus

²⁶⁴ Perhaps strangely, given that Dio records Lucusta's involvement in the poisoning of Claudius (60.34.2).

²⁶⁵ Rudich 1993: 16, Keitel 2009: 128.

²⁶⁶ For the view that Tacitus adopts this paradigm more widely in his Julio-Claudian narrative, see Santoro L'hoir 2006: 33–44. For the wider use of the myth of Agamemnon as a paradigm for the fates of late republican and imperial aristocrats, see Champlin 2003: 295–305.

²⁶⁷ Cf. Arist. *Poet.* 11.3 and see further Stanford 1939: 137–8, Bartsch 1994: 20–1, Santoro L'hoir 2006: 34–5, 89–90.

potentially alludes is that of Medea, particularly in the contrast between Medea's *lentum scelus* and Nero's *celeritas* (15.5n.).

Dissimulation is a significant literary theme in Tacitus' depiction of the murder. Tacitus, to a greater extent than Suetonius or Dio, depicts the dinner-guests as being compelled to conceal their true emotions and suspicions in the face of a murderous tyrant.²⁶⁸ He also exploits the theme of the visual throughout both the death scene itself (15.1–16.4) and his depiction of Britannicus' funeral (17.1–3), depicting the tyrant as controlling what his subjects can and cannot see, to prevent them from ascertaining the truth.²⁶⁹ Tacitus invests his account with *enargeia* (and verisimilitude) by including precise but vivid and memorable details, many of which are absent from Suetonius and Dio. He makes deliberate use of uncharacteristically undignified but explicit language denoting bodily functions (15.4) to depict memorably (with a touch of grim humour) the failure of the initial poison, creating both realism and suspense; he takes care to explain precisely how the *praegustator* was circumvented (16.1) by adding the poison to the water used to cool the drink (a tactic used by conspirators against Alexander the Great; see n. ad loc.), ensuring both *enargeia* and plausibility, and exploits the medical lexical field to describe vividly and precisely Britannicus' paralysis (16.2–3). He then describes individual reactions to the death in turn, as if he were himself casting his eyes over the two tables and examining the reactions of each diner (16.3–4); first he describes the reaction of those *circumsedentes*, then that of the *imprudentes* and that of those *quibus altior intellectus*, then finally those of Agrippina and Octavia. The funeral scene is rendered dramatic by the depiction of a hasty and unceremonious burial at night in heavy rain (17.1), which both creates pathetic fallacy and alludes to the theme of the supernatural in suggesting divine displeasure at the murder; portents of divine displeasure also follow the funeral of Agrippina (14.10.3), strengthening the similarities between these two prominent Tacitean narratives of dynastic murder. Possible allusions to Senecan tragedy (15.5) and Virgil's *Aeneid* (16.2, 17.1, 17.3) link the murder with mythological and tragic paradigms for violent deaths, heightening the audience's sense of pathos for Britannicus. Another prominent theme is tyrannical *saevitia*, especially apparent in Tacitus' depiction of Nero's lack of concern for his step-brother following the murder (16.3); Tacitus develops the theme of *saevitia* further in 17.1–3 (describing Britannicus' obsequies) by emphasising the funeral's *uilitas* and the emperor's refusal to grant *laudationes*.

The incompatibility of contemporary and late antique views of the first five years of Nero as a period of benign rule (for which cf. Sen. *Clem.* 1.11.1–3, Calp. *Ecl.* 1.42–5, *Carm. Einsid.* 1.36, 2.38, Luc. 1.60–5, Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 5.2 with discussion by Lepper 1957: 95–103, Murray 1965: 41–61, Griffin 1976: 118, 423–6, 1984: 37–8, 83–4, Rudich 1993: 35, Malitz 1999: 17–18, Drinkwater 2019: 27, 56) with this account of the *princeps*' brutality, barely five months into his principate, has led several scholars (Roux 1962: 98–9, Robichon 1985: 93, Fini 1993: 115–9, Barrett 1996: 171–2, Dubuisson 1999: 260–1, Romm 2014: 81–2, Drinkwater 2019: 175–6) to question whether Nero murdered Britannicus as Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius and Dio all suggest. They argue that Britannicus is more likely to have died following an epileptic fit, and that the poisoning arose as a popular rumour (as in the case of other theories surrounding premature, or otherwise suspicious, deaths in the imperial *domus*) which provided attractive subject-matter for anti-Neronian rhetoric during the Flavian period, from which the earliest extant source to refer explicitly to Britannicus' murder

²⁶⁸ See further Rudich 1993: 8–10, Bartsch 1994: 14–16, Freudenburg 2017: 118, Leigh 2017: 29. For *dissimulatio* on the part of both emperor and subject as a pervasive theme in the Neronian *Annales* see also Woodman 1993: 107–28.

²⁶⁹ Freudenburg, Leigh locc. cit.

(Josephus) dates.²⁷⁰ Rumours of poisoning, never conclusively proved, surround the deaths of Germanicus (2.69.3), Drusus (4.10.1–3) and Claudius (12.66.1–7.2). Seneca, at *Clem.* 1.11.3, wrote *praestitisti, Caesar, ciuitatem incruentam*: if *De Clementia* post-dates Britannicus' death,²⁷¹ the remark sits awkwardly with Nero's crime, although perhaps Seneca's insincerity was intended to discourage Nero from further acts of *saeuitia* following the murder. In passages of Plutarch detailing Nero's crimes (*Mor.* 56E and 96C, which include the forced suicide of Petronius and the execution of Rubellius Plautus), there is no mention of Britannicus' murder, which is striking given its importance in Julio-Claudian dynastic history and the extent to which it exemplifies Neronian *saeuitia*. None of these discrepancies categorically disproves Tacitus' account of the murder; its historicity, however, is open to debate, especially given the practical difficulty of obtaining a poison with the effects described by Tacitus (16.2n.).

15.1 turbatus his Nero: Nero sees Britannicus' imminent coming-of-age (14.2) combined with Agrippina's threat to support his claim to the Principate over Nero's (14.3) as a genuine danger to his own principate, hence *turbatus*, 'alarmed' (G-G 1686b, *OLD turbare* 8). Tacitus strongly prefers simple *turbare* to compound *perturbare*, employing the former 71 times throughout his work (G-G 1685–6), the latter only at *Dial.* 4.1. On Tacitus' use of simple for compound, see p. 34 n. 211.

propinquo die, quo quartum decimum aetatis annum Britannicus explebat: 'on the next day, on which Britannicus would reach his fourteenth birthday.' For [sc. ordinal number] *aetatis annum explere*, lit. 'to complete the [sc. ordinal number] year of one's life', i.e. 'to reach a given birthday', cf. *Hist.* 1.48.1 *Piso unum et tricesimum aetatis annum explebat*, 3.86.1. Tacitus consistently employs imperfect *explebat* (an imperfect of expected action, for which see Gildersleeve-Lodge 1895: 158) in this expression. *Propinquo die* refers to 12th February 55, Britannicus' fourteenth birthday, on which he would assume the *toga uirililis* (cf. 14.2). His birthday can confidently be dated: Suetonius (*Claud.* 27.2) specifically records Britannicus' birthday as being the twentieth day of Claudius' principate (12th February); that emperor's *dies imperii* is known from Jos. *AJ* 19.77, Suet. *Cal.* 58.1, *Claud.* 10.1, Dio 59.29.5–6, 30.1 to be the day of Gaius' death, January 24th (Hurley 2001: 95, 191). That Britannicus was born in 41, not 42 (the year of Claudius' second consulship), as Suetonius (*Claud.* 27.2) and Dio (60.12.5) both assume, is confirmed by an Alexandrian coin (Vogt *Alex.* 1.24), dated to the first year of Claudius' principate (41), which depicts the siblings Britannicus and Octavia below their mother Messalina's head on the reverse.²⁷²

uolutare secum...matris uiolentiam: Tacitus varies the expression meaning 'to turn over something in one's mind', employing *aliquid secum uolutare* without the instrumental ablative *animo* here and at 4.12.2, with *animo* at *Hist.* 2.49.1, and the analogous *aliquid intra animum uolutare* at 4.40.7. *Uolutare* is a historic infinitive, adding vividness to the psychological insight. *Matris uiolentiam* alludes to both the immediate context of Agrippina's threats (14.2–3) and the rhetorical stereotype of the *dux femina* as applied to the Tacitean

²⁷⁰ Some of Tacitus' most important sources for the Neronian *Annales* (including Pliny the Elder and Fabius Rusticus) were perhaps a product of the hostile tradition; see further 20.2n. There is an allusion to Britannicus' death at ps.-Sen. *Oct.* 165–6; this work is likely to be a product of the same anti-Neronian *Zeitgeist* under the Flavians.

²⁷¹ Griffin (1976: 136) and Braund (2009: 16–17) are almost certain of this.

²⁷² Britannicus' being born in February 41 is consistent with Tacitus' statement (12.25.2) that Nero (born on 16th December 37) was three years older than him (*triennio maiorem natu Domitium*).

Agrippina, for which cf. 2.2 *contra ferociam Agrippinae*, 21.2 *Agrippina ferociae memor* with n.

ipsius indolem, <le>ui quidem experimento nuper cognitam, quo tamen fauorem late quaesiuisset: M's *ut quidam experimento nuper cognitam* affords no sense; *quidam* is not construable and *ut* has no syntactic function. Vat. Lat. 1958 restored the desirable particle *quidem*, while Freinsheim (1638: ad loc.) suggested that *ut* was a corruption of *-ui* of *leui*, whose first two letters were lost by haplography after *indolē*. This conjecture restores good sense and has been accepted by all subsequent editors.²⁷³ *Leui* is contextually desirable, describing the test (*experimentum*) by which Britannicus revealed his true character, namely his singing at the Saturnalia of 54 (for which see 15.2n.), as being frivolous (*TLL* 7.1211.36–64) at first sight. *Quidem* is to be taken as concessive, anticipating *tamen* in the following clause and affording the sense 'by means of a test which was admittedly frivolous, but by which he had nonetheless gained wide sympathy'. The subjunctive *quaesiuisset* is oblique, recording Nero's own reaction to Britannicus' singing rather than the historian's; cf. 23.2n. *quos conscios haberet* and see further K-S 2.199–200, Pinkster 2015: 619–20. For the collocation of the adjective *leuis* and the adverb *quidem*, cf. Gell. 19.8.2.

The *fauor* is that of Nero's aristocratic peers, whom he entertained at the Saturnalia; they sympathise (*OLD fauor* 1) with Britannicus when he laments his being deprived of his rightful principate.

15.2 festis Saturno diebus: for this periphrasis, denoting the Saturnalia, cf. Fest. p. 432.9 *Saturno dies festus celebratur mense Decembre*; for a similar periphrasis employing the genitive *Saturni*, which illustrates Tacitus' penchant for self-variation, cf. *Hist.* 3.78.1 *festos Saturni dies*.²⁷⁴ Such periphrases conform with Tacitus' (and other Roman historians') well-attested eschewal of technical terminology, in order to avoid both indignity and tedium (Goodyear 1972: 344–5, Oakley 1997: 148, Woodman 2017: 63, 135). The festival, which perhaps originated in the early Republic, was initially conceived as a single day of thanksgiving to Saturn; cf. Catull. 14.14–15 *die... Saturnalibus optimo dierum*, Liv. 2.21.1 *Saturnalia institutus festus dies* and see further Dolansky 2011: 500. Tacitus uses plural *dies* here and at *Hist.* 3.78.1 because under Claudius, Nero and the Flavians, the Saturnalia was officially a five-day-long celebration (Augustus restricted its length to three days after it had become a week-long festival during the late Republic); the revelry often continued for a full week or even longer; cf. Sen. *Apoc.* 12.2 (a work itself performed at the Saturnalia of 54), Plut. *Mor.* 272e, 1131c, Macrobian *Sat.* 1.10.2–4 and see further Versnel 1992: 136, Dolansky 2011: 491. The festival was generally celebrated through the medium of private feasts enjoyed by members of the same *domus* in a private home; the main themes of the entertainment given at these feasts were frivolity and the inversion of hierarchy; slaves behaved as free citizens, while free citizens donned the *pilleus* (slave's cap), and in doing so strove to mitigate social tensions. See further Toner 2009: 92–100, Dolansky 2011: loc. cit. Britannicus' real-life status as a subject of the emperor is mirrored by his status at the Saturnalia as a subject of the *rex* ('party-king') Nero; when ordered by Nero to sing,

²⁷³ *Et quidem* (Laur. plut. 68.5) is unsatisfactory given *tamen* in the following relative clause. Doederlein's (1839: 5) *utique uiuidam* affords sense in the context, but is some distance from the paradosis.

²⁷⁴ Our passage and Fest. loc. cit. are the only certain examples of *festus dies* governing the dative of the godhead honoured in periphrases of the names of festivals; for the similar *festus lux* governing the dative of the godhead honoured, cf. Ov. *Fast.* 6.191. For the genitive of the godhead honoured in such periphrases, cf. also Plaut. *Poen.* 1133, Hor. *Carm.* 3.28.1–2, Fest. p. 149.11. Liv. 25.23.14 *diem festum Dianae* is ambiguous.

however, Britannicus took advantage of the Saturnalian licence to subvert hierarchy by casting himself as Rome's rightful ruler.

inter alia aequalium ludicra regnum lusu sortientium euenerat ea sors Neroni: 'among the other games of his peers, who were drawing lots for the position of king by roll of the die, this particular lot had fallen to Nero.' *Aequalium* refers here to Nero's peers (*TLL* 1.993.71–4) within the extended *domus*, among whom the emperor had hoped to make his step-brother a source of derision; the use of the term has piquant irony in a context of subverted hierarchies.

M's *r. regnum*, whose most likely interpretation is as an abbreviation of *Romae regnum*,²⁷⁵ is at odds with the context; *regnum*, in this Saturnalian context, must mean 'the position of king' (i.e. party leader); cf. Hor. *Carm.* 1.4.18 *nec regna uini sortiēre talis* with Nisbet-Hubbard 1970: 71 ad loc. Transmitted 'r.' was therefore rightly deleted by the scribe of Vat. Lat. 1958 and all editors. The party's 'king' ordered individual guests to pay forfeits and thereby to embarrass themselves in front of their audience; cf. Plaut. *Asin.* 904, Hor. *Carm.* 2.7.25–6, Arrian *Diss. Epict.* 1.25.8, Lucian *Saturn.* 4 and see further Versnel 1992: 137, Toner 2009: 93, Dolansky 2011: 495. For *lusu* meaning 'roll of the die', see *TLL* 7.1889.53–72. The die was either a six-sided *tessera*, similar to a modern die-cube, or a four-sided *talus*, which had two rounded ends and four marked, square faces, as used at Hor. *Carm.* 1.4.18; see further Purcell 1995: 3–37. The *paronomasia* of *ludicra* and *lusu*, followed by that of *sortientium* and *sors*, emphasises the reciprocity of the forfeits in this Saturnalian game in addition to its apparent joviality, despite its serious consequences for Britannicus.

igitur ceteris diuersa nec ruborem adlatura: this sentence is elliptical, and one should supply *iussit* from the following clause (with Nero as its subject); for this brachylogy, sometimes termed 'left-gapping', cf. Caes. *Gall.* 1.1.1 *tertiam* [sc. *partem incolunt*] *qui ipsorum lingua Celtae, nostra Galli appellantur* and see further Panhuis 1980: 232–3, Woodman-Martin 1996: 94. The most apposite translation is 'therefore, on the other guests Nero imposed various orders, which were not likely to make them blush with embarrassment'. *Ruborem adferre*, 'to make someone blush', is unparalleled, but cf. *ruborem incutere* at Liv. 45.37.14 *si nomen hoc saltem ruborem incutere...possit*, Val. Max. 6.3.7.

ubi Britannico iussit exurgeret progressusque in medium cantum aliquem inciperet: the syntax whereby *iubere* governs a dative of the person ordered and an indirect command with *ut* suppressed is not elsewhere attested; however, it is attested as governing a dative of the person ordered and an indirect command introduced by *ut* with a subjunctive verb, on the analogy of *imperare*, from Cicero's time onwards; cf. 40.2 *quibus iusserat ut instantibus comminus resisterent*, Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.161, *Dom.* 44, *Pis.* 72. Tacitus most commonly employs the standard construction (*iubere* + acc.+ inf., for which cf. 2.7.1 *Caesar...Silium legatum...inruptionem in Chat<t>os facere iubet*) which he seeks to vary here; see further *TLL* 7.583.3–17, K-S 1.717–8, H-S 530. For *cantum incipere*, cf. Val. Fl. 5.217 *incipere nunc cantus alios, dea*.

inrisum ex eo sperans pueri sobrios quoque conuictus, nedum temulentos ignorantis: 'hoping thereby to mock a boy who was not familiar [*OLD ignorare* 2] even with sober parties, let alone drunken ones'. *Sperans* is indicative of Tacitus' use of internal focalisation to suggest intention on Nero's part. For *inrisus* governing an objective genitive in the sense

²⁷⁵ Thus the scribe of Laur. plut. 68.5 understood M's text.

‘mockery of’, cf. *Hist.* 3.37.2 *magno cum inrisu tribuentis accipientisque*, Plin. *NH* 37.124 *non sine...inrisu generis humani* and see further *TLL* 7.424.61–4.

Ignorantis (predicated of Britannicus) can be read in opposition to 15.3 *Nero intellecta inuidia*, illustrating the opposition between the victim’s ignorance and his antagonist’s knowledge, for which see p. 42. Tacitus presents Britannicus as ignorant on two levels: first of the kind of behaviour expected during Saturnalian revelry, and second of the need to dissimulate his true feelings towards Nero, even at the Saturnalia.

constanter: ‘with firmness of purpose’, for which sense, cf. 3.6.3 *funditus amissas nobiles familias constanter tulerit*, 6.22.2, Cic. *Tusc.* 2.46, Liv. 26.12.17, Ov. *Ep.* 15.154 and see further *TLL* 4.538.76–539.84.

quo euolutum eum sede patria rebusque summis significabatur: *euolutum* means ‘ejected’ (from a position or property); cf. Plaut. *Men.* 903, Liv. 6.15.5, Sen. *Ep.* 74.4, Luc. 9.876 *euoluimur orbe* and see further *TLL* 5.2.1068.26–35. For *summae res* meaning ‘power over the state’, cf. Caes. *Gall.* 6.20.1, Verg. *Aen.* 9.224, Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.28. Tacitus therefore creates a slight syllepsis, whereby *euolutum* can be understood physically when governing *sede patria*, but only metaphorically when governing *rebus...summis*. For the impersonal passive *significabatur* governing an accusative and infinitive, cf. Cic. *Att.* 7.12.1, Curt. 8.1.27; on the wider concept of *significatio*, whereby one’s speech conveys hidden meaning, see further Lausberg 1998: 142–3, Woodman 2017: 173. Although Britannicus’ recital was in the spirit of Saturnalian inversions of hierarchy, whereby a boy who had not yet assumed the *toga uirilis* characterised himself as Rome’s *princeps*, its content, as Tacitus here suggests, had the serious political implication that Claudius’ adoption of Nero had usurped Britannicus from his rightful principate.

quia dissimulationem nox et lasciua exemerat: for the Tacitean conception of *dissimulatio*, cf. 25.1, 49.3, 2.57.3, 4.71.3, 6.50.1, 11.26.1, *Agr.* 18.6, *Hist.* 1.26.1, 3.54.1, 4.18.1, 54.1; this can be defined as a paradigm of pretences according to which Tacitus presents both the *princeps* and his subjects as being compelled to act (Syme 1958: 1.422–3, Martin 1981: 107–13, Rudich 1993: 8–10, Bartsch 1994: 14–16, Woodman-Martin 1996: 89, Drinkwater 2019: 86–7, Schulz 2019: 72–6). *Dissimulatio* is the opposite of the ideal state of civic engagement which Tacitus describes in the second half of the epigram at *Hist.* 1.1.4, *ubi sentire quae uelis et quae sentias dicere licet*. Under the Principate, citizens’ consciousness of the need to curry favour with the emperor was felt to suppress free speech; their true attitudes towards the emperor tended to emerge accidentally in circumstances in which they had allowed their guard to slip, such as in drunken Saturnalian revelry (cf. *conuictus...temulentos*), aligning with the proverb *in uino ueritas* (for which cf. Plin. *NH* 14.141 and see further Otto 1965: 372, Tosi 2007: 343).

For *nox* as the subject of *eximere*, cf. 1.64.3 *nox demum inclinantes iam legiones aduersae pugnae exemit*. Tacitus follows Sallustian and Livian precedent in personifying *nox*, making it the subject of transitive verbs, to denote occurrences beyond human control; cf. 17.1, 1.49.1, 50.4, 2.14.1, 12.16.2, 14.4.3, 15.37.4, *Hist.* 1.80.2, 2.44.2, 4.29.1, 35.2, Sall. *Iug.* 18.2, 60.8, Liv. 3.17.9, 4.39.6. The collocation *nox et lasciua* can be understood as a hendiadys, ‘nocturnal revelry’. For the singular verb predicated of similar collocations, cf. 1.10.2 *sui milites Hirtium et machinator doli Caesar abstulerat*, *Agr.* 37.5 *finis sequendi nox et satietas fuit*; this accords with the rule whereby the verb agrees in number with the subject which stands nearest to it, for which see K–S 1.49–51.

15.3 odium intendit: for *intendere* meaning ‘to intensify’ (sc. a feeling or emotion), cf. 2.13.3 *intendit ea contumelia legionum iras*, Ov. *Pont.* 3.9.29 *intendere curas*, Suet. *Tib.* 62.1 *auxit intenditque saevitiam* and see further TLL 7.1.2115.1–12.

urgentibusque Agrippinae minis, quia nullum crimen neque iubere caedem fratris palam audebat: for absolute *urgere*, ‘to be a cause of worry’ (*OLD* 4), cf. 5.3.1 *praerupta iam et urgens dominatio*, Cic. *Cato* 2, Verg. *Georg.* 1.146, Liv. 25.28.6, Sen. *Suas.* 3.1. *Minis*, personified by *urgentibus*, denotes Agrippina’s threat to support Britannicus’ claim to the throne (for which cf. 14.2, 15.1 with n.). Tacitus varies his construction of the two causal adjuncts; the first (which explains why Nero sought to kill Britannicus) is expressed by a causal ablative absolute, the second (which explains why Nero chose poison as his weapon) by a causal clause introduced by *quia*; for similar instances of this *uariatio*, cf. 6.17.1 *commoto simul omnium aere alieno, et quia...attinebatur*, 14.5.2 *nec dissolutio nauigii sequebatur, turbatis omnibus et quod plerique ignari etiam conscios impediabant* and see further Sörbom 1935: 115, Oakley 1997: 384, Woodman 2017: 157. The *uariatio* here underlines the fact that both the need for quick action in response to Agrippina’s threats and the impracticability of charging Britannicus of any crime (for which see further Champlin 2003: 150) were equally important considerations for the emperor. Nero would have contravened his promise of *clementia* (4.2) had he executed his step-brother, barely fourteen years of age, on an arbitrary *maiestas* charge. For the difficulties in reconciling Britannicus’ murder with Nero’s claims of *clementia*, see Griffin 1976: 135–6.

occulta molitur pararique uenenum iubet: Nero’s use of poison perhaps violates gender norms, since it was often perceived (probably due to the mythological paradigm of Medea as well as the fact that it gave scope for murder without physical force; see 15.5n. and introduction p. 22) as a feminine weapon. It was certainly rumoured to be attractive to those women in the imperial court who sought to eliminate dynastic rivals to their own sons; cf. 4.3.4, Suet. *Tib.* 62.1 (Livilla), 12.66.1 (Agrippina) and see further Santoro L’hoir 2006: 175–7, Woodman 2018: 77. Nero’s use of poison reflects his mother’s method; for the idea that Agrippina herself inspired Nero’s crimes, cf. ps.-Sen. *Oct.* 371–2 *hic est fodiendus... | ...monstrum qui tale tulit* with Ferri 2003: 225. For issues of credibility surrounding accounts of poisoning in Julio-Claudian history, see 16.2n *frigida in aqua adfunditur uenenum*.

Pollione Iulio praetoriae cohortis tribuno: for this tribune, of equestrian rank, cf. *CIL* 10.7863, 7952 (Sardinian dedicatory inscriptions to the equestrian from Forum Traiani and Turris Libisonis respectively) and see further *PIR*² I 473, Pflaum 1961: 29, Demougin 1992: 450. His *nomen gentilicium* and *cognomen* are here transposed, a common variation in a number of belletristic prose authors from Cicero onwards, including Tacitus; see further Sörbom 1935: 6, Goodyear 1972: 148, Woodman-Martin 1996: 206. He perhaps began his career as a legionary tribune (*CIL* 10.7952)²⁷⁶ before progressing to the tribunate of the fifteenth urban cohort, followed by that of the fourth praetorian cohort, which he must have held at the time of Britannicus’ murder. At some point between Britannicus’ murder in 55

²⁷⁶ Although it is speculative, this suggestion seems particularly plausible if Domaszewski’s (1967: 261) restoration of the inscription’s first line to [*pr(imus) pil(us) leg(ionis) VI Fer]r(atae)* is accepted, revealing a standard pattern of career progression for a *primus pilus* raised to equestrian rank. See further Demougin 1992: 450.

and 66, the year in which Nero made Sardinia a public province, he served as Sardinia's presidial procurator, which explains the location of the dedicatory inscriptions cited.²⁷⁷

cuius cura attinebatur damnata ueneficii nomine Lucusta, multa scelerum fama: 'in whose custody was detained [*OLD* 2b] a woman convicted of poisoning called Lucusta, greatly renowned for her crimes.' For *cura* governing an objective gen. pers. meaning 'custody of someone', cf. Liv. 26.49.10, Ov. *Am.* 2.2.8 and see further *TLL* 4.1466.3–50. For the poisoner Lucusta (*PIR*²L 414), cf. 12.66.2 (her first appearance in Tacitus), where she assists Agrippina in preparing a fast-acting poison to kill Claudius.²⁷⁸ As to her previous crimes which had led her to prison (*damnata ueneficii*), and how she had helped the imperial *domus* before Claudius' murder (12.66.2 *diu inter instrumenta regni habita*), one can only speculate. A female poisoner from Tiberius' principate is Martina, for whom cf. 2.74.2, 3.7.2 and see further Henderson 1989: 187; she allegedly concocted the poison which killed Germanicus in Syria. Juvenal (1.71) and Suetonius (*Nero* 33.2–3, 47.1) also refer to Lucusta; Juvenal in the context of Britannicus' poisoning, Suetonius in the context of both Britannicus' poisoning (33.2–3) and Nero's suicide (47.1; she concocted a poison with which Nero would take his own life). Both neglect Lucusta's involvement in the murder of Claudius.

From the manuscript evidence, it is difficult to divine whether the poisoner was called *Lucusta* or *Locusta*; although M originally read *Lucusta*, both here and at 12.66.2, the original scribe corrected it, in both places, to *Locusta*, which is adopted by all *recentiores* and editions. In Suetonius, manuscripts L (of the α^2 -branch) and Q (of the β^2 -branch) read *Locusta* at *Nero* 33.2, 3, 47.1; it is also found as a correction in P (of the α^2 -branch) in all three places; the remaining witnesses read *Lucusta*. This distribution suggests that both variants stood in the archetype (on the textual tradition of Suetonius, see further Kaster 2016: x). Manuscripts RGH of Juvenal read *Lucusta* at 1.71, and it is also found as a correction in P; the remainder read *Locusta* (as does the fragment of the satirist Turnus preserved at Schol. Juv. 1.71; see Mayor 1886: 119). An inscription from Peltuinum in south-central Italy (*CIL* 9.3442) records a freedwoman named Nonia Lucusta, but she is not certainly identifiable with the poisoner.²⁷⁹ The most recent editors of Juvenal and Suetonius, Willis (1997) and Kaster (2016) respectively, print *Lucusta*, and it may be prudent to do so here and at 12.66.2, given that it was the original reading of M.²⁸⁰

Schol. Juv. 1.71 suggests that Lucusta was a native of Gaul. Her renown (*multa scelerum fama*) is perhaps due to her assistance with the poisoning of Claudius, a crime which Nero sought to emulate. She was finally executed by Galba in 68 (Dio 64.3.4), along with the freedman Narcissus, as an undesirable vestige of the Neronian court.

Multa scelerum fama is an ablative of quality (Woodcock 1959: 33, 64–5); the verb *attinebatur* is therefore modified by a double ablative appendage, for which see Chausserie-Laprée 1969: 330–1, Ash 2007: 20.

²⁷⁷ His tenure of his last three posts is confirmed by *CIL* 10.7863.

²⁷⁸ Lucusta's involvement in this plot against Claudius is also recorded by Dio 60.34.2. Dio does not record Lucusta's involvement in his account of the murder of Britannicus (61.7.1).

²⁷⁹ On this inscription see Shumka 2016: 81–2.

²⁸⁰ The manuscripts of Dio's epitomators for the Claudian narrative (60.34.2) all record her name as Λουκοῦστα, which would support the Latin *Lucusta* rather than *Locusta*.

nam ut proximus quisque Britannico neque fas neque fidem pensi haberet, olim prouisum erat: *proximus quisque Britannico* denotes the soldiers of the Praetorian Guard who had sworn allegiance to Nero (12.9.2, 41.2, 69.1–2) and had no specific loyalty (*fides*) to Britannicus; *nam* therefore explains why a praetorian tribune would willingly acquiesce in his murder. Although the syntax of sentences containing the genitive of value *pensi* is notoriously difficult to interpret (TLL 10.1.1049.48–1050.7), it is probable that the construction employed here is *aliquid pensi habere*,²⁸¹ ‘to regard something as a matter of importance’ (*pensi* is a genitive of value), for which cf. *Dial.* 29.1, *Hist.* 1.46.2, *Sall. Cat.* 5.6 and see further *OLD habere* 24d, TLL 10.1.1050.2–7, K-S 1.457; for analogous *aliquid pensi ducere*, cf. *Val. Max.* 2.9.3.

15.4 primum uenenum ab ipsis educatoribus acceptit: the identity of the tutors who administered the poison, and their number, is nowhere stated in the *Annales* nor in any other source. Tacitus (11.1.1, 4.3) refers to a tutor of Britannicus named Sosibius (for whom see further *PIR*² S 773, Malloch 2013: 58), who, together with Suillius Rufus, denounced Valerius Asiaticus (cos. 46) before Claudius in 47; he, however, was dead by the time of Nero’s accession, being executed on Agrippina’s orders for conspiracy against the newly-adopted Nero in 51 (Dio 60.32.5). From 51, the tutors (not named) to whom Claudius entrusted Britannicus were specially chosen by Agrippina (12.41.3), to ensure that they accepted Claudius’ adoption of Nero and did not entertain any hopes of Britannicus’ accession to the Principate. See further Ginsburg 2006: 28.

tramisitque exsoluta aluo parum ualidum, siue temperamentum inerat ne statim saeuiret: in Tacitus’ compressed expression, *siue* should be understood before *parum ualidum*,²⁸² an attributive adjectival phrase (qualifying *uenenum*) which replaces a causal clause; cf. *Cic. Tusc.* 1.99 *nec enim cuiquam bono mali quicquam euenire potest nec uiuo nec mortuo* and see further K-S 1.239. One should translate the sentence as if it read *siue quod parum ualidum erat, siue quod temperamentum inerat*. The ellipsis of the first *siue* provides the reader with a momentary sense of surprise; an explanation is given, only for the reader to find that it was the first of two.

Tramittere means ‘to pass through one’s bowels’ (*OLD* 5), for which sense cf. *Cels.* 4.19.1, *Plin. NH* 11.199, 26.43, ps.-*Quint. Decl. Min.* 260. *Aluum exsoluere* is not otherwise attested; the standard Latin expression for ‘opening one’s bowels’ is the analogous *aluum soluere*, for which cf. 12.67.1 *simul soluta aluus subuenisse uidebatur*, *Varr. RR* 2.4.21, *Cels.* 2.1, *Plin. NH* 13.127, *Suet. Vesp.* 24.1 and see further TLL 1.1802.41–9. Tacitus’ intratextual allusion to the poisoning of Claudius is suggestive of a perverse exemplarity, whereby Britannicus follows his father’s negative (and tragic), rather than positive, example. Tacitus’ uncharacteristically explicit scatological references, although (from a strict critical perspective) unsuited to the dignity of historiography,²⁸³ nonetheless lend realism, and therefore plausibility, to his accounts of the murders of Claudius and Britannicus; see further Henderson 1989: 190, Gowers 2018: 100–1. Sceptical readings of these accounts (Roux 1962: 98–9, Dubuisson 1999: 259–61) attribute their evident similarities in content and idiom to Tacitus’ following a stock description of assassination by poisoning derived from popular rumour.²⁸⁴

²⁸¹ As Prof. Woodman (*per litteras*) suggests.

²⁸² For omission of initial *siue/seu* in a similar context, cf. 6.12.3 *una seu plures fuere*, *Prop.* 2.26.34 *prora cubile mihi seu mihi puppis erit*.

²⁸³ For this concept see introduction p. 32 and n. 197.

²⁸⁴ Cf. the depiction of a conspiracy to poison Alexander the Great at *Just.* 12.14.9, for which see further 16.2n.

Validum means ‘potent’, as predicated of a poison (*OLD* 5a). The striking polysyllabic *temperamentum* has its literal sense, ‘a substance added to dilute a liquid’ (*OLD* 1), fitting the medical lexical field which Tacitus exploits to achieve realism here (Henderson, Gowers locc. cit.). *Saeuire* means ‘to have a destructive effect’ (*OLD* 3b); see further Watson 2003: 134 ad Hor. *Epod.* 3.5 *quid hoc ueneni saeuit in praecordiis* (in a similar context, describing poison’s effects upon the body). To the parallels cited by Watson, add Petron. 17.8, Val. Fl. 4.455, Apul. *Met.* 6.12.3.

15.5 sed Nero lenti sceleris impatiens minitari tribuno: for *lentum scelus*, cf. Sen. *Med.* 1016 (spoken by Medea) *perfruere lento scelere, ne propera, dolor* (the only other instance of *lentum* qualifying *scelus* in extant Latin). Tacitus’ re-use of this bold figurative expression is likely to constitute an allusion to this verse, inviting comparisons between Nero and Medea, both perpetrators of parricide. That Tacitus alluded to Senecan tragedy here is rendered likely by the fact that he clearly alludes to the *Octavia* in his account of Britannicus’ sister Octavia’s death at 14.63–4 (Ferri 1998: 339–56). Tacitus reverses Medea’s sentiment by suggesting that allowing Britannicus’ death to be slow and painful (like that of Medea’s children) is politically disadvantageous to Nero. The myth of Medea combined with the Graeco-Roman topos of the malign stepmother (for which see Watson 1995: 16, Eidinow 2016: 167–70) perhaps led to the association of poison with witchcraft and ultimately with women,²⁸⁵ which strengthens Tacitus’ audience’s impression of Nero as an effeminate emperor, or at least one who falls short of the Roman aristocratic ideal of *uirtus* (Barrett 1996: 207, Santoro L’hoir 2006: 158–82, Challet 2013: 68–9)²⁸⁶ to which his name alludes (for its alleged derivation from a Sabellic adjective meaning ‘strong’, cf. Suet. *Tib.* 1.2 and see further Maltby 1991: 409). Within Roman history, Nero takes his place within a canon of famed poisoners alongside Cleopatra (Plin. *NH* 21.12), Martina (2.74.2, 3.7.2), the younger Agrippina (12.66.1) and Lucusta (15.3n.), all of whom are women.

Tacitus, like Sallust and Valerius Maximus, prefers frequentative *minitari* to *minari* (there is no major semantic difference between the two forms, although *minitari* may have stronger connotations of persistent threats, as are contextually appropriate here; see *TLL* 8.1024.50–65). *Minitari* outnumbers *minari* by 6:1 in Tacitus, 3:2 in Sallust and 7:4 in Valerius Maximus; other prose authors prefer *minari* (particularly Cicero, by a ratio of 39:22).

iubere supplicium ueneficae: the construction *supplicium* + gen. pers. + *iubere* is unparalleled, but explicable on the analogy of *supplicium* + gen. pers. + *poscere* (*Hist.* 2.29.3, 3.75.3), *supplicium* + gen. pers. *exposcere* (*Hist.* 3.74.2) and *aliquem ad supplicium iubere* (*Hist.* 4.25.4). Tacitus does not describe the punishment with which Nero threatened Lucusta; Suetonius (*Nero* 33.2) suggests that he beat her. For the feminine substantive *uenefica*, ‘poisoner’ (*OLD ueneficus* 2), cf. Cic. *Phil.* 13.25, Quint. *Inst.* 7.8.2. Cicero (loc. cit.) applies this form contemptuously to Antony, possibly alluding to the rhetorical topos whereby poison is a feminine weapon.

²⁸⁵ As, perhaps, did the folk etymology whereby *uenenum* was derived from *Venus*, for which cf. Verg. *Aen.* 1.688 (Venus to Aeneas) *occultum inspiret ignem fallasque ueneno*, Ov. *Met.* 10.238–242 (the story whereby the Propoetides, ignorant of Venus’ divinity, were transformed into statues resembling poisoned bodies) and see further Currie 1998: 162.

²⁸⁶ Barrett (loc. cit.) takes 12.66.2 *eius mulieris ingenio paratum uirus* as a derogatory reference to the womanly associations of poison.

quod, dum rumore respiciunt, dum parant defensiones, securitatem morarentur:

‘because for as long as they paid attention to what might be said, for as long as they fashioned excuses, they were delaying his release from fear.’ For the indicative in *dum*-clauses in *oratio obliqua*, cf. 15.45.3, Cic. *Tusc.* 1.101, *Caec.* 55, *Cluent.* 89, Sall. *Cat.* 58.4, Liv. 2.57.3, 8.40.4 and see further K-S 2.544, Ash 2018: 213. For *defensionem parare*, ‘to fashion an excuse’, cf. Sall. *Cat.* 35.2 *defensionem in nouo consilio non statui parare*, ps.-Quint. *Decl. Mai.* 2.13. Suetonius (*Nero* 33.2) records Lucusta’s excuse; she purposely administered a slow-acting poison to avoid being accused of participation in the crime (given her known involvement in the poisoning of Claudius). *Securitatem* is an emendation, first found in Leiden BPL 16B, for M’s unconstruable *securitate*.

For fear (which leads to *dissimulatio*) as a characteristic of the tyrannical emperor in Tacitus,²⁸⁷ cf. 20.3n. *Nero trepidus*, 25.3n. *metuentior*, 2.72.1 *metum ex Tiberio*, 11.31.1 *eo pauore offusum Claudium*, 15.58.1 *magis magisque pauido Nerone*, Agr. 39.1 *hunc rerum cursum...ut erat Domitiano moris, fronte laetus, pectore anxius exceptit* and see further Bartsch 1994: 13, Wright 1996: 78–106, Woodman 2018: 322, Drinkwater 2019: 86–7, Schulz 2019: 90.

promittentibus dein tam praecipitem necem quam si ferro urgeretur: ‘they then promised as sudden a death as if he were being attacked with a sword.’ *Promittentibus* is an ablative absolute with subject suppressed, for which see K-S 1.773. Tacitus employs this licence more frequently than any previous prose author, particularly in phrases employing the present participle; cf. 1.5.1 *haec atque talia agitantibus*, 1.29.2 *orantibus*, *Hist.* 4.25.4 *poscentibus*. The implied subjects of *promittentibus* are Lucusta and Pollio. For *praeceps* meaning ‘sudden, instantaneous’ (*OLD* 5a) when predicated of death, as here, cf. Sen. *Phaedr.* 261–2 *sic te senectus nostra praecipiti sinat | perire leto*. Tacitus’ predicating *praeceps* of death may recall his predicating *praeceps* of a poison (*OLD* 5b, *TLL* 10.2.419.10–13) deployed against Claudius at 12.66.1. A paronomastic cluster (for which see Santoro L’hoir 2006: 16–17) of adjectives denoting haste is noticeable throughout Tacitus’ descriptions of the murders of Claudius and Britannicus, emphasising the rash impulsivity of Agrippina and Nero in fulfilling their homicidal designs. For *aliquem ferro urgere*, ‘to attack someone with a sword’ (*OLD* *urgere* 5), cf. Sall. *Iug.* 24.3, Liv. 26.6.16, Luc. 7.582–3, Just. 14.6.5.

cubiculum Caesaris iuxta: for the aristocratic *cubiculum* (any private room within an aristocrat’s home, not necessarily a bedroom) as a site of secret (sometimes treacherous) activity,²⁸⁸ where expectations of both propriety and hospitality could be disregarded, cf. Mart. 14.39.1–2, Plin. *Ep.* 1.12.7; the preparation of a poison outside this room prefigures its use as a site of both parricide and suicide in the later Neronian *Annales*; cf. 14.8.2–5, 15.63.3, 69.2, 16.11.2, 35.1 and see further Riggsby 1997: 39–40, 44, Woodman 2017: 70.

The anastrophe of *iuxta* is common (with 8 other instances) in Tacitus’ *Annales*; cf. 2.41.1, 4.5.1, 5.9.2, 6.39.2, 12.13.3, 17.2, 14.6.1, 15.47.2 and see further Kuntz 1962: 51–3, Goodyear 1968: 30, 1981: 93–4, 314, Adams 1972b: 356. It is rare in earlier prose (attested only at Nep. *Paus.* 4.4, Plin. *NH* 14.119, 37.38, ps.-Quint. *Decl. Min.* 291) but common in hexameter verse from Virgil’s *Aeneid* onwards; cf. Verg. *Aen.* 3.506, 4.255, 517, 6.430, Val. Fl. 5.457, Stat. *Theb.* 1.90, 3.267, 4.459, 11.618, *Silv.* 2.1.167 and see further *TLL*

²⁸⁷ Cf. Nero’s remark at Suet. *Nero* 33.2, *legem Iuliam timeo*.

²⁸⁸ This includes trials *intra cubiculum* under the more despotic emperors, specifically that of Valerius Asiaticus under Claudius (11.2.1 with Malloch 2013: 65–6).

7.2.750.78–751.16. Here, the anastrophe accentuates the alliteration *cubiculum Caesaris*, highlighting the degrading misuse of this room. On anastrophe as an artificiality of diction, see also p. 31 and n. 190.

decoquitur uirus cognitis antea uenenis rapidum: for *decoquere aliquid* meaning ‘to concoct something’, see *TLL* 5.201.63–84; this sense is common in medical writers (cf. Cels. 4.24 *absinthium decoquere*, Colum. 12.19, Plin. *NH* 21.96); for the lexical field of medicine which Tacitus employs throughout Britannicus’ death scene, see 15.4n *temperamentum*. The plural *uenenis* implies that different types of poison were used in the potion; for this sense of plural *uenena*, cf. Plin. *NH* 20.47 *fungorum uenena*, 32.56, Suet. *Cal.* 49.3. Suetonius (*Nero* 33.3) records that the emperor first tested the potion on a kid, which lived for five hours; after refining the mixture, he tested it on a piglet, which died instantly. *Rapidum* is emphatically positioned at the end of the sentence in a hyperbaton whereby it is separated from its head noun by an ablative absolute (for which see Adams 1971: 9, Goodyear 1972: 329); this stresses the importance of the poison’s speed in the plot, as well as the wider theme of *celeritas* in the plot’s execution. For *rapidus* predicated of poisons or medicines, meaning ‘quick-seizing’ (in a similar sense to *praeceps* at 12.66.1, and looking forward to 16.2 *ut uox pariter et spiritus...raperentur*), cf. 12.67.2 *pinnam rapido ueneno inlitam* and see further *TLL* 11.2.87.38–44.

16.1 mos habebatur: there are no parallels for *mos habetur* governing an accusative and infinitive to mean ‘it is customary that...’; Tacitus perhaps used it thus on the analogy of *mos est*, for which cf. Cic. *Orat.* 151, Liv. 10.42.7, 37.24.4 and see further *TLL* 8.1528.56–58. *Morem habere* otherwise governs either a relative clause introduced by *in quo* (as at Cic. *Att.* 13.19.4) or a final clause introduced by *ut* (as at Vell. 2.91.4);²⁸⁹ see further *TLL* 8.1529.5. Tacitus’ variation of the expected construction draws the reader’s attention to the seating arrangements, which are important in the plot. The imperfect tense possibly suggests that the custom was obsolete by Tacitus’ own time.

principum liberos cum ceteris idem aetatis nobilibus sedentes uesci in adspectu propinquorum: *in adspectu* introduces the visual theme which is prominent throughout the narrative of Britannicus’ murder. *Principum liberos* is a generalising plural, ‘the children of the imperial household’. *Liberi* encompassed boys (like Britannicus) who had not yet assumed the *toga uirilis* (15.1n.). At feasts held in the *Palatium* under the Julio-Claudians, children of the imperial *domus* dined, together with those of leading senators who were close friends of the emperor, in accordance with the arrangement whereby they were visibly separated from their elders, but nonetheless in full view of them (*in adspectu propinquorum*); cf. Suet. *Aug.* 64.3, *Claud.* 32.1 *adhibebat omni cenae et liberos suos cum pueris puellisque nobilibus, qui more ueteri ad fulcra lectorum sedentes uescerentur* and see further Allen 1962: 374–6, Dubuisson 1999: 255, Hurley 2001: 203. Suetonius (loc. cit.) suggests that they merely dined at the ends of the couches, while Tacitus suggests the presence of a separate children’s table. *Sedentes* (as opposed to *cubantes*) is used because the children sat upright to dine, whereas the adults reclined; cf. Suet. *Aug.* 64.3 *assiderent*, *Claud.* 32.1 *sedentes*.²⁹⁰ On this occasion, the future emperor Vespasian’s eldest son Titus dined alongside Britannicus, who was his friend and peer (Suet. *Tit.* 2.1).

²⁸⁹ If Burer’s almost certain emendation of the paradosis is accepted; see further Woodman 1983: 273.

²⁹⁰ Suetonius (*Tit.* 2.1) describes Titus as reclining at Britannicus’ side (*iuxta cubans*); this may be a convention of language rather than an indication that protocol was not observed.

For the adverbial accusative *idem* governing the partitive genitive *aetatis*, meaning ‘of the same age’, see K–S 1.306. Absolute *uesci*, used of persons in the sense *cibum sumere* (*OLD uesci* 3), is attested first at Liv. 9.30.5. Cf. also 1.49.1 *isdem e cubilibus, quos simul uescentes dies, simul quietos nox habuerat*, Curt. 8.6.5, Val. Fl. 4.489, Stat. *Silv.* 1.6.43.

propria et parciore mensa: for *parcus* used of meals to mean ‘modest, light’, see *TLL* 10.1.343.71–84; to the examples there cited, add Curt. 6.2.3 *parco ac parabili uictu*, Cypr. *Epist.* 2.2. The collocation *propria et parciore mensa* is a syllepsis, since *mensa* has two different senses dependent upon which of the two adjectives qualifies it. Qualified by *propria*, it denotes the physical table (*OLD mensa* 3), as separate from that at which the adults dine; qualified by *parciore*, it denotes the meal (*OLD mensa* 7), as if it were a synonym of *cibus*, for which cf. 3.55.1 *luxus...mensae*, Cic. *Tusc.* 5.100, Sil. 6.95 *parca uires accersere mensa*, Plin. *Ep.* 2.6.6 and see further *TLL* 8.742.26–43. The syllepsis, reinforced by the alliteration *propria et parciore*, succinctly encapsulates the notion of a separate children’s table at which smaller and simpler meals are served. For syllepsis in Tacitus, see introduction p. 31 and n. 194; for alliteration, Woodman-Martin 1996: 121, Woodman 2017: 92. *Propria et parciore mensa* might be expected to precede the infinitive *uesci* which it modifies (H-S 403); it is perhaps postponed so as to focus the reader’s attention on the table, at which Nero’s plot will be carried out (Gowers 2018: 101).

epulante Britannico: in the *Annales*, absolute *epulari* is consistently used of those victims of emperors who die during the course of, or soon after, a meal. Cf. 11.3.2 *hilare epulatus* [sc. *Valerius Asiaticus*], 14.57.4 *cum epulandi causa discumberet* [sc. *Cornelius Sulla*], 15.60.4 *ipsi cum Pompeia Paulina uxore et amicis duobus epulanti* [sc. *Seneca*]. *Epulari* therefore serves a programmatic function in insinuating that death is imminent when emperors’ victims come to dine. For the theme of the corrupted feast inherent in Tacitus’ use of this verb, see Santoro L’hoir 2006: 188–90, Gowers 2018: 101. This theme is developed further when Tacitus depicts emperors as dining while their victims succumb to their fate: Claudius is described as *epulans* when Messalina’s death is announced to him (11.38.2).

quia cibos potusque eius delectus ex ministris gustu explorabat: as at Curt. 7.5.16 and Plin. *NH* 20.50, *potus* stands in collocation with *cibus*, denoting drink in general, as opposed to a specific drink (which *potio* [*OLD* 2] would usually denote). For *aliquid gustu explorare*, ‘to test something by tasting’, cf. 12.66.2 *inferre epulas et explorare gustu solitus*, Colum. 1.8, 2.2, 11.2. M’s *explorabatur* is a progressive corruption which arose from a scribe’s unsatisfactory attempt to restore construable syntax after *cibos* was corrupted to *cibus* by error of anticipation. Danesius (ap. Ursinus 1595) restored both *cibos* and *explorabat*.²⁹¹

The attendant acts as *praegustator*; for this specific role within a Roman imperial household, cf. 12.66.2, Suet. *Claud.* 44.2 (both describing Claudius’ *praegustator*), *AE* 1976: 504 (commemorating a *praegustator* of Domitian), *ILS* 1567, 1734, 1795–7 (inscriptions commemorating *praegustatores* of the Julio-Claudian emperors) and see further Schumacher 1976: 131–41, Henderson 1989: 188, Dubuisson 1999: 256–7, Hurley 2001: 237, Gowers 2018: 101–2. *Praegustator* became an official appointment for a freedman of the imperial *domus* from the time of Augustus onwards (*CIL* 6.9005, 10.6324, *AE* 1976: 504). The

²⁹¹ Dübner 1845: ad loc. retained M’s *cibus* and *explorabatur* but emended *delectus ex ministris* to *delecti ministri*, affording the sense ‘because his food and drink were tested by the taste of a chosen servant’. That the ‘s’ of *ministris* stands *in rasura* in M perhaps strengthens Dübner’s argument; his solution, although accepted by Wellesley, is less attractive, since the passive construction is more awkward, and the corruption of *delecti ministri* to *delectus ex ministris* is not easily explicable.

emperor, fearful of assassination, appointed a trusted freedman to taste food and drink that was offered to him, so as to detect irregularities indicative of poisoning; in 54, shortly before his death, Claudius had appointed as *praegustator* the freedman and eunuch Halotus (12.66.2, Suet. *Claud.* 44.2). Although the presence of a *praegustator* is sometimes thought to be indicative of imperial paranoia (Verdière 1964: 113), particularly among the Julio-Claudians and Flavians, comparable roles existed in other ancient royal houses (Heckel 1997: 288), and even in Antony's *domus* around the time of the Battle of Actium. Xenophon (*Cyr.* 1.9) records that the cupbearers of the sixth-century BC Achaemenid Persian king Cambyses tasted wine before offering it to the king, so as to detect harmful contamination, while Pliny the Elder (*NH* 21.12) recalls how Antony, fearful of conspiracy, refused to eat food which had not been tasted first (*Antonio timente nec nisi praegustatos cibos sumente*). Pompeius Trogus (Just. 12.14.9) records that Alexander the Great's court tasters at the end of his reign were Philip and Iollas, who were suborned by Antipater to poison the king's drink (16.2n.).

Tacitus nowhere uses the noun *praegustator*, perhaps because of his well-attested penchant for avoiding technical lexis (15.2n. *festis Saturno diebus*). Whether a member of the imperial household who had not yet come of age would have a designated *praegustator*, or would rely on the services of the emperor's appointee, is uncertain; there are no comparable cases in extant accounts of the Julio-Claudian court. Gowers (2018: 101) suggests that Halotus, in the light of his fortunes under Nero and Galba (for which cf. Suet. *Galba* 15.2 with Hurley 2001: 237), may have continued to serve as the court's *praegustator* after Claudius' death and been the *delectus ex ministris* here. There is no evidence for this, and it would be surprising, given that Tacitus introduced Halotus at 12.66.2, for him not to be named here. Dubuisson (1999: 256) argues that Tacitus' phrasing is more suggestive of an attendant chosen *ad hoc* than a dedicated *praegustator*; the semantics of *delectus* support this view, since it implies a person selected for a task on an *ad hoc* basis (often in a military context) rather than the holder of a full-time office; cf. 15.5.2 *Casperius centurio in eam leg<at>ionem delectus*, Caes. *Gall.* 7.76.4, Sall. *Iug.* 51.5, Liv. 8.24.9, Curt. 4.7.3 and see further *TLL* 5.1.457.45–67.

ne omitteretur institutum aut utriusque morte proderetur scelus: *institutum* refers to the custom of tasting food and drink before it was offered to members of the imperial household. The attendant chosen to taste Britannicus' drink on this occasion seemed to lack the conscientiousness expected of an experienced court taster (a circumstance which proved advantageous to Nero), since he neglected to taste the water which was added to it.

For *institutum omittere*, 'to neglect an established custom', cf. Cic. *Att.* 13.47.1. M's *ne omitteret institutum* coheres awkwardly with the passive *proderetur scelus*; Leiden BPL 16B restores *concinntas* with the passive *omitteretur*, accepted by every editor except Wellesley. For *scelus prodere*, 'to expose criminal activity', cf. Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.1 *odore tabescentium membrorum scelus proditum est*. For Tacitus' phrasing, cf. 14.5.1, *quasi conuincendum ad scelus*; similarities in phrasing underline the thematic similarities between Nero's plots against Britannicus and Agrippina (for which see further Drinkwater 2019: 194).

talis dolus repertus est: for *dolum reperire*, cf. Verg. *Aen.* 4.128 *dolis risit Cytherea repertis*.

16.2 innoxia adhuc ac praecalida et libata gustu potio traditur Britannico: *adhuc* has an ominous foreshadowing effect, looking forward to the addition of poison. For *innoxius*, 'not harmful', used of food, drink and medicines, cf. Sen. *Ben.* 3.24.1 *medicamentum innoxium bibendum illi dedit*, Plin. *NH* 14.31, Plin. *Ep.* 10.96.7 and see further *TLL* 7.1.1721.51–63.

Praecalidus (TLL 10.2.392.74–81) is a *hapax eiremenon* in Tacitus and unattested in extant Latin before him; its only other attestations are in late antique literature (*Itin. Alex.* 21, Prud. *Contr. Symm.* 1.pf.67, 2.320) and a late gloss (I Ansil. PR 47). The recondite adjective, which is possibly a coinage,²⁹² emphasises that the plot only succeeded because the drink required dilution. *Libata gustu* is not elsewhere attested, but is a variation on *explorata gustu* (Sörbom 1935: 41); *libata* means ‘sipped’ (*OLD libare* 3, TLL 7.1340.28–73).²⁹³ Instrumental *gustu* is perhaps redundant given *libata* (lit. ‘sipped by tasting’; perhaps the most apposite translation is ‘which had been sipped so as to test it’), but emphasises the point that the *praegustator* had tested the drink. Tacitus’ word order is emphatic: adjectival and participial phrases are used consecutively, preceding *potio* which they qualify, thereby emphasising that the drink itself was uncontaminated; *Britannico*, the indirect object of *traditur*, stands in the emphatic position at the end of the clause (H-S 403).

Attempts to identify the *potio* are inevitably speculative. Furneaux (1907: 172) suggests that it was *caldum* (warmed wine diluted with water), for which cf. Varr. *LL* 5.27, Petron. 66.3, 67.10, Mart. 14.113.1 with Leary 1996: 176. Temkin (1945: 53), Verdière (1964: 121) and Dubuisson (1999: 257) refute this, arguing that it would have been foolish to give wine to a boy who was known to suffer from epilepsy. Instead they believe it to have been a herbal infusion. Franzero (1954: 61) suggests that it was an easily-digestible porridge, intended as a substitute for the meal on account of Britannicus’ propensity to illness. Henderson (1989: 189) and Gowers (2018: 101) both suggest that it was warmed fruit juice.

frigida in aqua adfunditur uenenum: cf. Just. 12.14.9 *Philippus et Iollas praegustare ac temperare potum regis in aqua frigida uenenum habuerunt, quam praegustatae iam potioni supermiserunt* which depicts a similar plot (against Alexander the Great) at work; here, however, the identity of the water’s contaminator is mysterious (given the agentless passive *adfunditur*). *Venenum* stands in the emphatic position (for which see H-S 403). The syntax of this clause is awkward on any interpretation, and suggestive of textual corruption.²⁹⁴ Transitive *adfundere* meaning ‘to pour something into something’ otherwise governs an accusative direct object and either the bare dative or the prepositions *in* or *ad* governing the accusative; cf. 1.10.2 *uenenum uulneri adfusum*, *Hist.* 5.23.1, Manil. 4.654–6 *nec procul in mollis Arabas...leniter adfundit gemmantia litora pontus* and see further TLL 1.1248.12–42. Emendation to the expected *frigidam in aquam*, which no scholar seems to have proposed, might be considered.

The question as to the kind of poison which was used is probably insoluble. This difficulty has led Roux (1962: 98–9), Robichon (1985: 93), Fini (1993: 115–9), Barrett (1996: 171–2), Dubuisson (1999: 260–1), Romm (2014: 81–2) and Drinkwater (2019: 175–6) to doubt the veracity of the account in the historical tradition. Tacitus’ readers must imagine either a colourless, toxic liquid or a toxin which forms a colourless solution in water, which could kill a thirteen-year-old boy within minutes of ingestion by causing muscular convulsions leading to asphyxia (*ut uox pariter et spiritus...raperentur*). It is difficult to conceive of a poison with

²⁹² For Tacitus’ penchant for intensifying *prae-*, see Syme 1958: 2.724.

²⁹³ This is the only instance of *libare* used in this literal sense in the extant Tacitean corpus (G-G 772).

²⁹⁴ Koestermann (1967: 265) interprets the prepositional phrase *frigida in aqua* as a complement of *adfunditur* (ostensibly affording the sense ‘poison was poured into cold water’) but this use of the locative ablative is awkward and unparalleled. Prof. Woodman (*per litteras*) suggests that *frigida in aqua* might be understood as an adnominal prepositional argument (for which see Pinkster 2015: 1045) modifying *uenenum*, and that a dative noun such as *potioni* needs to be understood as the complement of *adfunditur*; this interpretation seems more plausible but the sense remains awkward (‘poison in cold water was poured in [sc. to the drink]’).

this combination of characteristics which could have existed in antiquity. As Barrett (loc. cit.) explains, the only such poison which is currently known is strychnine, a plant toxin derived from a tree unknown to the Romans whose toxic properties were not proved until the mid-eighteenth century.²⁹⁵

quod ita cunctos eius artus peruasit, ut uox pariter et spiritus [eius] raperentur: for *pariter et*, positioned between the two words or phrases which they couple to express the simultaneity of two occurrences, see *TLL* 10.1.285.17–22; to the examples cited there, add 40.1 *qui uiae pariter et pugnae composuerat exercitum*, Cic. *De Orat.* 3.10, Varr. *RR* 3.16.9, Liv. 5.11.4. M's second *eius* is entirely without point, since the context renders it obvious as to who was dying, especially given *cunctos eius artus* in the preceding clause. The scribe of Vienna 49 therefore deleted it; all editors have followed suit. *Eius* is probably an intrusive gloss in M or its exemplar (for which cf. 11.8.2 with Malloch 2013: app. crit. ad loc.).²⁹⁶ Simple *raperere* stands for compound *eripere* (*TLL* 11.2.112.5–13) and perhaps looks back to 15.5 *uirus...rapidum*; this is a consciously poeticising usage, paralleled only in verse and more artificial post-Augustan prose. Cf. Verg. *Aen.* 10.348 *uocem animamque rapit traiecto gutture*, Sen. *Ira* 2.3.4, Mart. 10.12.11, Sil. 3.44.

16.3 trepidatur a circumsedentibus, diffugiunt imprudentes: for impersonal passive *trepidatur*, 'there was a shuddering', cf. Caes. *Gall.* 6.37.6 *totis trepidatur castris*, Liv. 37.29.4, Sil. 4.26, Juv. 3.200 and see further K-S 1.709. The impersonal construction emphasises the overall atmosphere of fear as opposed to merely the fear shown by individual diners, and enables the characteristically Tacitean constructional *uariatio*; the following clause employs the active verbal construction *diffugiunt imprudentes*.²⁹⁷ In these two clauses, Tacitus creates *enargeia* by employing verbs in the historic present in sentence-initial position and simple sentences in adversative asyndeton (Voss 1963: 24–6); he also splits the scene visually, by focusing the reader's attention first upon the reactions of those sitting on either side of Britannicus (*circumsedentes*) at the children's table, then upon the *imprudentes* who impetuously flee, followed by those *quibus altior intellectus*, namely Agrippina and Octavia.

In accordance with the notions of theatricality discussed by Plass (1988: 100–2), Bartsch (1994: 14–16), Keitel (2009: 127–8), Freudenburg (2017: 118–19) and Leigh (2017: 29), the *imprudentes* fail to conceal their true reactions to the death. *Imprudentes*, to be contrasted with *quibus altior intellectus* in the following clause, alludes to the theme of knowledge and ignorance (for which see 15.2n.) which pervades Tacitus' narrative of the death of Britannicus. Goodyear (1972: 155 ad 1.9.3 *at apud prudentes*) suggests that Tacitus, perhaps because of his own experiences as a senator under the tyrannical Domitian, feels an affinity with a hypothetical group of *prudentes* (senators who knew of the need to dissimulate their emotions in the emperor's presence).

²⁹⁵ Drinkwater 2019: 176 n. 38 suggests that a toxin extracted from water hemlock could have been used, although it is not certain whether the species containing this toxin would have been readily available to the Romans, or even whether a solution containing this toxin would have had the properties necessary for the plot (as recorded by Tacitus, Suetonius and Dio) to work.

²⁹⁶ Alternatively, *eius* may be a *Perseverationsfehler* following *cunctos eius artus*. Magnaldi's (2000: 102–3) argument that transmitted *eius* is spurious before *artus* but genuine after *spiritus* is unconvincing; the pronoun seems entirely otiose after *spiritus* (there could be no doubt as to who was dying, whereas before *artus* the pronoun makes it clear that the poison's specific effects on Britannicus are being described), and its retention would mar the elegantly balanced *uox pariter et spiritus* before *raperentur*, which facilitates the allusion to Virgil's (*Aen.* 10.348) *uocem animamque rapit*, for which see pp. 38–9 and nn. 235–6.

²⁹⁷ For Tacitus' variation of active and passive within the same sentence see Sörbom 1935: 108–10.

at quibus altior intellectus, resistunt defixi et Neronem intuentes: *intuentes* once again emphasises the theme of the visual. For the collocation *altior intellectus*, cf. Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.83 [sc. ἔμφοσις] *altiozem praebens intellectum quam quem uerba per se ipsa declarant*. *Resistunt* means ‘they kept their positions’ (*OLD resistere* 2) while adjectival *defixi* means ‘motionless, rooted to the spot’; cf. Cic. *Or.* 9, Liv. 8.7.21, Verg. *Aen.* 1.495, Val. Fl. 5.377 and see further *TLL* 5.1.344.35–45. The usage implies that the more prudent guests appeared to keep their movements and expressions frozen until they had taken a cue from Nero (*Neronem intuentes*) as to how to react to the events which they had witnessed; cf. the soldiers’ monitoring the facial expressions of the terrified senators at *Hist.* 2.52.1. Tacitus uses participial appendages to modify *resistunt*, rather than employing an ordered periodic structure with *resistunt* in final position; this structure is termed a *phrase à rallonge* (Chausserie-Laprée 1969: 283–336, Martin 1981: 221–3, Martin-Woodman 1989: 23–4, O’Gorman 2000: 3–5, Ash 2007: 20). The sentence’s main emphasis is therefore conferred upon the outward appearance of those *quibus altior intellectus*.

reclinis: for this recondite adjective, meaning ‘in a reclining position’, see G-G 1362, *TLL* 11.2.371.30–46. Tacitus uses it once elsewhere (14.5.1 *Acerronia super pedes cubitantis reclinis*); it is otherwise absent from prose until late antiquity, when it appears three times (Oros. 2.5.18.20, *SHA Quatt. Tyr.* 4.3, Mart. Cap. 9.889). Its more frequent attestation in verse (Ov. *Met.* 10.558, Manil. 5.554, Sen. *Phaedr.* 385, *Phoen.* 499, Calp. *Ecl.* 4.95, ps.-Sen. *Herc. Oet.* 1339, 1643, Val. Fl. 4.535, Stat. *Silu.* 1.2.161, 237, Sil. 5.470, Mart. 9.90.1) suggests that it is a conscious poeticism on Tacitus’ part, perhaps recalling the posture of Venus in Ovid (loc. cit.; see further Bömer 1980: 187), and vividly depicting Nero’s lack of concern (of which it has strong connotations; cf. Mart. loc. cit.). Its more conventional equivalents are *recubans* and *resupinus*.²⁹⁸ Tacitus’ only other use of the adjective is also in a murder-plot narrative, that of the abortive plot to shipwreck Agrippina (14.5.1). He thereby expresses a lack of concern on the part of two different characters, encouraging the comparison of Nero’s attitude here, brought about by his knowledge of the plot and his lack of surprise at its result, with that of the freedwoman Acerronia, an unexpected victim of the shipwreck, brought about by her ignorance of the fate that is to befall her. For this tragic knowledge-ignorance dichotomy, see 15.2n.

nescio similis: *nescio similis* is, as far as can be ascertained, a *hapax eiremenon*; its sense is clear: ‘as if he were someone who was unaware of the incident’. *Similis* meaning ‘like, resembling’ (*OLD* 1b) frequently governs an adjectival substantive in the dative; cf. Liv. 23.37.5 *obsidenti similior...Poenus*, Curt. 3.11.18 *fugientibus similes*, 7.7.26 *attonito...similis*. Tacitus perhaps coined *nescio similis* on the analogy of such phrases.

solitum ita ait per comitalem morbum: ‘he said that it was thus (*OLD ita* 5) a normal occurrence on account of his epilepsy’. The sentence is elliptical; *id* (referring to Britannicus’ loss of faculties) should be understood as the subject of the indirect statement, qualified by *solitum* (which is in turn modified by *ita*), with the copula *esse* also understood. *Comitalis morbus* is the standard Latin expression for epilepsy, consistently used by medical writers of the first century AD (cf. Cels. 2.1, 4.27, Scrib. Larg. 12, 15, 98, Plin. *NH* 8.111). Scribonius Largus (12, 98) confirms that *comitalis morbus* is synonymous with the Greek ἐπιληψία; see further Temkin 1945: 53. Dubuisson (1999: 260–1) argues, from a pathological perspective,

²⁹⁸ The synonymous *inclinis* (*TLL* 7.1.940.65–79) is even rarer, appearing only at Manil. 1.598, Val. Fl. 4.308 in verse, Min. Fel. *Oct.* 3.6 in prose.

that an epileptic fit could easily cause instantaneous death of the kind described by Tacitus if it resulted in the rupturing of the carotid artery; the Romans knew that epilepsy was potentially life-threatening (Cels. 2.8, Plin. *NH* 20.238). The illness was called *comitialis morbus* because the republican *comitia* were traditionally postponed if a candidate suffered from it during the election period; cf. Fest. p. 268.13 and see further *TLL* 3.1798.62–4. Long-standing members of the *domus* would have been familiar with the risks of epileptic seizures after seeing Caligula gripped by them (Suet. *Cal.* 50.2).

quo prima ab infantia adflictaretur: M's *primum ab infantia* affords awkward sense, requiring *primum* and *ab infantia* to be construed as separate adverbial modifiers of *adflictaretur*; all modern editors follow Leiden BPL 16B in emending to the more idiomatic *prima ab infantia*, for which cf. 1.4.4, 2.56.2, 6.51.1.²⁹⁹ *Adflictare* is here used of an illness in a technical sense meaning 'to afflict'; cf. Liv. 29.10.1, Suet. *Tit.* 2.1 and see further *TLL* 1.1232.17–22.

uisus sensusque: the gradual return to consciousness was expected after a less severe epileptic fit; cf. Cels. 2.8, Scrib. Larg. 15. Sentence-final *-que*, a characteristic (possibly archaising) mannerism of Tacitus as well as Sallust and Livy (Kraus 1992: 324–9, Woodman-Martin 1996: 305, Malloch 2013: 444), is paralleled in the Claudian and Neronian *Annales* at 11.13.2, 33.1, 14.9.3, 32.3, 50.2, 15.23.2, 46.1.

16.4 at Agrippina<e> is pauor, ea consternatio mentis, quamuis uultu premeretur, emicuit: *Agrippina<e>* is a conjecture in Vat. Lat. 1958 for M's unconstruable *Agrippina*. *Consternatio mentis* is paralleled only at Heges. 2.5; analogous phrases are *perturbatio mentis* (Cic. *Tusc.* 4.54, Apul. *Met.* 5.1.1), *turbatio mentis* (Apul. *Socr.* 13) and *animi consternatio* (Val. Max. 4.6.4, Amm. 18.10.2, Auson. 14.3). *Mentem consternare* is also an attested expression; cf. Sen. *Ep.* 104.10, Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 26.69.³⁰⁰ *Consternatio* is unattested in extant Latin before Livy (28.25.5) but becomes common in prose writers of the first and second centuries AD. Its semantic similarities with *pauor* lend the two noun phrases which are the subject of *emicuit* a pleonastic quality, emphasising the extent of Agrippina's sense of shock on witnessing the death of Britannicus; it is perhaps here that, for the first time, she foresees her own death, orchestrated by Nero (14.8.5).

For *aliquid uultu premere*, 'to hide something beneath one's facial expression', cf. Val. Fl. 3.369–70 *quamquam tristissima rerum | castiganda duci uultuque premenda sereno*, Nemes. *Ecl.* 4.17. The semantics of *premere* are conative here. For the ancient view that one's facial expression affected how one's inner emotions were read by others, cf. *Agr.* 39.1, *Hist.* 2.65.1 and see further Heubner 1968: 234, Wright 1996: 65–7. Tacitus here constructs a powerful image of dissimulation, whereby Agrippina, although perturbed by her son's behaviour, attempts to mask her true feelings in the hope of avoiding her son's wrath and thereby ensuring her safety (Martin 1981: 165, Plass 1988: 43). For a similar sentiment, cf. 14.6.1 *solum insidiarum remedium esse <sensit>, si non intellegerentur*, describing Agrippina's state of mind after the failure of Nero's plot to shipwreck her. *Emicare* has connotations of

²⁹⁹ Walther's (1819) defence of the paradosis on the basis of 14.63.3 *huic primum nuptiarum dies* (if genuine; Lipsius [1574: ad loc.] emends to the less awkward *primus*) is unsatisfactory, since *primum* at 14.63.3 is explicable in its context on the basis of *tum* and *postremo* introducing the two sentences which follow; M's *primum* here cannot be so explained.

³⁰⁰ Mela 1.72 *ut mentes accedentium primo aspectu consternat* would also be a parallel for this expression if one were to emend transmitted *consternat* (the sole instance of *consternere* meaning *consternare* in Latin; for this oddity see *OLD consternere* 3b) to *consternet*, as Prof. Oakley (*per litteras*) suggests.

tragic revelation or ἀναγνώρισις, at the point in the narrative at which Agrippina's true fear inadvertently reveals itself; see further Henne 1982: 143, Santoro L'hoir 2006: 90–91.

ut perinde ignaram fuisse <quam> Octauiam sororem Britannici constiterit: M's text is defective: if *ignaram fuisse Octauiam sororem constiterit* is read in the consecutive clause, the passage's train of thought is incoherent, since the fact that Agrippina showed signs of fear cannot explain why it was later agreed that Octavia had no knowledge of the plot. The consecutive clause ought to express the concept that Agrippina was just as ignorant of the plot as Octavia; the sense requires a particle, which implies a comparison and coheres with *perinde*.³⁰¹ This explains the conjecture *ignaram fuisse <atque> Octauiam sororem*, first found in Vat. Lat. 1958 and accepted by all editors except Heubner, who prints Nolte's (1851: 56–7) *fuisse <quam> Octauiam*. Both *<atque>* and *<quam>* are possible;³⁰² perhaps *<quam>* is more attractive in the light of Tacitus' strong preference for the correlatives *perinde...quam* meaning 'just as';³⁰³ cf. 49.3 *cetera per omnes imperii partes perinde egregia quam si non Nero, sed Thræsea regimen eorum teneret*, 1.73.4, 2.1.2, 5.3, 14.2, 19.1, 3.31.5, 6.30.3, 46.2, 11.10.3, 14.48.2, 15.21.2, *Hist.* 3.86.1, 4.2.3, 49.4, 69.3.

quippe sibi supremum auxilium ereptum et parricidii exemplum intellegebat: *intellegebat* governs both an indirect statement (*sibi supremum auxilium ereptum*) and a direct object in the accusative (*parricidii exemplum*), creating *uariatio*; cf. 2.79.3 *magnitudinem imperatoris identidem ingerens et rem publicam armis peti*, 6.25.2 *impudicitiam arguens et Asinium Gallum adulterum*, 15.50.1 *dum scelera principis et finem adesse imperio deligendumque...inter se aut inter amicos iaciunt* and see further Sörbom 1935: 110–11, Goodyear 1981: 427. This figure conveys the rapidity of Agrippina's thoughts at this point: she simultaneously realises her loss of an ally (and a useful control mechanism for modifying Nero's behaviour) in Britannicus (cf. 14.2) and her imminent destruction by Nero now that he has set a precedent for *parricidium*. For *supremum auxilium*, 'one's last hope', cf. Liv. 30.32.2 *supremo auxilio effuso*. For the analogous *extremum auxilium*, cf. Caes. *Gall.* 3.5.1, *Civ.* 3.9.3.

Although *parricidium* is common in all other Latin prose authors from the late Republic onwards, particularly Cicero, this is its first instance in Tacitus; it recurs only at 21.2 and 14.8.4, both in the context of Agrippina's impending murder (G-G 1057). Tacitus perhaps reserved the term specifically for Nero's matricide, his most heinous crime. *Parricidium* strongly connotes the murder of one's parent, rather than merely relatives, on account of a folk etymology whereby it derives from *parens*; cf. Gloss. 4.547.33, Isid. *Orig.* 5.26.16 and see further *TLL* 10.1.445.5–10, Maltby 1991: 452. *Parricidium* is most likely to be derived from **paso-*, cognate with Greek πηός, meaning 'a kinsman'. Tacitus uses the related noun *parricida* more freely (G-G loc. cit.): this can mean a murderer of kin (cf. 15.67.2, used of Nero, 4.29.2, *Hist.* 3.25.2), a tyrannicide (cf. 4.34.3, used of Brutus and Cassius) or an enemy of the state in general (cf. 15.73.3, used of Junius Gallio, *Hist.* 1.85.3, used of Vitellius).

Octauia quoque, quamuis rudibus annis: for *rudes anni*, cf. Sen. *Thy.* 317–18, Quint. *Inst.* 1.1.20, Cypr. *De Laps.* 25. In February 55, Octavia was 14 or 15 years old; as the eldest child of Claudius and Messalina, she was probably born in 40 (*PIR*² C 1110).

³⁰¹ On the uses of *perinde* as a comparative particle with a correlative, see further Holmes 1997: 59–62.

³⁰² For correlatives *perinde...atque* meaning 'just as', cf. *Hist.* 3.18.1, ps.-Sall. *ad Caes.* 2.8.3, Plin. *Paneg.* 19.3.

³⁰³ The loss of *quam* (which could easily fall out through homoeoteleuton before *Octauiam*) is perhaps also more explicable than that of *atque*.

dolorem caritatem, omnis adfectus abscondere didicerat: the verb's complete sequence of objects *dolorem caritatem, omnis adfectus* is arranged in *asyndeton summatium*, a common structural technique in dramatic or emotionally-charged scenes, whereby a two-part (*asyndeton bimembre*, as here and at 42.4, 57.2)³⁰⁴ or multiple-part (as at 11.16.3, 12.65.2) *asyndeton* comprising the verb's unqualified objects is concluded with a final object qualified by *omnis* or *cunctus*, which summarises the meanings of the preceding objects under one unifying definition; see further Malloch 2013: 253 (with further examples and bibliography there cited).

ita post breue silentium repetita conuiuii laetitia: the subject of *repetita* is the abstract *conuiuii laetitia*, standing in the emphatic position and highlighting the atmosphere of jollity which was at odds with Britannicus' fate. *Conuiuii laetitia* stands for *laetum conuiuium* (for which phrase cf. Tib. 2.3.47, Sil. 11.368); for an analogy, compare the use of *senectutem Tiberii* for *senem Tiberium* at 6.31.1. This is a characteristic instance of Tacitus' substitution of abstract for concrete (for which see Sörbom 1935: 75, Woodman 2017: 225), either to achieve *uariatio* or (as here) to highlight a given attribute. The closing sentence depicts Britannicus' death-scene as if it were a play: the drama reaches its climax, after which the audience members return to their frivolous pursuits. For the blurring of theatrical spectacle with real life, pervasive throughout the Neronian *Annales*, see 16.3n.

17.1 nox eadem necem Britannici et rogam coniunxit: for Tacitus' personification of *nox*, whereby it stands as the subject of a transitive verb, see 15.2n. *Coniunxit* emphasises *celeritas*, a recurrent theme throughout the narrative of Britannicus' murder and funeral (see also 15.5n. *rapidum*). Nero's haste was politically motivated, to ensure that senators had no time to foster suspicions or question the official edict (17.3n.). Only Tacitus suggests that Britannicus' funeral took place at night, immediately after the dinner: Suetonius (*Nero* 33.3 *postero die*) implies that the funeral took place in daylight on the next day.³⁰⁵ Tacitus' account is perhaps the more likely to be right, since the republican custom of burying children and those who had died prematurely (17.3 *id a maioribus institutum, acerba funera*) unceremoniously at night was retained under the Principate. Cf. Sen. *Brev. Vit.* 20.5, Plut. *Cons. Vx.* 11 (= *Mor.* 612), Serv. *Aen.* 1.727, 6.224, Serv. *Dan.* 11.143, *ILS* 172, 181, 188 and see further Flower 1996: 97, Bodel 1999: 259. Dio (61.7.4) suggests that Britannicus' body was covered in gypsum to conceal the discoloration of the skin caused by the poison; heavy rain washed this off, revealing the crime to the spectators. In Tacitus' account, Nero's *celeritas* prevents mourners' suspicions from being aroused; see further Griffin 1976: 134.

prouiso ante funebri paratu: this phrase may recall 15.3 *olim prouisum*, suggesting that Britannicus' funeral was premeditated to the same extent as his murder. *Funebris paratus*, 'the trappings of a funeral', is not elsewhere attested, but is analogous in sense to the neuter plural substantive *funebria*, for which cf. Cic. *Leg.* 2.60, Liv. 1.20.7, Plin. *NH* 7.177.

qui modicus fuit: *modicus* ('unassuming') has connotations of stinginess and can be used as a synonym of *uilis*, 'cheap' (*TLL* 8.1230.48–68). The two adjectives are juxtaposed at Hor. *Carm.* 1.20.1–2 *uile potabis modicis Sabinum | cantharis*. For this sense of *modicus* in Tacitus, used particularly of funerals, cf. 5.1.4 *funus eius modicum*, *Hist.* 2.49.4 and see

³⁰⁴ For Tacitus' pointed use of *asyndeton bimembre* cf. also 4.70.2 *deseri itinera fora*, 11.12.3 *largiri opes honores* and see further Goodyear 1972: 252–3, Malloch 2013: 205, 248, Woodman 2018: 70–1.

³⁰⁵ Dio's account (61.7.4) does not make it clear whether the burial took place at night or in daylight the following day; the implication, however, is that the burial took place at a time when there were sufficient onlookers in the forum to detect Nero's crime, which would be more suggestive of a burial the following day.

further G-G 853. Through the use of this lexical field, Tacitus invites readers of his depiction of Agrippina's similarly low-key rites (14.9.1 *exsequiis uilibus*) to look back to this passage, reinforcing the notion (16.4n. *parricidii exemplum*) that Britannicus' murder presages that of Nero's mother. That Nero is prepared to undermine the *dignitas* of his step-brother and mother by affording them unceremonious funerals is a sign of his *saevitia*.

in campo tamen Martis sepultus est: *campus Martis* is a *uariatio* (for which see 15.2n. *festis Saturno diebus*) of *Campus Martius*; cf. 31.1, 1.8.5, 3.4.1, 15.39.2, Ov. *Tr.* 5.1.32 and see further Löfstedt 1942: 123, Goodyear 1972: 118. As was customary for members of the Julio-Claudian *domus* (cf. 1.8.5 [Augustus' funeral] with Goodyear 1972: 151, 3.9.2 [Germanicus' funeral] with Woodman-Martin 1996: 126, 16.6.2 [Poppaea Sabina's funeral]), Britannicus' ashes were interred in the Mausoleum of Augustus in the *Campus Martius*, conceived during the triumviral period and probably completed in the late 20s BC; see further Steinby 1999: 4.291, Wardle 2014: 559 ad Suet. *Aug.* 100.4. This site was chosen since it was outside the *pomerium*, within which ancient law prohibited burials, but nonetheless close to the Tiber and *Via Flaminia*, rendering the mausoleum easily accessible by funeral cortèges and highly visible throughout much of Rome (Hope 2009: 160).³⁰⁶ Tacitus describes the mausoleum elsewhere as *tumulus Augusti* (3.4.1), *tumulus Caesarum* (3.9.2) and *tumulus Iuliorum* (16.6.2). From the middle Republic, *nobiles* were customarily cremated rather than buried (Flower 1996: 97, Bodel 1999: 262); the Julio-Claudians' pyres were in front of the mausoleum (Goodyear loc. cit.). *Sepelire* (*OLD sepelire* 1) therefore denotes the deposition of Britannicus' ashes, rather than his burial.

adeo turbidis imbribus ut uulgus iram deum portendi crediderit aduersus facinus: for *turbidus* predicated of *imber*, meaning 'torrential' (*OLD turbidus* 1), cf. Verg. *Aen.* 5.696, 12.685; cf. also Lucr. 1.286–7 *turbidus...amnis*. Except here and at Apul. *Met.* 11.7.5, this sense of *turbidus* is restricted to poetry. *Turbidis imbribus* especially recalls Virgil's use of *turbidus imber* to describe supernatural rain at *Aen.* 5.696,³⁰⁷ enlivening the popular rumour that the rain at Britannicus' funeral was a sign of divine wrath against Nero. Similar rumours of portents of divine displeasure follow the funeral of Agrippina in the Tacitean narrative, further encouraging the reading of the Britannicus death-scene as a prelude to that of Agrippina; cf. 14.10.3 *et erant qui crederent sonitum tubae collibus circum editis planctusque tumulo matris audiri*.

Poetic diction is recalled more generally by the archaic genitive plural *deum*. This outnumbers *deorum* in Tacitus by a ratio of 2:1, and is consistently used when governed by *ara*, *delubrum*, *benignitas* or *ira*; cf. 3.57.1 *aras deum*, 15.40.1 *delubra deum*, *Hist.* 2.38.2 *deum ira*, 4.85.2 *benignitate deum*. *Portendi* is a conjecture first found in Vat. Lat. 1958, affording certain sense in the context of popular superstition (cf. 14.22.1 *inter quae sidus cometes effulsit...tamquam mutationem regis portendat*) and accepted by all editors. M's *protendi* affords sense of a sort (if taken to mean 'prolonged'; see *TLL* 10.2.2267.49–75), but there are no parallels for *iram protendere* and the phrase sits awkwardly with the context; it is corrupt by metathesis.

cui plerique etiam hominum ignoscebant: for the masculine plural substantive *plerique* governing a partitive genitive, cf. Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.12, *Inv.* 1.4, Liv. 3.6.8, Scrib. Larg. 84 and

³⁰⁶ The *Campus Martius* was also the site of the interment of Julius Caesar's ashes in a tomb granted by the Senate (Liv. *Per.* 90, Suet. *Iul.* 84.1 with Weinstock 1971: 349–50, Steinby op. cit. 278), although it is not certain whether the site of this tomb corresponds with that of the mausoleum (Steinby op. cit. 291).

³⁰⁷ For Virgilian intertexts elsewhere in the narrative of Britannicus' funeral, see. 17.3n.

see further *TLL* 10.1.2432.15–19. Transmitted *etiam* affords unobjectionable and even pointed sense if construed as modifying *hominum* (see *TLL* 5.2.950.26–58); one should perhaps translate the clause as ‘the crime of which even many men [sc. as opposed to gods] were forgiving’. For the emphatic collocation *plerique etiam*, meaning ‘many even’ (as opposed to an implied ‘few’), cf. *Hist.* 3.50.1 *milites uulneribus aut aetate graues, plerique etiam integri Veronae relictis, 75.2 ferebant plerique etiam paci consultum dire<m>pta aemulatione inter duos*, Cic. *Inv.* 1.65, *Div.* 2.81 *plerique etiam summum bonum [sc. uoluptatem esse] dicunt*, Ascon. *In Pis.* 13, Plin. *NH* 5.30 *ex reliquo numero non ciuitates tantum, sed plerique etiam nationes iure dici possunt*. The epigrammatic point of *etiam* (a restrictive particle used to denote a stronger version of a case in comparison with an implied weaker one [Hand 1836: 3.638]), is that the Roman people, for all their pity, were generally willing to forgive Nero’s crime; only the gods were unable to forgive it.³⁰⁸

antiquas fratrum discordias et insociabile regnum aestimantes: *antiquas fratrum discordias* alludes to near-proverbial mythological paradigms for the rivalry between Nero and Britannicus, namely the quarrels between Atreus and Thyestes, Eteocles and Polynices, and Romulus and Remus (for which see Nisbet-Hubbard 1978: 41, Briscoe 2008: 432–3); the rivalries between Artaxerxes and Cyrus in fifth-century BC Persia (for which cf. Xen. *Anab.* 1.1.1–8) and Perseus and Demetrius in second-century BC Macedonia (for which cf. Liv. 40.8.11, 45.19.16–17) provide historical *comparanda*. For another Tacitean allusion to these paradigms, cf. 4.60.3 *solita fratribus odia*, describing the relationship between Germanicus’ sons Drusus and Nero.³⁰⁹ For the recondite *insociabilis*, ‘unable to enter into a partnership’, see *TLL* 7.1.1928.30–6; it is synonymous with Greek ἀκοινωνήτος and the equally rare *dissociabilis* (for which cf. *Agr.* 3.1 and see further *TLL* 5.1.1493.31–6). For *insociabilis* qualifying *regnum*, ‘autocracy’ (*OLD regnum* 3), cf. Curt. 10.9.1 *admouebantur...bella ciuilia, nam et insociabile est regnum et a pluribus expetebatur* (in a moralising context on the nature of kingship, explaining the cause of civil strife in the Macedonian Empire). Tacitus is perhaps here alluding to Curtius’ statement in order to explain why the destruction of Britannicus was thought by the Roman people at the time to be necessary.³¹⁰ For the view (widely held in antiquity) that autocratic power cannot be shared without causing factional instability within the ruling class, cf. Hom. *Il.* 2.204–5, Sen. *Ag.* 259, *Thy.* 444, Luc. 1.92–3 *nulla fides regni sociis, omnisque potestas | impatiens consortis erit*, Plut. *Ant.* 81.4, Suet. *Cal.* 22.1, *Dom.* 12.3 and see further Otto 1965: 296, Tarrant 1976: 220–1, Atkinson 1980: 26–7, Champlin 2003: 305.

For *aliquid aestimare*, ‘to take something into account,’ cf. 15.2.3, Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.47 and see further *TLL* 1.1102.14–24. M’s *extimantes* is an orthographical variant of *aestimantes* which prompted the less idiomatic *existimantes* (a very common corruption) in certain *recentiores* and the *editio princeps*.

³⁰⁸ Given that the paradox is unobjectionable, it seems unnecessary to emend *etiam* to *tamen* (following Heinsius [ap. Urlichs 1848: 638], accepted by Nipperdey and Halm) or *iam* (following Ritter 1863: 113, which no editor accepts). Woelffel (1856: 64) saw *etiam* as a corruption of *inertium*, qualifying *hominum*; while this affords sense, and *inertes homines* is paralleled (Naev. *Carm. Frag.* 11, Cic. *Cat.* 2.10, ps.-Sall. *ad Caes.* 2.3.6, Ascon. *In Scaur.* p. 20.16), Tacitus is here emphasising the notion of humans as opposed to gods (hence *etiam*), rather than human characteristics (Urlichs loc. cit.). See also p. 36.

³⁰⁹ Piso maintained the misconception (3.8.1) that Germanicus and his brother Drusus were similarly rivals, and that the elimination of one of the brothers was politically advantageous. See further Woodman-Martin 1996: 123.

³¹⁰ On the extent of intertextuality between Curtius and Tacitus, see Atkinson 1980: 43, Bosworth 2004: 551–67, Woodman-Kraus 2014: 225 ad *Agr.* 27.1 *nihil uirtuti suae inuium* (a possible allusion to Curt. 9.2.9 *insatiabilis cupido famae nihil inuium, nihil remotum uideri sinebat*).

17.2: plerique eorum temporum scriptores: for the appeal to a majority of contemporary written sources as an assertion of the truth of a version of events which is difficult to believe, cf. 5.9.2, 12.67.1, 14.2.2 and see further Marincola 1997: 282, Woodman 2017: 74. Tacitus never names his sources for the murder of Britannicus; he explicitly cites Cluvius Rufus (for whom see 20.2n.) in his analysis of events leading up to Agrippina's murder (14.2.1–2), and perhaps used him as a source here too. As a consular senator close to Nero's court (20.2n.), Cluvius was probably familiar with allegations of incidents such as Nero's sexual assaults against Britannicus; see also pp. 92–3.

inlusum isse pueritiae Britannici Neronem: M's *inlusum esse pueritia...Neronem* affords impossible syntax: *includere* in the sense 'to use for sexual pleasure' is intransitive and must govern a dative complement (cf. 15.72.2 *matri eius inlusit*, Curt. 3.12.22, Suet. *Tib.* 44.1, Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 3.10 and see further *TLL* 7.1.389.76–80). Although (theoretically) it is construable in the passive impersonally, this is unparalleled and awkward.³¹¹ *Inlusum isse pueritiae*, first conjectured by Lipsius (1574: ad loc.) and accepted by all modern editors except Wellesley,³¹² economically restores an attested and desirable archaising construction, for which see K-S 2.722–3. *Pueritiae* is the dative complement of *inlusum*, a supine in *-um* governed by the auxiliary verb *ire*; the indirect statement can therefore be translated 'Nero had set out to use the young Britannicus for his sexual gratification'. For *ire* governing the supine, meaning 'to set out to do something', cf. 4.1.1 *quo facinore dominationem raptum ierit, expediam*, *Hist.* 2.6.2, Varr. *RR* 2.4.12, Sall. *Cat.* 36.4, Liv. 23.43.7 and see further Woodcock 1959: 112, Martin-Woodman 1989: 81, Ash 2007: 92, Woodman 2018: 62. This construction was largely obsolete in spoken and written Latin by the late Republic, being particularly rare in Cicero and Caesar, but found favour with historians from Sallust onwards as a conscious archaism.³¹³ For *pueritia* governing a genitive of the person as a periphrasis for (e.g.) *Britannicus puer*, 'the young [sc. Britannicus]', cf. 14.3.3 *Anicetus, pueritiae Neronis educator*, 12.8.2, Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.153, *Phil.* 13.17, Val. Max. 3.1.2, 6.2.8, Auson. 11.10.3 and see further *TLL* 10.2.2527.71–2528.4. This usage conforms with Tacitus' wider predilection for substituting abstract nouns for concrete; see 16.4n.

ut iam non praematura neque saeua mors uideri queat: Tacitus presents the comparative lack of public outcry as a symptom of popular *dissimulatio* (Henderson 1989: 191, Bartsch 1994: 12), although the people perhaps took a degree of solace in the fact that Britannicus' sexual abuse at the hands of Nero was cut short by his death; that death might release a person from a painful or degrading situation is a familiar topos in the literary *consolatio* (cf. *Agr.* 45.1). For *saeuus* meaning 'shocking', cf. 1.35.5 *saeuum id malique moris etiam furentibus uisum*, Verg. *Aen.* 12.629, Liv. 27.13.1 and see further *OLD saeuus* 2a. This usage is largely poetic and has its first prose attestation in Livy (loc. cit.).

inter sacra mensae: for *sacra mensae*, 'the sanctity of the table' (*OLD sacrum* 5), cf. 15.52.1, Val. Max. 2.1.8, ps.-Quint. *Decl. Min.* 321 *uenenum...inter lares suos, inter sacra mensae...aliquis hilaris hilari dedit*; this last passage, although set in an imaginary declamatory context in which a doctor and his brother accuse each other of poisoning the victim, was possibly inspired (in terms of both content and language) by accounts of the

³¹¹ Constans' (1899: 142) *inlusum esse pueritiae Britannici a Nerone* is therefore unconvincing.

³¹² *Pueritiae* is already found in Vat. Lat. 1958; without further changes, this emendation produces the unconstruable text *inlusum esse pueritiae Britannici Neronem*.

³¹³ Rhenanus' *illusisse pueritiae* (1533 ad loc.), which Wellesley adopts, is less desirable, since it is both further from the paradosis and a banalisation, eliminating a choice archaic construction.

death of Britannicus, whether in the Flavian historical tradition or Tacitus. The concept of *sacra mensae* recalls the Atreid mythological paradigm (for which see 17.1n. *antiquas fratrum discordias*).

ne tempore quidem ad complexum sororum dato: M's plural *sorum* is difficult to explain, since Britannicus, so far as is known, had only one biological sister (Octavia). Perhaps *sorum* could include his half-sister (*OLD soror* 1b) Claudia (Claudius' daughter by his second wife Aelia Paetina, for whom cf. 12.2.1, 15.53.3, Suet. *Claud.* 27.1, *Nero* 35.4 and see further *PIR*² A 886), who may have been present at the dinner. Koestermann (1967: 267) suggests that plural *sorores* is a metonym for his closest relatives, just as *liberorum* at 15.60.1 denotes Plautius Lateranus' close family, not merely his children (Ash 2018: 274–5). This is a possible interpretation, but *sorores* is unparalleled in this sense.³¹⁴ The depiction of family members snatched from mutual embraces is a common motif in Roman rhetoric for *saeuitia* on the part of those who sanction executions; cf. Nero's execution of Plautius Lateranus (15.60.1 *adeo propere ut non complecti liberos...permitteret* with Ash loc. cit.) and Cicero's accusations of *saeuitia* against Verres (*Verr.* 2.1.7 *iste inuentus est qui...e complexu parentum abreptos filios ad necem duceret*, 2.5.138 *nauium praefectos...de complexu parentium suorum...ad mortem cruciatumque rapuisti*).

ante oculos inimici properata sit: this is the sole attested occasion in Nero's principate on which he himself watches the death of his victim. Nero, unlike Domitian (who relished watching his victims suffer) was otherwise known for ordering executions to be performed out of his sight; cf. *Agr.* 45.2 *Nero tamen subtraxit oculos suos iussitque scelera, non spectauit: praecipua sub Domitiano miseriarum pars erat uidere et aspici*. By elevating Nero's *saeuitia* to Domitianic levels, Tacitus presents Britannicus' murder as Nero's cruellest act, thereby emphasising his surprise at the lack of popular outrage. For *mortem properare*, 'to bring about death quickly' (with the implication that the death is premature; see *OLD properare* 7b), cf. 2.31.3, *Verg. Aen.* 9.401, *Paneg. Mess.* 205, *Sil.* 1.225.

in illum supremum Claudiorum sanguinem: Britannicus was the last surviving direct male descendant of the patrician *Gens Claudia* (Nero laid claim to the *nomen gentilicium* only by adoption; cf. 12.25.2); on their genealogy,³¹⁵ see 3.1 with Levick 1990: 11–15, Oakley 2005: 357–61. Britannicus' death draws the reader's attention to a significant change in the composition of Rome's ruling elite to which Tacitus draws frequent attention in his *Annales* (cf. 3.1, 30.2): the extinction, either through infertility or malice on the part of emperors, of the patrician and other noble families which had held curule magistracies since the early Republic allowed many more *noui homines* to enter the Senate and to attain the highest offices; following the civil war of 69, Vespasian became the first *nouus homo* to accede to the Principate. See further Hopkins 1983: 120–46, Talbert 1984: 31, Woodman-Martin 1996: 268–9, Patterson 2016: 213–22.

stupro prius quam ueneno pollutum: this phrase is a syllepsis; *pollutum* is to be construed in both its figurative (governing *stupro*) and its literal (governing *ueneno*) senses. For *polluere* used figuratively of partaking in sexual intercourse with an unwilling partner, cf. 6.1.1 *ut more regio pubem ingenuam stupris pollueret*, *Hist.* 2.56.1, *Catull.* 62.46, *Prop.* 2.34.5, *Sen. Contr.* 1.2.20, *Juv.* 2.29, *SHA Comm.* 11.6 and see further *TLL* 10.1.2566.47–60.

³¹⁴ The oddity perhaps prompted the conjecture *sorori*, first found in Vat. Lat. 1958, which Fuchs (1963: ad loc.) improved to *sororis*; *sorum* could be a *Perseverationsfehler* after *complexum*. Bezzemberger's (1844: 30) *sororium* is also possible, but this adjective is unattested in Tacitus.

³¹⁵ For *sanguis* meaning 'family line, progeny', as here, see *OLD* 10.

The usage is largely poetic and is not attested in prose until the elder Seneca; it is rare thereafter. Here, as at 6.1.1 and 14.31.1 *filiae* [sc. *Boudicca*] *stupro uiolatae sunt, stuprum* has the sense ‘rape’ (*OLD* 2), and recalls *inlusum isse*.

17.3: festinationem exsequiarum edicto Caesar defendit: the edict’s Senecan composition seems likely in the light of Seneca’s known role in the composition of Nero’s funeral eulogy for Claudius (3.2 *aliena facundia*) and his speech to the Senate on *clementia* before Plautius Lateranus’ recall from exile (11.2). Tacitus does not share Dio’s view (61.7.5) that Seneca believed Nero to be a hopeless case and refused to advise him on public pronouncements after Britannicus’ murder; even after Agrippina’s murder in 59, Tacitus’ Nero still felt able to confide in Seneca’s rhetorical skills in providing an eloquent *apologia* for his crimes; cf. 14.11.3 (where he records that Seneca wrote Nero’s insincere justification of his matricide to the Senate) and see further Griffin 1976: 135.

id a maioribus institutum referens: for *aliquid a maioribus institutum*, cf. 3.69.3, Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.113, Macrobian *Sat.* 1.12.12. M’s *id maioribus* was corrected by the original scribe to *id a maioribus*, affording good sense, ‘saying that that had been instituted by the ancestors’.³¹⁶ For the long-standing custom of burying children and those who had died prematurely unceremoniously at night, see 17.1n. *nox eadem*.

subtrahere oculis acerba funera neque laudationibus aut pompa detinere: for *subtrahere aliquid oculis alicuius*, ‘to conceal something from someone’s sight’, cf. Liv. 45.39.7 *Perseus...Philippus...Alexander...tanta nomina subtrahentur ciuitatis oculis*, Min. Fel. *Oct.* 1.1, 34.10, Lact. *De Mort.* 2.3. Analogous idioms are *aspectu subtrahere aliquid* (Verg. *Aen.* 6.465) and *oculos subtrahere* [sc. *aliquo*] (*Agr.* 45.2). For *detinere* meaning ‘to prolong’, cf. 6.23.2, Tib. 1.8.74, Ov. *Ars* 3.650, Sen. *Contr.* 4.pr.1, Sen. *Cons. Marc.* 23.4, Mart. 7.93.4 and see further *TLL* 5.1.815.78–816.6.

Acerba funera perhaps recalls the depiction of the dead children’s souls in the Underworld at Verg. *Aen.* 6.428–9, *quos dulcis uitae exsortis et ab ubere raptos | abstulit atra dies et funere mersit acerbo*; 6.429 is re-used at 11.28, describing the death of Pallas. This possible Virgilian intertext heightens the pathos felt by Tacitus’ audiences, as the premature death of Britannicus is compared to two mythological paradigms; the likening of Britannicus to Pallas provides a poignant image of the destruction of youthful potential. For *acerbum funus* (‘premature death’) elsewhere,³¹⁷ cf. Plaut. *Amph.* 190, Cic. *Dom.* 42, Sen. *Prov.* 5.9, Stat. *Theb.* 2.690, Sil. 13.387, Plin. *Ep.* 5.16.6, Juv. 11.44.

A *comparandum* for Britannicus’ funeral is that of his uncle Germanicus, another member of the Julio-Claudian *domus* whose death was premature and suspicious; his obsequies (2.73.1) are described as *sine imaginibus et pompa*. An otherwise prominent feature of aristocratic funerals at Rome was the procession (*pompa*) of *imagines* of ancestors through the forum, worn by their descendants as the eulogy or *laudatio* was given; cf. 3.1 and see further Kierdorf 1980: 64–80, Flower 1996: 91–127, Bodet 1999: 261, Pepe 2018: 287–91. That no

³¹⁶ On the basis of 3.69.3 *sic a maioribus institutum*, Halm (1856: ad loc.) conjectured *ita* for *id a*, a conjecture also adopted by Fisher. This is unconvincing, since (unlike at 3.69.3) there is no consecutive clause with which *ita* can cohere, and *ita* lacks point; furthermore, M¹’s *id* may be pointed insofar as it looks forward to the two infinitives in the following clause. Ernesti’s deletion of *id* (1752: ad loc.), Nipperdey’s deletion of *id a* (1852: ad loc.) and Ritter’s replacement of *id* with *iam* (1863: 113) are also unnecessary given that M¹’s *id a maioribus institutum* is unobjectionable.

³¹⁷ For *acerbus* in the metaphorical sense ‘premature’, see *TLL* 1.368.8–36.

laudationes were afforded to Britannicus renders his funeral even more sombre than that of Germanicus, which (2.73.1) *per laudes ac memoriam uirtutum eius celebre fuit*.

ceterum et sibi amisso fratris auxilio reliquas spes in re publica sitas: cf. Tiberius' remarks after his son Drusus' death at 4.8.3 (*se tamen fortiora solacia e complexu rei publicae petiuisse*). *Fratris auxilio* could not have been taken seriously; in the light of their established rivalry (12.25.1–2, 41.3, 69.1) and the manipulative behaviour of Agrippina (14.3), Nero could not have relied upon Britannicus as an ally in the same way as Tiberius relied upon the elder Drusus, or Germanicus the younger Drusus (a comparison which Tacitus would have invited here; see also Woodman 2006: 308–10). The insincerity of this edict recalls that of Nero's justification for his matricide at 14.11.3. For *spes in aliquo sita*, cf. Ter. *Ad.* 455, Sall. *Iug.* 33.4, 54.7, 85.4, Apul. *Apol.* 71.

qui unus superesset e familia summum ad fastigium genita: Nero here disingenuously (see 17.2n. *in illum supremum Claudiorum sanguinem*) characterises himself as the last surviving descendant of the patrician *Gens Claudia* (hence *summum ad fastigium genita*; the sentence-final positioning of *genita* is emphatic). *Fastigium* means 'high rank' (*TLL* 6.1.322.33–82); for *summum fastigium*, cf. 3.56.2, 14.54.3, 15.65.1, Vell. 2.30.3, Sen. *Cons. Marc.* 4.4, Plin. *Ep.* 2.1.2. For *genitus ad aliquid*, 'having a right to something by birth', cf. Sall. *Hist.* p. 148.10, Val. Max. 3.4.ext.1, Curt. 8.10.1, Sen. *Ira* 2.31.7, *Cons. Marc.* 17.1, *Ep.* 65.20, Sil. 15.88.

Agrippina's Removal from the *Palatium* and Silana's Conspiracy against her (18.1–22.2)

In the following part of the narrative, Tacitus continues his account of the year 55 by outlining the events which occur in the aftermath of Britannicus' murder. The emperor's use of gifts (18.1n. *largitione*) to ensure the continued loyalty both of family members and of powerful aristocrats (including those who were members of his loosely-defined *consilium*) following a dynastic murder is described for the first time; similar acts of munificence follow Nero's assassinations of Agrippina (14.12.3–4) and Octavia (14.64.3) in the Tacitean narrative and therefore help to establish the murder of Britannicus within a canon of acts of parricide committed by the tyrannical Nero. Tacitus creates a sense of impending doom for Nero's future victims Agrippina and Octavia by alluding to their close alliance at court (exploiting the double meaning of *amplecti* [18.2] in doing so) which had perhaps developed as a result of their shared terror (however much they both sought to conceal it) on witnessing the destruction of Britannicus, their stepson and brother respectively (16.4). Tacitus creates drama by intimating Agrippina's formation of political alliances or *partes* (18.2n.) with noble senators; although there is no evidence that Agrippina seriously sought such alliances, the mere suggestion of them has an important narrative function in preparing Tacitus' reader for Silana's allegation whereby Agrippina was conspiring against the emperor (19.1–21.6).

The drama is heightened by the fact that Nero himself took the court's suspicions of *partes Agrippinae* seriously and took active steps to distance Agrippina from the centre of imperial power, depriving her of opportunities to develop friendships with both *nobiles* and the military and to formulate a conspiracy (Martin 1981: 165, Griffin 1984: 74, Bauman 1992: 196, Rudich 1993: 17–19, Barrett 1996: 173–4, Ginsburg 2006: 43, Drinkwater 2019: 176–77). Nero therefore disbanded her two sets of bodyguards, both the one consisting of praetorian soldiers (18.3n. *excubias*) and that consisting of quasi-mercenary Germans (18.3n. *Germanos*), and expelled her from the *Palatium*, assigning to her the house on the lower Palatine which once belonged to Antonia Minor (the younger daughter of M. Antonius and Augustus' sister Octavia). From this point on, Nero treated Agrippina with a considerable degree of suspicion, and ensured that he was escorted by praetorian centurions on any short visits to her house.

The fact that Agrippina was the object of the emperor's suspicions combined with her weak position (isolated from the centre of power) rendered her an easy target for the opportunistic (if farcical) conspiracy on the part of her former friend Junia Silana which is the subject of the narrative in 19.1–21.6. Silana sought to bring an end to Agrippina's ascendancy once and for all by accusing her of conspiring with the aristocrat Rubellius Plautus (a descendant of Augustus by the same number of removes as Nero; see 19.3n. *pari ac Neronem gradu*) to overthrow Nero and facilitate Plautus' accession to the Principate. The gnomic *sententia* with which 19.1 begins emphasises how the strength and weakness of Agrippina's position is entirely dependent upon Nero's whims; here, at the point in the narrative of 55 at which the emperor is most suspicious of her, she is in an unusually fragile position for the first year of the new principate and therefore especially vulnerable to *delatio* (Rudich 1993: 17–18, Rutledge 2001: 150–2). That this act of *delatio* was motivated purely by revenge and that Silana's allegations against Agrippina had no basis in reality is already suggested at 19.2–3, where Tacitus gives Agrippina's preventing Silana from marrying Sextius Africanus (purely because she coveted the wealthy and childless Silana's estate) as the reason for the animosity between the two women. This is the somewhat trivial motivation for this wholly feminine political operation (Rudich 1993: 18–19), although since Silana is a woman and unable to act

as a *delator* in her own person, she suborns two of her clients (the otherwise obscure Iturius and Calvisius) to denounce Agrippina to the emperor by way of two intermediaries, Atimetus and Paris,³¹⁸ of whom the latter was a close personal friend of Nero (19.4).

Paris is chosen to inform Nero of the accusations against Agrippina, perhaps because he is the only person within the circle of conspirators to be sufficiently close to Nero for the emperor to take his allegations seriously (19.4n.). In a dramatic late-night scene invested with *enargeia* (20.1), Nero, already suspicious of his mother, responds to Paris' report irrationally, engaging in tyrannical behaviour which is caused by a combination of drunkenness and extreme fear, with all sound judgment suppressed (20.1n.); it is at this point that the reader can imagine an inebriated and panic-stricken Nero hastily resolving not only to remove Burrus from the praetorian prefecture (believing that Burrus, as a *protégé* of Agrippina, was aiding and abetting his mother's plot against him) but also to kill his mother (20.1).³¹⁹ While creating suspense, Tacitus simultaneously seizes the opportunity to augment his own *auctoritas* as a historian by setting the historical record straight with regard to the true significance of Nero's reaction to Paris' report (20.2); he argues that Nero's response is merely a drunken overreaction to a rumour, and that Pliny the Elder's and Cluvius Rufus' accounts (which suggest that Nero at no point doubted Burrus' loyalty) are therefore more believable than that of Fabius Rusticus, who records that Nero had earnestly suspected Burrus and had even sent the *codicilli* appointing C. Caecina Tuscus to replace him before Seneca was able to dissuade him from dismissing his praetorian prefect; Tacitus further suggests that Fabius' account is untrustworthy because of its exaggeration of Seneca's positive influence upon Nero. While Tacitus does not uphold his intention to name his sources wherever they offer discrepant accounts of a given event (20.2n.), his analysis here provides an invaluable insight into the historian's technique and the means whereby he constructs his *auctoritas*.

Burrus' role in the Tacitean account is in fact positive, since by counselling Nero he curbs the emperor's irrationality and encourages sound judgment on his part (for Burrus' wider role in instilling the immature and often rash emperor with good sense cf. also 2.1); he ensures that the emperor grants Agrippina a fair hearing before him and Seneca (witnessed by a small select group of imperial freedmen) and promises to have Agrippina executed if he and Seneca find her guilty of conspiracy (20.3n., 21.1n.). One of the most memorable passages in the Neronian *Annales* (21.2–5) ensues, as Agrippina gives an impassioned defence speech in *oratio recta* before Seneca, Burrus and the libertine witnesses at a hearing held in her own home; hers is the first speech in *oratio recta* in the Neronian *Annales*, and she is the only female character in the entire *Annales* to express her thoughts in direct speech.³²⁰ She stresses the absurdity of Silana's accusation by highlighting her own status as a mother, thereby emphasising that she feels an acute sense of maternal affection for her son with which the childless Silana could never empathise; she further argues that Iturius and Calvisius have no concern for propriety and merely submit to Silana because they covet her wealth. In a conspicuous display of female rivalry, Agrippina curtly dismisses the role of her rival, Nero's aunt Domitia (whose freedmen were implicated in the accusation), in the young emperor's upbringing and stresses that, while Domitia concerned herself with such frivolities as her Baian fishponds, she was concentrating all her efforts upon the securing of the Principate for her son (21.3n.). The speech's drama is heightened by the fact that Agrippina does not downplay the acts of criminality which she previously committed against the *domus*; the expression *ideo aut mihi infamia parricidii...subeunda est* (21.2n.) has a bitter irony in the

³¹⁸ Freedmen of Nero's aunt, Domitia, who is also a personal enemy of Agrippina (19.4n. *infensa aemulatio*).

³¹⁹ This is the first point in the *Annales* at which Nero feels a desire to kill his mother.

³²⁰ On the significance of Agrippina's speech see also introduction p. 24.

light of Agrippina's murder of Claudius, an irony which is reinforced by her subsequent utterances (21.5n.) *uiuere ego Britannico potiente rerum poteram* and *ea crimina...quibus nisi a filio absolui non possim*. In a powerful and dramatic display of candour, Tacitus' Agrippina does not hesitate to admit her responsibility for a previous dynastic murder, that of Claudius, but skilfully uses her guilt for this murder to explain why it would be politically disastrous for her to conspire against Nero (Rudich 1993: 20, Woodman 2004: 255 n. 44). In a dramatic *peripeteia*,³²¹ the outcome of her speech is that Seneca, Burrus and the imperial freedmen are convinced of her innocence; she reports the outcome of the hearing to Nero and she regains the emperor's favour (21.6).

The outcome of Agrippina's renewed favour at court is a significant increase in the value of her patronage, which results in the emperor's elevation of her protégés (both equestrian and senatorial) to distinguished public offices: L. Faenius Rufus is appointed *praefectus annonae*, while the otherwise obscure L. Arruntius Stella is appointed to a special office overseeing games; P. Anteius is earmarked for the governorship of Syria, but never takes up the office (22.1n.). Agrippina's influence also ensures retribution for some of those who conspired against her; Silana, Calvisius and Iturius are all exiled, while Atimetus (who, in the spirit of Tacitean onomastic irony,³²² lives up to his Greek name) is put to death (22.2n.). Paris is too powerful an ally of the emperor to face a penalty, while Nero at this point lacks the courage to deal with Plautus, although (in the light of both his descent from Augustus and his links with anti-Neronian factions in the Senate) he continues to regard him with the utmost suspicion (22.2n.) until he is compelled (on witnessing a portent) to exile him in 60 (14.22.1–3). Given Agrippina's influence at this point, it is perhaps puzzling that she disappears from the Tacitean narrative only to reappear as Nero's plot to assassinate her commences in 59 (14.1.1); it is perhaps the case that Nero and Agrippina had settled into a productive working relationship (of relatively little interest to Tacitus)³²³ which was only disturbed when he fell in love with Poppaea Sabina, an enemy of Agrippina who regarded her as an obstacle to their marriage, in 58 (45.1–46.3, 14.1.1–3).³²⁴

18.1 *exin largitione potissimos amicorum auxit*: *exin*, a contracted form of *exinde*,³²⁵ is preferred by poets, but rare in prose before Tacitus. The only pre-Tacitean prose attestations of *exin* are at Cic. *Div.* 1.55, *Leg.* 3.7, *Nat. Deor.* 2.101, 111, *Orat.* 154 (in a passage explaining the phenomenon of contraction), Varr. *RR* 1.28.1, 31.3, Liv. 27.5.6; in Tacitus the form is used 36 times (twice in the *Historiae* and 34 times throughout the *Annales*, appearing at least once in every book). The form then appears 5 times in Suetonius and 6 times in Apuleius, before becoming common in late antique prose; see further *TLL* 5.2.1506.59–63, Neue-Wagener 2.672–3. *Aliquem largitione augere* is not elsewhere attested, but for analogous *aliquem copiis augere*, cf. 6.44.4, Caes. *Gall.* 6.1.2, Liv. 31.34.6; for *aliquem*

³²¹ On Tacitus' exploitation of this tragic technique (which accords with the Aristotelian conception of tragic poetics) throughout the *Annales* see Santoro L'hoir 2006: 23, 79–83.

³²² On which see introduction pp. 37–8, 22.1n.

³²³ Tacitus shows comparatively little interest in recording aspects of good government in which harmony existed between the major organs of the imperial Roman state (and also within the *domus*) under Nero, as such material is less conducive to a compelling or dramatic narrative of imperial Rome (Marincola 1997: 251–3); this perhaps explains why his narrative of the year 57 (2 Teubner pages) is very brief in comparison with those of 55 and 58 (7 and 13 Teubner pages respectively); cf. his comment at the start of his narrative of that year (31.1) and see further p. 92 n. 381. Agrippina continues to enjoy the loyal support of the praetorian soldiers right up until her death in 59 (14.7.4 with Rudich 1993: 18).

³²⁴ See further p. 22 n. 143.

³²⁵ Manuscripts vary constantly as to whether *exin* or *exim* is read; here (and elsewhere in *Annales* 11–16 and the *Historiae*) it is prudent to follow M.

opibus augere, 2.2.1, 11.8.4. By *potissimos amicorum*, Seneca and Burrus are probably meant (Baldwin 1967: 433, Brinkmann 2002: 19). Nero perhaps took measures to ensure that his two most influential advisers remained loyal following the murder of Britannicus, in which their involvement is (perhaps deliberately) not discussed by Tacitus, who leaves it unclear as to whether they acquiesced in it or were opposed to it. Dio (61.7.5) suggests that Seneca and Burrus felt it impossible to steer Nero towards virtue following the murder and therefore distanced themselves from him, taking only a passive and defensive role in his *consilium*; Tacitus rather suggests that Nero used gifts as a means of ensuring their continued loyalty to him (although Burrus' loyalty to the emperor soon came into question; cf. 20.1–2, 23.1–2); see further Baldwin 1967: 431–3, Griffin 1976: 422–3, Martin 1981: 165, Rudich 1993: 16–17, Bauman 1992: 195, Rutledge 2001: 152.

Acts of imperial munificence consistently follow the emperor's acts of parricide in the Neronian *Annales* (Kloft 1970, Braund 2009: 354, Keitel 2009: 132); following the murder of Agrippina in 59, Nero recalled a number of exiles, for whose banishment from Rome Agrippina had been partly responsible (14.12.3–4), while Nero offered money to temples following the murder of Octavia in 62 (14.64.3).³²⁶

nec defuere qui arguerent uiros grauitatem adseuerantes, quod domos uillas id temporis quasi praedam diuisissent: 'there was no shortage of people to accuse men professing their austerity [*OLD grauitas* 5b] of distributing [*OLD diuidere* 6a] houses and country estates at that point in time as though they were the spoils of war.' For Tacitus' use of the formula *non deesse qui* governing a generic subjunctive, cf. 14.1, 26.1, 43.1, 4.50.3, 14.16.2, 15.64.2, 16.11.1, *Hist.* 2.9.1, 94.1, 3.38.1, 78.1, 4.56.2. For transitive *adseuerare* meaning 'to profess or assert a quality or attribute,' cf. *Agr.* 11.2 *magni artus Germanicam originem adseuerant*, *Cic. Brut.* 293 (used elliptically), *Quint. Inst.* 9.2.59, *Apul. Met.* 3.13.2 and see further *OLD adseuerare* 2, *TLL* 2.876.37–50. The partitioning of estates belonging to the imperial family (probably overseen by Seneca and Burrus, who are to be understood as the *uiros grauitatem adseuerantes* [Brinkmann 2002: 19]; the description is especially appropriate for Seneca in the light of his characterisation by both Agrippina [14.3] and Suillius [42.4] as a hypocritical and duplicitous philosopher) was inevitable if Nero was to fulfil his promises of lavish gifts to his closest allies (Braund 2009: 354). Suetonius (*Nero* 33.3) suggests that gifts of land as well as money were made to the poisoner Lucusta, who had concocted the poison which killed Britannicus (15.3n.). For *arguere* governing an accusative of the person accused and a causal clause introduced by *quod*, meaning 'to accuse someone of having done something', a construction unattested before Tacitus' *Annales*, cf. 1.40.1 *arguere Germanicum omnes quod non ad superiorem exercitum pergeret*, 16.27.1 *patres arguebat quod publica munia desererent*, *Amm.* 16.6.1 and see further *TLL* 2.553.50–55. In the standard construction *arguere* governs an accusative of the person accused and a genitive of charge (*TLL* 2.552.31–52).

alii necessitatem adhibitam credebant a principe: 'others believed that compulsion had been applied by the emperor.' For *necessitatem adhibere*, 'to apply compulsion,' cf. *Cic. Ac.* 1.116, *Sen. Contr.* 9.3.9 *si uis et necessitas a paciscente adhibita est*.

sceleris sibi conscio et ueniam sperante: for *consciis* governing the dative of the reflexive pronoun and a genitive of the thing known, meaning 'inwardly aware of something,' see *TLL*

³²⁶ Tacitus' remark at 14.64.3 *quicumque casus temporum illorum nobis uel aliis auctoribus noscent praesumptum habeant, quotiens fugas et caedes iussit princeps, totiens grates deis actas* ironically illustrates this pattern in the Neronian narrative.

4.372.31–48, K-S 1.437; to the examples there cited, add Verg. *Aen.* 1.604 *mens sibi conscia recti*, Ov. *Hal.* 27 *muraena...teretis sibi conscia tergi*. For *ueniam sperare*, cf. Luc. 4.231, Val. Fl. 4.584. For Nero's feelings of guilt following an act of parricide, cf. 14.10.1 *sed a Caesare perfecto demum scelere magnitudo eius intellecta est. reliquo noctis modo per silentium defixus*.

si largitionibus ualidissimum quemque obstrinxisset: for the philosophy behind Nero's actions, cf. Sen. *Ben.* 7.19.5, 20 and see further Rudich 1993: 16–17, Braund 2009: 354. *Aliquem largitionibus obstringere* is not attested elsewhere, but the sense of *obstringere*, 'to hold someone in a bond of loyalty' (*OLD obstringere* 5) is clear; for analogous expressions, cf. 11.2.1 *pecunia et stupro in omne flagitium obstrictos*, Cic. *Cluent.* 190 *illum...donis muneribus...obstrinxit*.

18.2 at matris ira nulla munificentia leniri: the sequence of five paratactic sentences in asyndeton, of which each has a historic infinitive (*leniri, amplecti, habere, excipere, habere*) as its main verb,³²⁷ adds vividness to the psychological description of Agrippina; unlike the members of Nero's *consilium*, her loyalty cannot be bought, nor can any gifts from her son lessen her feelings of injustice, as she appears to court the loyalty of others who might seek to avenge Nero's crime.

Munificentia ('munificence') is common in Livy and post-Augustan prose authors, but entirely absent from the extant corpora of Cicero, Caesar and Varro; its earliest attestation in extant Latin is at Sall. *Cat.* 54.2 *Caesar beneficiis ac munificentia magnus habebatur*; Sallust then uses it three times in the *Bellum Iugurthinum*. The noun was probably a late republican coinage, attractive to Sallust. For *iram lenire*, 'to assuage someone's anger,' see *TLL* 7.1141.44–6; to the examples there cited, add Sen. *Ira* 1.1.1, Quint. *Inst.* 3.8.12; an analogous phrase is *iracundiam lenire*, for which cf. Sen. *Tranq.* 9.2. *Aliquid munificentia lenire* is unparalleled, but for analogous *aliquid bonitate lenire*, cf. Cic. *Marcell.* 31.

amplecti Octauiam, crebra cum amicis secreta habere: the historic infinitive *amplecti* can be understood in its literal sense ('she [sc. Agrippina] embraced Octavia')³²⁸ as well as its figurative ('she took Octavia's interests into account'); for the latter usage, cf. Cic. *Mil.* 72 *nimis amplecti plebem uidebatur*, Sall. *Iug.* 7.6, Plin. *Paneg.* 26.6 and see further *TLL* 1.1992.57–74. Agrippina's support for Octavia is perhaps motivated just as much by the perverse logic of court intrigue as by pity for her treatment by Nero (Bauman 1992: 195–6, Rudich 1993: 17, Drinkwater 2019: 176). For the neuter substantive *secretum* meaning 'secret meeting,' cf. 12.2, 3.8.2, 11.30.1, *Hist.* 2.4.2, 100.3, 4.49.1 and see further G-G 1443b.

super ingenitam auaritiam undique pecunias quasi in subsidium corripens: 'appropriating (*OLD corripere* 3) money from all corners, as if to provide an emergency

³²⁷ For a similar sequence (with seven historic infinitives), cf. 14.8.1 *decurrere ad litus. hi molium obiectus, hi proximas scaphas scandere; alii...uadere in mare, quidam manus protendere; ...omnis ora compleri; adflueri ingens multitudo...ut ad gratandum sese expedire*. The longest paratactic sequence of historic infinitives in the *Annales* has nine (4.51.1); the longest in Tacitus has ten (*Agr.* 38.1), while the longest in extant Latin prose has eleven (Sall. *Iug.* 66.1). Sequences of asyndetic, paratactic clauses with historic infinitives as main verbs are a prominent Sallustian stylistic feature adopted by Tacitus; see further Woodman 2014: 104, 281, 2018: 252 with bibliography there cited. Such sequences are especially apposite in vivid psychological descriptions; see further Malloch 2013: 205, 460.

³²⁸ This is plausible in the light of their close familial bond as first cousins (Agrippina was Germanicus' daughter, Octavia Claudius').

fund, to an extent beyond that expected given her innate greed'.³²⁹ For greed as a trait of Tacitus' Agrippina, cf. 12.7.3 *cupido auri immensa obtentum habebat, quasi subsidium regno pararetur* and see further Ginsburg 2006: 43. Agrippina's appropriation of funds here (perhaps achieved by her courting the financial support of the *nobiles* and other aristocrats) may merely be symptomatic of her innate greed rather than a sign of conspiracy (Ginsburg loc. cit.). Tacitus suggests (19.2) that Agrippina's greed was the primary cause of the breakdown of her relations with Iunia Silana; seeking to inherit her fortune, she discouraged Silana from marrying Sextius Africanus, a young aristocrat whom she loved. For the view that the money was genuinely intended both to fund a conspiracy against Nero and to bribe aristocrats to switch their allegiance from Nero to Agrippina, see Martin 1981: 165, Bauman 1992: 196, Rutledge 2001: 150; Rudich (1993: 17–20) is more sceptical, but nonetheless sees conspiracy as a possibility in the light of Agrippina's continuing ambition to become a *socia imperii*, a goal which was becoming ever less likely following Nero's manoeuvring against her (as exemplified by the dismissal of Pallas, for which cf. 14.1, and her banishment from the *Palatium*, for which see 18.3n).

Ingenita auaritia is not paralleled elsewhere, but for analogous expressions whereby adjectival *ingenitus* (for which see *OLD* 1b) qualifies an abstract noun denoting a character trait, cf. Liv. 9.6.5 *superbiam ingenitam*, Manil. 5.137, Fronto p. 79.4. Tacitus uses adjectival *ingenitus* only once elsewhere (1.29.1 *nobilitate ingenita*); nowhere does he use any other form of *ingignere* (G-G 637). For *pecuniam corripere*, 'to appropriate money' (with the implication 'dishonestly'; see *OLD corripere* 3), cf. Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.30, Val. Max. 4.8.ext.2 *in corripienda pecunia occupatus*. *Subsidium* meaning 'emergency fund' is unparalleled, but explicable as an extension of its use to mean 'assistance for a specified occasion' (*OLD* 4b).

tribunos et centuriones comiter excipere: for *aliquem comiter excipere*, 'to welcome someone courteously' (*OLD comiter* 1, *excipere* 8), cf. 3.8.1 *exceptum comiter iuuenem*, 14.4.4, *Hist.* 3.42.2, Liv. 33.49.6, Curt. 6.5.3, Apul. *Met.* 6.19.4. The tribunes and centurions described here are most likely to be those of the Praetorian Guard (Griffin 1984: 74). That Agrippina courted the favour of the praetorian officers may well have been suggestive of her conspiring against Nero, as Martin (1981: 165), Bauman (1992: 195) and Rutledge (2001: 150) argue. Rudich (1993: 17), Barrett (1996: 172–3) and Drinkwater (2019: 176–7), although more hesitant to believe that Agrippina plotted revolution as her enemy Iunia Silana alleged (19.2–3), nonetheless concede that her currying favour with praetorian officers provided some substance to Silana's allegations.

nomina et uirtutes nobilium, qui etiam tum supererant, in honore habere: for *aliquid in honore habere*, 'to hold something in high esteem' (*OLD honor* 3d), cf. Plin. *NH* 37.87; cf. also *aliquem in honore habere* at Cic. *Cluent.* 184, Caes. *Civ.* 1.77.2, Suet. *Aug.* 67.1. Agrippina's currying favour with the *nobiles* descended from republican consuls,³³⁰ who were likely to have been opposed to Nero's principate, could also have been suggestive of *res*

³²⁹ M's *corripens* affords unobjectionable sense, but Lipsius (1574: ad loc.) conjectured *corripere*, to cohere with the other historic infinitives; his conjecture is accepted by Ernesti (1752: ad loc.) and Anquetil (1838: 43). While it may seem awkward to subordinate this one clause in a sequence of paratactic finite clauses (whose verbs are historic infinitives), it is perhaps appropriate to the 'stream of consciousness' style, according to which Tacitus conveys Agrippina's often rash thoughts and actions (cf. also 13.1, 14.2–3, 14.6.1, 8.3–4); there is also no compelling route of corruption from *corripere* to *corripens*. All modern editors have therefore rejected the conjecture.

³³⁰ For Tacitus' predication of *nobilis* of a senator who claimed ancestry from a republican consul, cf. 1.1, 19.2 with n. Perhaps Agrippina deliberately sought to flatter *nobiles* to foster their support (as *nomina et uirtutes...in honore habere* might imply).

nouae (Martin 1981: 165, Bauman 1992: 145, 195, Rutledge 2001: 150); one *nobilis* whose favour she perhaps courted was Rubellius Plautus (*PIR*² R 115), with whom she was accused by Junia Silana and the *delatores* Iturius and Calvisius of plotting revolution (19.3). Plautus was no friend of Nero, who felt him to be a rival to his principate and banished him to Asia in 60 (14.22.3), before sanctioning his murder (at Tigellinus' urging) in 62 (14.59.4). She probably also sought the friendship of Cornelius Sulla (cos. 52; see further *PIR*² C 1464) who was the husband of Claudius' daughter Antonia (*PIR*² A 886; see also 17.2n. *sorum*), the half-brother of Messalina and a descendant of the republican *dictator*, as well as a great-grandson of Augustus' sister Octavia; Sulla was implicated in a conspiracy against Nero (along with Burrus and Pallas) later in 55 (23.1–2) and exiled to Massilia on a charge of conspiracy three years later (47.3); Nero had probably suspected his loyalty from the start of his principate (Baldwin 1967: 432), and finally put him to death in 62 (14.57.4). The implication of *qui etiam tum supererant* is that by the Neronian age, the proportion of senators who were descended from republican consuls was steadily decreasing, as that of *noui homines* increased (see 17.2n. *illum supremum Claudiorum sanguinem*), a trend which continued into the Flavian period and later; on such temporal innuendo, see Woodman-Martin 1996: 403 ad 3.55.2 *etiam tum*. Some senators of republican stock (such as the Junii Silani [1.1] and the descendants of Sulla [23.1n.]) had been specifically targeted by the Julio-Claudian emperors, perhaps because they were felt to harbour anti-imperial sentiments or pose an especial threat to that dynasty's hegemony (Walker 1952: 68, Syme 1958: 2.654, Rudich 1993: 20, Patterson 2016: 216–220, 231–3). The large-scale loss of ancient republican families from the Senate's ranks did not occur until the last years of Domitian's principate (Syme 1939: 490–1, 500–8, Hopkins 1983: 166–70, Levick 1999: 81–3, Patterson 2016: 236).

quasi quaereret ducem et partes: ‘as if she were looking for a leader and a faction’ (*OLD pars* 16). It is questionable whether Agrippina sought to mount a conspiracy against Nero, and even more so as to whether the disparate friendships with the military and aristocracy which Agrippina had established (of which many had probably been established under Claudius; her friendship with the praetorians was merely a continuation of that enjoyed by her father Germanicus; cf. 14.7.4 and see further Barrett 1996: 173) could be termed an organised faction (*partes*); the most generally accepted view (Rudich 1993: 17–20, Barrett 1996: 192–3, Ginsburg 2006: 45, Drinkwater 2019: 176–8) is that Agrippina's close friendships with the military and leading senators (some of whom had anti-Neronian leanings) engendered popular suspicion of her which was magnified into an allegation of conspiracy by her enemy Junia Silana, and also, perhaps, by a hostile source tradition.³³¹ Agrippina the Elder was similarly accused by Sejanus of forming anti-Tiberian factions, the so-called *partes Agrippinae* (for which cf. 4.17.3); *pace* Bauman (1992: 153), it is scarcely credible that the ill-defined support networks recorded by the historical tradition amounted to any organised movement against the emperor (Barrett 1996: 33, Shotter 2000: 350–1, Seager 2005: 229).

18.3 cognitum id Neroni: for the impersonal passive *cognitum* [sc. *est*] *alicui*, ‘it was made known to someone’, cf. 6.26.1, 16.10.2, *Agr.* 26.1 and see further *TLL* 4.1515.65–6. Tacitus deliberately leaves it vague as to who informed Nero of his mother's courting the favour of aristocrats, or how Nero found out; for this narrative technique, which underlines the role of

³³¹ The hostile rumour whereby Octavia was fomenting a revolt against Nero in 62 is conveyed using similar language; cf. 14.61.3 *arma illa aduersus principem sumpta; ducem tamen defuisse* and see further Drinkwater 2019: 176 n.39.

obscure rumour in driving the events of the *Annales*, cf. 4.8.1 *ut octo post annos cognitum est* and see further Martin-Woodman 1989: 123–5, Feldherr 2009: 181–3.

excubiasque militares, quae ut coniugi imperatoris olim, tum ut matri seruabantur: *excubiae* (OLD 2) here denotes those soldiers of the Praetorian Guard who stood on watch duty outside Agrippina’s chamber; these are to be contrasted with her private bodyguards (*Germanos...custodes*) in the following clause. *Excubiae* were probably first assigned to Agrippina (an unprecedented honour for an imperial woman; cf. Dio 61.8.4) while she was Claudius’ wife, around the same time as she assumed the *cognomen* Augusta (in 50; cf. 12.26.1), and were retained for the first five months or so of Nero’s principate (Bauman 1992: 196, Barrett 1996: 173, Drinkwater 2019: 177).

Tacitus’ use of *coniunx*, meaning ‘wife’ (as a synonym for *uxor*), could be deemed an artificiality of diction; while the noun sees unrestricted use in verse (particularly epic) in this sense, and is considered to be of a higher stylistic level than *uxor* (Watson 1985: 431–2), its use in prose is largely restricted to formulaic collocations such as *coniunx et liberi* (Adams 1972a: 252–5, Woodman-Martin 1996: 291). Its free use as a synonym for *uxor* is attested only in those prose authors of the Augustan period and later who permit artificialities of diction, namely Livy (5 times), Velleius (twice), Valerius Maximus (4 times), the elder Seneca (once at *Contr.* 10.3.2), the younger Seneca (3 times) and Tacitus (8 times, including here, of which all are in *Annales* 12–14).

M reads *excubiasque militares quae ut coniugi imperatoris solitum ut matri seruabantur*, but *solitum* is not construable; Lipsius (1574: ad loc.) restores good sense with *quae ut coniugi imperatoris olim, tum ut matri seruabantur* (positing a false word division), accepted by all editors since.

et Germanos per eundem honorem custodes additos digredi iubet: a cohort of 500 quasi-mercenary Germans,³³² periodically recruited during campaigns on the Lower Rhine, was first established at Rome around 5 as a personal bodyguard for the emperor, following a precedent set by Julius Caesar (*Caes. Gall.* 7.13.1); cf. 1.24.2, 15.58.2, *Jos. AJ* 19.119, 149–52, *Suet. Aug.* 49.1, *Cal.* 43.1, 55.2, 58.3, *Galba* 12.2, Dio 55.24.7, 56.23.4 and see further Bellen 1981, Barrett 1996: 174, Fuhrmann 2012: 114–15, Bingham 2013: 16–17, Ash 2018: 264, Drinkwater 2019: 46, 61. As an exceptional honour (Ginsburg 2006: 43), a detachment of this force had been appointed as a private bodyguard (OLD *custos* 1) to Agrippina (cf. *Suet. Nero* 34.1), perhaps around the time of Nero’s accession (given *nuper*). German bodyguards, unlike praetorians, were not part of the Roman army; as peregrine soldiers, they had no political interests at Rome and their loyalty to the emperor and his household could generally be relied upon (15.58.2, *Jos. AJ* 19.150, *Suet. Cal.* 58.3, *Galba* 12.2 with Bingham loc. cit.). Although Augustus temporarily disbanded the cohort following the Varan defeat of 9 (*Suet. Aug.* 49.1, Dio 56.23.4), it had been reinstated by the time of Tiberius’ accession in 14 (1.24.2); it was permanently disbanded by Galba in 69 (*Suet. Galba* 12.2).

M’s *super eundem honorem* (‘above/beyond the same honour’) is meaningless in the context and therefore almost certainly corrupt; no modern editor accepts it. There are two possible emendations: Bötticher’s (1834) *nuper eundem <in> honorem* and Andresen’s (1913: app. crit. ad loc.) *per eundem honorem*. While Bötticher’s emendation (accepted by all modern

³³² Also termed *Bataui* (*Suet. Cal.* 43.1, Dio 55.24.7), since they were recruited predominantly from among this tribe.

editors except Andresen) is attractive in the light of the pointed semantics of *nuper, eundem* <in> *honorem* is difficult to understand; if *in honorem* means ‘in [or to fulfil] his/her honour’,³³³ it is difficult to see how such an expression can be qualified by an adjective meaning ‘the same’. Andresen’s *per eundem honorem* is therefore preferable; for *per honorem*, ‘for a given honorific purpose’, cf. 15.33.3 *quique Caesarem per honorem aut uarios usus sectantur*. The corruption perhaps arose from a dittography of ‘s’ after *Germanos* in *scriptio continua*, which was suggestive of the word *super*.

ne coetu salutantium frequentaretur: for *coetus salutantium*, denoting a crowd of well-wishers drawn from among an aristocrat’s friends and clients, cf. 11.22.1, 14.56.3 [sc. *Seneca*] *prohibet coetus salutantium, uitat comitantes*; for analogous *turba salutantium*, 4.41.2, Sen. *Ep.* 19.11, Suet. *Galba* 17.1. Under the Principate as well as the Republic, a Roman aristocrat formally received his friends and clients at home early in the morning in accordance with the ritual known as *salutatio*; the gathered friends and clients saluted the aristocrat and offered their good wishes in order of social status. If the aristocrat held a public office or had business to undertake, his friends and clients escorted him to the forum.³³⁴ Cf. Cic. *ad Brut.* 2.4.1, Verg. *Georg.* 2.461–2, Mart. 12.18.4–5, Juv. 5.21, Suet. *Claud.* 25.1, 35.1, Fronto p. 46.19–20 and see further *BNP* 12.909–10, Mottershead 1986: 127, Lendon 1997: 234, Hall 1998: 422, Watson 2003: 90–1, Malloch 2013: 319, Woodman 2018: 227. Tacitus nowhere implies that a *salutatio* was unusual for an aristocratic female, although there is no other evidence of a woman receiving one. Nero perhaps feared that these meetings would offer Agrippina and her aristocratic supporters an opportunity to conspire to overthrow him, or at least to form an alliance against him: hence his eagerness to prohibit them; see further Martin 1981: 165, Rudich 1993: 17, Barrett 1996: 173.

separat domum matremque transfert in eam quae Antoniae fuerat: Nero’s removal of Agrippina from the imperial residence (for which cf. also Dio 61.8.4–6) was designed not only to prevent conspiracy, but also, perhaps more importantly, to enable him to assert the independence which he desired by isolating his mother from the centre of power, an important political manoeuvre; see further Griffin 1984: 74, Bauman 1992: 196, Rudich 1993: 17–18, Barrett 1996: 174, Ginsburg 2006: 43, Drinkwater 2019: 176–77. For *separare* governing only a direct object denoting a physical entity (without an ablative or prepositional phrase indicating the place from which), meaning ‘to cut off,’ cf. Cic. *Agr.* 2.87, Plin. *NH* 4.84 and see further *OLD* *separare* 2.

The *domus Antoniae* referred to here is almost certainly that of Antonia Minor (the younger daughter of M. Antonius and Augustus’ sister Octavia), for whom cf. 3.3.2, 18.3, 11.3.1, Val. Max. 4.3.3, Plin. *NH* 7.80, 9.172, Suet. *Cal.* 1.1, 10.1, *Claud.* 1.6, Dio 58.11.7 and see further *PIR*² A 885, *ARA* X 781 tav. 70, Papi ap. Steinby 1995: 2.34. Born on 31st January 36 BC, she was Nero’s maternal great-grandmother (the wife of the elder Drusus Claudius Nero [cos. 9 BC]); she was therefore the mother of Germanicus and Claudius and the grandmother of Gaius,³³⁵ Agrippina, Drusilla and Livilla. Her Palatine house was an important social and political centre while Tiberius was on Capri (Suet. *Cal.* 10.1, Plin. *NH* 9.172); Gaius was raised there after Germanicus’ death, before Tiberius summoned him to Capri (Suet. loc. cit.).

³³³ This seems likely given *additos*; for *in honorem* in this sense, cf. Sen. *Ep.* 20.7, 79.2, Hyg. *Fab.* 18.1.

³³⁴ The *salutatio* was a means whereby an aristocrat both kept himself in the public eye and measured his public influence and importance; an aristocrat’s refusal of a *salutatio* could be interpreted as a sign of withdrawal from public life. Cf. Seneca’s refusal of one (on his retirement in 62) at 14.56.3 and see further Barrett 1996: 173, Hall 1998: 418–19.

³³⁵ Gaius forced her to commit suicide aged 72 on 1st May 37 (Dio loc. cit.).

Her elder sister, Antonia Maior (for whom cf. 4.44.2, 12.64.2,³³⁶ Suet. *Nero* 5.1 and see further *PIR*² A 884, Woodman 2018: 235), was Nero's paternal grandmother, the mother of Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus.³³⁷ The house of Antonia was on the lower Palatine; it therefore had the advantage of being physically separate from the *Palatium*, but sufficiently close to it to enable Agrippina to be kept under close supervision.

quotiens ipse illuc uentitaret, saeptus turba centurionum et post breue osculum

digrediens: in late republican prose, the iterative subjunctive is comparatively rare in temporal clauses in historic sequence introduced by *quotiens* (with only 25 examples in the entire Ciceronian corpus, and only 14 in Caesar), but more common than the indicative in such clauses in Livy and Tacitus. Cf. 2.2.3 *quotiens per urbes incederet* [sc. *Vonones*], 6.21.1, Liv. 23.32.3 and see further H-S 652, K-S 2.206–8, Woodman 2017: 152, 174.

The frequentative form *uentitare*, used once by Catullus (8.4), eight times by Cicero, three times by Caesar and once by Nepos (*Att.* 4.4), is unattested in Latin prose between the triumviral period and the elder Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* (where it appears four times, at 3.142, 9.25, 18.31, 35.85); perhaps by the Flavian period, the form was already obsolete in the everyday educated register, being revived by the elder Pliny as a conscious artificiality; it perhaps appeals to Tacitus and the archaising writers of the Antonine period (Gellius and Apuleius, who use it three times and once respectively) for the same reason. Tacitus uses the form more often than any other writer (G-G 1751), using it once each in the *Agricola* (43.1) and the *Historiae* (2.91.2), once in the Tiberian hexad of the *Annales* (4.68.4) and seven times in *Annales* 11–16 (here, 47.2, 11.12.3, 12.3.1, 15.52.1, 53.1, 16.14.1); this distribution accords with Tacitus' attested experimentation with artificial lexis, employing it initially sparingly, then more frequently as the form appeals to him (Syme 1958: 2.736, Goodyear 1968: 22, Adams 1972a: 254). Here the frequentative semantics are redundant except for the purpose of conferring additional emphasis, since the notion of repeated action is sufficiently conveyed by the iterative subjunctive in the *quotiens*-clause; for similar instances of redundancy, cf. Plin. *NH* 18.31 *saepius uentitare in agrum*, 35.85 *frequenter...uentitanti*, Gell. 12.11.1 *cumque...frequenter uentitaremus*.

Saeptus here means 'surrounded [sc. by an armed guard],' for which cf. *Hist.* 4.2.3 *longus deditorum ordo saeptus armatis per urbem incessit*, Suet. *Aug.* 65.4 and see further G-G 1423b, *OLD saepire* 3b. Characteristically Tacitean lexical *uariatio* (for which see Sörbom 1935: 16–29) is exhibited by his use of the near-synonyms *turba* and *coetus* (cf. *ne coetu salutantium frequentaretur*) in clauses which follow in close succession. This final sentence is an example of the characteristically Tacitean *phrase à rallonge* whereby the main clause (*separat domum matremque transfert in eam quae Antoniae fuerat*) is modified by a temporal clause and a participial clause, in which Nero, the subject, is qualified by two participles coupled by *et*.

Nero's employment of an armed guard to accompany him on his visits to his mother is perhaps indicative of the emperor's paranoia at this time surrounding his mother's potential involvement in conspiracy; see further Bauman 1992: 196, Rudich 1993: 17–18, Barrett 1996: 173–4, Rutledge 2001: 150–1, Drinkwater 2019: 176–7. The deterioration of relations

³³⁶ In both these places, Tacitus erroneously refers to Antonia Maior as Antonia Minor (Woodman 2018: 235).

³³⁷ Nipperdey (1852: ad loc.) suggested reading <*proauia*> after *Antoniae*, signifying that Antonia was Nero's great-grandmother, but given that Antonia Minor has appeared previously in the *Annales* and her relationship to the *domus* was already made clear at 3.3.2, it seems unlikely that Tacitus would feel the need to state her relationship to Nero here.

between Agrippina and Nero is further suggested by Tacitus' emphasis on the perfunctory nature of his visits, which he achieves using the striking phrase *post breue osculum*. The only other attestation of *breue* qualifying *osculum* in extant Latin is also in Tacitus; cf. *Agr.* 40.3 *exceptusque* [sc. *Agricola*] *breui osculo*, which describes *Agricola*'s lukewarm reception by Domitian following his successful governorship of Britain. By employing *breue* here, Tacitus encourages a comparison between the behaviour of Domitian, suspicious of *Agricola*, and that of Nero, suspicious of Agrippina, thereby elevating Nero's suspicion to the level for which Domitian was renowned. The *osculum* (usually given to *nobiles* on the lip; see Lendon 1997: 60) was part of the emperor's formal greeting and valediction of senators and members of his *domus* (14.56.3, *Sen. Ira* 2.24.1, *Plin. Paneg.* 23.1, 71.1, *Suet. Galba* 22.1, *Otho* 6.2, *Lucian Nigr.* 21, *Fronto* p. 112.11, *Dio* 59.27.1), and a sign of mutual respect (and obligation) between emperor and subject (Wallace-Hadrill 1982: 33, Lendon 1997: 49, 134, 155, Paterson 2007: 147–8); it should not be understood in any amatory sense.³³⁸ The epithet *breue*, however, is particularly suggestive of indignity (cf. *Mart.* 2.10.1–2, 22.3–4 with Lendon 1997: 60; see further Woodman-Kraus 2014: 291, Ash 2018: 151).³³⁹

19.1 nihil rerum mortalium tam instabile ac fluxum est quam fama potentiae non sua uinixae: Tacitus prepares his audiences for the attempted prosecution of Agrippina with a gnomic *sententia* which renders the themes of the narrative which is to follow more generally applicable to his implied readers' (second-century senators') own political situation. The extent to which Agrippina wields political influence within the *domus* and wider society is entirely dependent upon her son's (the *princeps*') arbitrary whims; Nero allows Agrippina to wield significant influence at 5.1–2, 13.1–4 and 22.1, but renders her almost powerless here and at 14.1. All political power under the Principate which has its sole basis in proximity to, and good relations with, the emperor rather than an office of the Roman state or command of legions is therefore, by definition, insecure (Saller 1982: 65–9, Levick 1990: 53, 207 n.2, Ginsburg 2006: 115–16, Mouritsen 2011: 98–104, Drinkwater 2019: 176–8).³⁴⁰ Gnostic *sententiae* in the *Annales* are significantly rarer than in the *Agricola*, *Germania* and *Historiae*, especially in books 11–16, and where they do appear, they tend to be closely integrated with the narrative which surrounds them, serving as explanations of specific narrative themes which are more generally applicable to the experiences of Tacitus' implied ideal readership (the Roman aristocracy under Hadrian).³⁴¹ Cf. *Quint. Inst.* 8.5.3, 27 and see further Goodyear 1968: 27, 1972: 41–2, 136–7, Martin 1981: 220, Martin-Woodman 1989: 147, Sinclair 1995: 34–40, Kirchner 2001: 96–7, 126, Damon 2003: 15–16, Ash 2007: 21–4, Oakley 2009: 202–3, Woodman-Kraus 2014: 31–2, Woodman 2017: 166–7. Negative *sententiae*, as here, may often highlight that the expectations of a given character in the narrative are naïve when compared with those of the author and his ideal audience who are

³³⁸ The frequency with which aristocratic males (equestrians and senators) used the kiss as a formal greeting compared with other social classes is suggested by *Plin. NH* 26.3 (discussing the contagious skin disease *mentagra* which an *eques* introduced to Rome from Asia Minor); Pliny argues that the disease was spread particularly easily among aristocratic males through face-to-face contact while kissing, whereas it did not spread at all among slaves and the *plebs*.

³³⁹ Heedless of aristocratic dignity, Nero neglected entirely the custom of kissing senators when he greeted them (*Suet. Nero* 37.3).

³⁴⁰ In addition to that of the imperial women, the power of the imperial freedmen as well as the senators and equestrians of the emperor's loosely-defined *consilium* can be understood in this way. Such arbitrary *potentia* is to be contrasted with the *potestas* guaranteed by an office of state or the command of an army; see *OLD potentia* 1, Levick, Mouritsen locc. cit.

³⁴¹ The *sententiae* of Horace's *Satires* and the younger Seneca's tragedies also fulfil the function of rendering the narratives' themes more generally applicable to their implied ideal readership (Dinter 2009: 100–1, 2014: 336–7).

more politically aware; cf. *Hist.* 2.92.1 *nec umquam satis fida potentia, ubi nimia est* (highlighting Vitellius' naivety) and see further Kirchner loc. cit., Ash 2007: 357.

The partitive genitive *nihil rerum mortalium* is not elsewhere attested; for analogous, more standard *nihil rerum humanarum*, cf. Cic. *Red. Pop.* 11, *Tusc.* 4.17, *Nep. Tim.* 4.4, *Liv.* 28.29.2; for *res mortalium*, 1.79.3 *optume rebus mortalium consuluisse naturam*, 3.18.4, 6.22.1. *Nihil rerum* is perhaps a pleonastic expression, affording the *sententia* a grandiloquent moralising tone; *nihil tam...est* and *nihil est...tam* are common sententious formulae; cf. 12.45.3, Cic. *Lig.* 37, *De Orat.* 1.129, *Liv.* 25.18.3, *Curt.* 7.8.15, *Sen. Ben.* 6.31.10, *Cons. Marc.* 22.3, *Plin. Paneg.* 84.2. The pleonastic collocation *instabile ac fluxum*, unexampled in extant Latin, would also have struck Tacitus' readers, emphasising the extent to which the influence wielded by members of the imperial *domus* fluctuates according to the emperor's whims. For Tacitus' use of metaphorical *instabilis* meaning 'variable' (G-G 654, *OLD* 4), cf. 6.37.2, *Hist.* 4.47. For his use of the near-synonym, metaphorical *fluxus*, qualifying an abstract noun to mean 'uncertain, fickle' (G-G 475β, *OLD* 5), cf. *Hist.* 1.21.2 *Galbae auctoritas fluxa*, 2.75, 3.48.2, 4.23.4. For the figurative use of *niti* governing an instrumental ablative ('to be grounded upon' [*OLD* 4]) and qualifying an abstract noun, cf. Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.71, *Val. Max.* 4.3.2.

Nixae is Lipsius' (1574: ad loc.) conjecture for M's *nixa*, accepted by all modern editors. The paradoxical sense but the conception of a 'reputation not grounded upon its own strength' is awkward, and the context makes it clear that Tacitus is emphasising the insecurity of Agrippina's political power rather than that of her public reputation.³⁴²

statim relictum Agrippinae limen: for Nero's political strategy of isolating Agrippina by removing her hastily (*statim*) from the *Palatium* and installing her in the house once owned by the younger Antonia, where she no longer received a *salutatio* nor enjoyed the protection of praetorian and German bodyguards, see 18.3n. *ne coetu salutantium frequentaretur*.

nemo solari, nemo adire praeter paucas feminas, amore an odio incertum: these women included her rivals Iunia Silana and Domitia (Nero's aunt), who saw, in the rapid decline of Agrippina's ascendancy, an opportune moment to exact vengeance upon their rival (Rutledge 2001: 151). For the anaphora of *nemo*, here emphasising Agrippina's isolation, cf. 3.12.7, Cic. *Cluent.* 170, *Liv.* 4.5.6, *Sen. Ben.* 2.4.3, *Plin. Paneg.* 40.1.

M reads *odio an amore incertus*, but in all other Tacitean instances of the expression whereby the adjective *incertus* introduces an indirect question consisting of two causal adjuncts coupled by *an* to express the historian's uncertainty as to which of two variant explanations for an event is right, it is in the neuter form, construed as an impersonal adjunct, meaning 'it is uncertain whether [sc. this happened] for this reason or for that.' This prompted the conjecture *incertum* in Bodl. auct. F. 2.24 (also produced by a later hand in Vat. Lat. 1958); *incertus* is probably corrupt by perseveration after *paucas feminas*. Transmitted *incertus*, although construable as qualifying *feminas*,³⁴³ would give the unwanted sense that the women were uncertain whether they came out of affection or hatred (*pace* Petersen 1835: 5),³⁴⁴

³⁴² On the Tacitean conception of *fama* see Hardie 2012: 294–5. For *fama* as public reputation, see also Yavetz 1974: 35–65, Damon 2003: 106, Woodman 2014: 9–10.

³⁴³ Cf. 11.9.1, *Sall. Jug.* 67.1, *Liv.* 32.14.4 and see further *TLL* 7.1.884.27–41.

³⁴⁴ 11.9.1 is adduced by Petersen as a parallel for the usage in M, but it is not strictly parallel; there, *distractis Orientis uiribus et quoniam inclinarent incertis* must mean that the eastern forces were themselves unsure in

whereas in fact *incertum* should be understood impersonally, denoting the author's own uncertainty as to the most plausible explanation. Cf. 1.11.4 [sc. *Augustus*] *addideratque consilium coercendi intra terminos imperii, incertum metu an per inuidiam*, 14.9.2 *incertum caritate in patronum an metu exitii*, 51.1 *incertum ualetudine an ueneno*, Agr. 7.3 *incertum suo an militum ingenio*. This is a Tacitean technique of insidious suggestion (a form of the rhetorical figure *dubitatio*, for which cf. *Rhet. Her.* 4.40) whereby the syntax allows the two alternative explanations to be construed as being equally plausible, but the emphatic position occupied by the second alternative tacitly invites readers to consider it the more likely of the two (if the genuine explanation were ever in doubt); see further Develin 1983: 66–8, Marincola 1997: 94–5, Whitton 2011: 269–70. For a similar disjunctive collocation of the two causal ablatives *amore an odio*, cf. Sen. *Ira* 3.28.4.

19.2 ex quibus erat Iunia Silana, quam matrimonio C. Sili a Messalina depulsam supra rettuli: for the formula *ex quibus esse*, introducing a particular person from among a group, cf. Cic. *Rep.* 6.16, Sen. *Contr.* 7.5.7 *ex quibus fuit Cestius*, Gell. 14.1.34.

Junia Silana's name (*PIR*² I 864)³⁴⁵ is first attested in the extant Tacitean narrative at 11.12.2, the passage recalled by *supra rettuli*,³⁴⁶ which describes her forced divorce in 47. She then appears here, suborning her two clients to accuse Agrippina of plotting revolution with Rubellius Plautus (cf. 21.2, 22.2); Silana is sentenced to capital exile as a result (22.2). Her final appearance is at 14.12.4, where she is recalled from exile by Nero in the aftermath of his matricide (as part of a policy of rehabilitating Agrippina's enemies) and returns to Italian soil at Tarentum, only to die of old age there. Although her genealogy is uncertain, she was perhaps a daughter of M. Iunius Silanus, a suffect consul in 15 (*PIR*² I 830); this M. Iunius Silanus was perhaps only distantly related to the M. Iunius Silanus Torquatus (*PIR*² I 839) who was consul for the whole of 19, the murders of whose sons Lucius and Marcus were orchestrated by Agrippina in 48 and 54 respectively (cf. 14.3).

C. Silius (*PIR*² S 714) was probably the consul designate for the last months of 48 (Levick 1990: 64, Malloch 2013: 94–5); in 47, when Silius was around 32 years of age, Messalina forced him to divorce Junia Silana (11.12.2) and scandalously celebrated a marriage to him the following year (even though she officially remained married to the emperor) while Claudius was at Ostia (11.26.3). On hearing of the affair, Claudius' freedmen urged the emperor to act; both Silius and Messalina were put to death on a charge of *maiestas* (11.35.2, 37.3).

For *matrimonium* governing an objective gen. pers., meaning 'marriage to,' cf. 1.53.1 *in matrimonio Tiberii*, Cic. *Cael.* 34, Plin. *Ep.* 8.18.8 and see further *TLL* 8.479.62–65. For *aliquem matrimonio depellere*, 'to force someone out of their marriage,' cf. Sulp. Sev. *Chron.* 2.12.4 *qua contumelia barbarus animus permotus uxorem matrimonio ac regia depellit*; for *depellere aliquem/aliquid aliquo* (with *depellere* complemented by a bare ablative of separation as opposed to the standard prepositional phrase *ab aliquo*), cf. *Hist.* 1.16.2 *Nero quem...sua immanitas, sua luxuria ceruicibus publicis depulerunt*, Verg. *Aen.* 5.726–7, Liv.

which direction to lean, whereas here, it is the historian who is unsure whether the women came out of affection or hatred, not the women themselves.

³⁴⁵ M reads *Iulia Silana*, but the Silani belonged to the *Gens Iunia*; that the wife of C. Silius until 47 was called *Iunia Silana* is confirmed by M's *Iuniam Silanam* at 11.12.2: hence the almost certain conjecture *Iunia* of Vat. Lat. 2965 here.

³⁴⁶ For Tacitus' use of cross-references, see further Starr 1981: 431–7, Woodman-Martin 1996: 188–9.

35.44.6, Sil. 6.94–5, Quint. *Inst.* 2.1.5 and see further *TLL* 5.1.567.49–51, 52–6; the usage is restricted to poets and those imperial prose authors who permit artificialities of diction.

insignis genere forma lasciuia: Tacitus shows an especial interest in the wider *Gens Iunia* because of the aristocratic *claritudo* of successive generations, which originated with Brutus' alleged consulship in 509 BC; cf. 3.76.1–2 (funeral of Junia, sister of the tyrannicide of 44 BC) with Woodman-Martin 1996: 495–8, 15.35.1 *isdem quippe illis diebus Torquatus Silanus mori adigitur, quia super Iuniae familiae claritudinem diuum Augustum abauum ferebat* with Ash 2018: 164. The three ablatives of respect governed by *insignis* each require that adjective to be understood in a slightly different sense, creating a slight syllepsis; the three-part asyndeton in which they are arranged (for which see Oakley 2009: 197 n.13, Malloch 2013: 253 ad 11.16.3 *alimonio seruitio cultu*) adds to this jarring effect and emphasises the different ways in which Silana could be understood as *insignis*. *Lasciuia* is also an attribute of Tacitus' Poppaea Sabina and Messalina (cf. 45.3, 12.7.3); through his attribution of *lasciuia* (wantonness in sexual relations) to three separate noble women, Tacitus maintains his negative characterisation of such women as threats to both the stability and the moral propriety of the *res publica* (Bauman 1992: 195–6, Rudich 1993: 18, Ginsburg 2006: 117).

M reads *lausciuia*, a *vox nihili*, after *forma*; the most obvious emendation is *lasciuia* (Vat. Lat. 1958). This affords good sense, 'outstanding in her lineage, beauty and sexual wantonness', and preserves the desirable three-part asyndeton; the corruption is explicable as a phonological error.³⁴⁷

et Agrippinae diu percara, mox occultis inter eas offensionibus: 'and for a long time a dear friend of Agrippina, until subsequently a private quarrel [*OLD* *offensio* 6a] broke out between them'; *occultis...offensionibus* should be taken as an ablative absolute. *Agrippinae diu percara* stands in chiasmus with the preceding *insignis genere forma lasciuia*. *Diu...mox* are correlatives, meaning 'for a long time...then subsequently' (*OLD* *mox* 2); cf. 4.53.1, 12.40.2, 14.19.1, 60.2, *Hist.* 4.12.3, Ov. *Fast.* 6.295–6, Plin. *Paneg.* 15.1. On the *uariatio* of adjective and ablative absolute, cf. 2.29.2 *die senatus metu et aegritudine fessus siue...simulato morbo* and see further Sörbom 1935: 91.

For the recondite compound adjective *percarus* governing a dat. pers. meaning 'very dear to someone', cf. 2.74.2, 6.9.2, Cic. *Scaur.* 39, Just. 12.12.11, 36.2.7, Oros. 1.1.8.1 and see further *TLL* 10.1.1194.25, 27–30; this compound is only otherwise attested at Ter. *Phorm.* 558, Sall. *Hist.* 1.94M. In the *Annales*, Tacitus shows an increasing penchant for recondite compound adjectives (as he does for recherché compound forms more generally; see Adams 1972b: 364). Rare compounds in *per-*, such as *peridoneus* (4.12.4), are particularly favoured; see further Goodyear 1972: 140.

quia Sextium Africanum nobilem iuuenem a nuptiis Silanae deterruerat Agrippina: for the senator T. Sextius Africanus (*PIR* S 464), cf. *CIL* 6.1.2034, 2039–2042, which give his *praenomen* and record his status as a *Frater Arualis* from 54 to 66; *CIL* 6.1.2042 additionally

³⁴⁷ This emendation has been accepted by all modern editors except Wellesley, who follows Laur. plut. 63.24, 68.5 in reading the adjective *lasciua* (which was also added by a later hand in Vat. Lat. 1958). Although construable, *lasciua* (whether taken as nominative or ablative) affords awkward sense ('noble in her lineage and wanton in her beauty' or 'noble in her lineage and wanton beauty') and eliminates a choice three-part asyndeton. Perhaps the scribes of the two *recentiores* were influenced by the apparent (but feint) dot of expunction beneath the 'i' of *lausciuia* in M.

confirms his suffect consulship with M. Ostorius Scapula from September to October 59. In literature, he is attested only here and at 14.46.2, where he is recorded as undertaking the census of Gaul in 61 with Q. Volusius Maximus (for whom see 25.1n., *PIR* V 982) and Trebellius Maximus (*PIR* T 314). Tacitus there describes Volusius and Africanus as rivals on account of their *nobilitas*, supporting *nobilem iuuenem* here, with *nobilem* in the pregnant sense which it commonly has in literary Latin of the Principate, meaning ‘claiming a republican consul as one’s ancestor’, for which cf. 1.1, 18.2, 4.21.1, 44.1 and see further G-G 946–7, *OLD nobilis* 5, Gelzer 1969: 141–154, Brunt 1982: 1–17, Shackleton Bailey 1986: 255–60. This senator was possibly a descendant of the T. Sextius who served as a legate under Caesar in Gaul (Caes. *Gall.* 6.1.1, 7.49.1, 51.2, 90.6) and who was *proconsul Africae* for three years from 43 to 40 BC (Dio 48.21.1, Appian *Civ.* 3.85, 4.53, 5.12). For *nuptiae* governing the genitive of the person married (either man or woman), cf. Liv. 29.23.8, Suet. *Galba* 1.1, Apul. *Apol.* 22 and see also 19.2n. *matrimonio*, *OLD nuptiae* 1a.

impudicam et uergentem annis dictitans: for Tacitus’ derogatory use of the feminine substantive *impudica*, ‘unchaste woman’ (*TLL* 7.1.712.41–6), to describe aristocratic women who have become renowned for sexual profligacy, often as part of a wider rhetorical strategy of denouncing their *potentia*, cf. 21.2 (also used of Silana), 43.4 *qui saeuienti impudicae* [sc. *Messalinae*] *uocem praeberet*, 2.85.2, 12.64.3 (used of both Agrippina and Nero’s aunt Domitia Lepida) and see further Bauman 1992: 195–6, Rudich 1993: 18, Ginsburg 2006: 117.³⁴⁸ The denigration of the aged nymphomaniac is a standard literary topos; see further Richlin 1984: 77, Nisbet-Rudd 2004: 191–2 ad Hor. *Carm.* 3.15, Challet 2013: 96.

The expression *uergens annis*, ‘approaching old age,’ in which the intransitive present participle *uergens* (*OLD uergere* 4) qualifying a personal noun is modified by an ablative of respect, is unexampled in extant Latin and is a Tacitean variation of the attested ablative of quality *uergentibus annis* (‘of declining years’) modifying a personal noun, for which cf. 12.44.4, Sen. *Clem.* 1.11.1, Luc. 1.129 (with Roche 2009: 181), 2.105–6. The expression *uergentibus annis* was perhaps a Senecan coinage (Roche loc. cit.). Phrases such as *grauis aetate* (Liv. 3.33.6) and *grauis annis* (Liv. 9.3.5, Verg. *Aen.* 9.246, Plin. *Ep.* 6.20.12) provide a parallel for Tacitus’ use of the ablative of respect to modify *uergens* here.

non ut Africanum sibi seponeret, sed ne opibus et orbitate Silanae maritus poteretur: ‘not so as to set aside Africanus for herself [*OLD seponere* 3], but rather so that a husband could not gain possession of the riches held by the childless Silana.’ The unparalleled collocation *opibus et orbitate Silanae* (illustrating the Tacitean collocation of concrete and abstract, for which see Sörbom 1935: 75) is perhaps best interpreted as standing for *opibus orbae Silanae*; cf. *Agr.* 21.2 and see further Woodman-Kraus 2014: 204–5. By Tacitus’ own time, *potiri* + abl. was the standard construction in Latin prose; *potiri* + gen. had been an archaism since the late Republic. The only post-Ciceronian prose authors to admit *potiri* + gen. at all (other than in the fossilised expression *rerum potiri*) are those who permit artificialities of diction, namely Sallust, Livy, Velleius, Curtius, the younger Seneca and Tacitus. Tacitus prefers *potiri* + abl. (with 23 instances) but in the *Annales* employs *potiri* + gen. three times *uariationis causa* (6.1, 3.73.3, 4.3.3). See further table at *TLL* 10.2.334.16–46.

For Agrippina’s innate avarice, which led her to discourage Silana’s second marriage in 48, see 18.2n. *super ingenitam auaritiam*. The avaricious often targeted acquaintances who were

³⁴⁸ One can only speculate as to the adulterous affairs in which Agrippina alleged that Silana had taken part.

elderly, childless and unmarried, seeking to inherit a large portion of their estate (cf. Juv. 6.40); aristocratic Romans customarily bequeathed this to friends and acquaintances if no immediate family survived them. If, however, an elderly and childless woman married a younger man who survived her, as would have been the case had Silana married Africanus, at least one quarter of her estate necessarily fell to him under the *Lex Falcidia* (*Epit. Gai.* 2.6). See further Tracy 1980: 399–402, Hopkins 1983: 238–43, Woodman-Martin 1996: 211, Whitton 2013: 269.

19.3 spe ultionis oblata: *spe ultionis* is a conjecture of a later hand in M for the implausible paradosis *speculationis*.³⁴⁹ The corruption perhaps arose as a misreading of SPEVLTIONIS in *capitalis* in *scriptio continua*. For *spes* [+ gen. rei] *offerri* in the medio-passive (quasi-reflexive) sense ‘the prospect [sc. of something] presents itself,’ see *TLL* 9.2.501.82–84; to the parallels there cited, add 15.64.2, Cic. *Dom.* 47 *spe largitionis oblata*, Liv. 32.11.5, 36.29.3, Frontin. *Strat.* 3.17.7. For revenge as the primary motivation behind Silana’s plot against Agrippina, see further Rutledge 2001: 151–2.

Iturium et Caluisium: the only references to the *delatores* Iturius (for whom see *PIR*² I 62, Rutledge 2001: 238–9) and Calvisius (for whom see *PIR*² C 343, Rutledge 2001: 208) in extant literature are in the context of the accusation against Agrippina (19.3–4, 21.2, 22.2) and their recall from exile (14.12.4); they always appear alongside each other. Although sentenced to *relegatio* after being found guilty of *calumnia* following the failed prosecution of Agrippina (22.2n.), they were recalled, like Silana, by Nero after his matricide in 59, in an attempt to rehabilitate his mother’s most prominent enemies and secure revenge against her. Although probably of ingenuous birth, they are of uncertain rank, and nothing is known of their genealogy or career. The name *Iturius* leaves no other traces in the historical or epigraphic record; although *Caluisii* occur frequently in inscriptions, none of these can be linked with any certainty to Silana’s client.

non uetera et saepius iam audita deferens, quod Britannici mortem lugeret aut Octaviae iniurias euulgaret: ‘reporting [*OLD deferre* 8] not those old accusations, which had already been heard quite often, namely that [*OLD quod* 5] she [sc. Agrippina] was mourning the death of Britannicus, or was making public the injury done to Octavia’. It seems strange to predicate *uetus* of Agrippina’s mourning Britannicus’ death (which had occurred immediately prior to her removal from the *Palatium*), but Agrippina’s alleged conduct perhaps exemplifies a general phenomenon whereby mourning on the part of a member of the *domus* becomes a contentious political action. *Deferens* is a conjecture in Vat. Lat. 1958 for M’s *differens*, which affords unsatisfactory sense in the context (in a context of *delatio*, the sense ‘reporting’ is required, not merely ‘divulging’ [*OLD differre* 3], which is also too close in sense to *euulgare*). *Deferens* governs both the direct acc. rei *uetera et saepius iam audita* in this clause and the indirect statement *sed destinauisse eam Rubellium Plautum...ad res nouas extollere* in the following, creating *uariatio*; cf. 12.62.1 *missas...copias...et...adiutum Antonium memorabant, quaeque...obtulissent, mox recentia in Caesares merita* and see further Sörbom 1935: 116.

For Agrippina’s anger at her son’s murder of his step-brother and consequent support for Octavia see 18.2n. *Octaviae* should be understood as an objective genitive governed by *iniurias*, meaning ‘the wrong done to Octavia’, for which cf. 3.38.3, Caes. *Gall.* 1.30.2, Nep.

³⁴⁹ *Speculationis oblata* is unconstructable; moreover, *speculatio* is unattested in Latin until ps.-Cypr. *De Mont.* 2; a reference to speculation makes no sense in the context. The conjectures of Vat. Lat. 1958 (*speculationis causa oblata*) and Leiden BPL 16B (*speculatione oblata*) are therefore unsatisfactory.

Con. 5.1 and see further *TLL* 7.1.1672.15–17, 18–19. The compound verb *euulgare* (‘to divulge, publicise’; see *TLL* 5.2.1082.3–15) is rare in extant literature; it is attested only twice in Livy and four times in Tacitus.³⁵⁰ Like its more common synonyms *uulgare* and *diuulgare*, *euulgare* can govern either a direct acc. rei, as here and at 14.14.3, *Hist.* 1.4.2, Liv. 9.46.5 (*TLL* 5.2.1082.5–9, 13–15) or an indirect statement, as at 9.3 and Liv. 44.27.13 (*TLL* 5.2.1082.9–12).

sed destinauisse eam Rubellium Plautum, per maternam originem pari ac Neronem gradu a diuo Augusto, ad res novas extollere: ‘but rather making the allegation that she had resolved [*OLD destinare* 3, *TLL* 5.1.758.30–51] to incite Rubellius Plautus, who was descended from the deified Augustus by as many removes as Nero on his mother’s side of the family, to revolution.’ For *materna origo* denoting the mother’s side of a person’s family (*OLD origo* 4), cf. 6.42.3, 12.44.2 *genti Parthorum Vologaeses imperitabat, materna origine ex paelice Graeca*.

M’s *pari ac Nero gradu* is accepted by all modern editors;³⁵¹ the paradosis is intelligible if *per...Augusto* is understood as an elliptical parenthesis in Tacitus’ voice which is not part of the indirect statement, with *fuit enim* supplied before *per maternam originem* (Wellesley 1987). However, this interpretation seems needlessly awkward, and there is no reason why *per...Augusto* should not be taken as part of the indirect statement; it is therefore preferable to follow Heinsius in regarding *Nero* as corrupt by anticipation before *diuo Augusto* and emending it to the accusative *Neronem*. In comparative expressions in which *ac* or *atque* is used as a comparative particle, the noun introduced by *ac* or *atque* is in the same case as that with which it is compared; cf. 12.9.2, Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.193, Nep. *Han.* 5.3 *M. Minucium Rufum, magistrum equitum pari ac dictatorem imperio*, Liv. 37.54.16, Just. 41.2.5 and see further *OLD atque* 13, K-S 2.18–19, H-S 478–9.

For Rubellius Plautus, who first appears here in the extant *Annales*, cf. 20.1, 21.5, 22.2, 14.22.1–3, 57.1–59.4, 60.4, 16.10.1–3, 32.1, ps.-Sen. *Oct.* 438–9, 465, Dio 62.14.1 and see further *PIR*² R 115.³⁵² Born at Tibur, he was the son of Julia (the daughter of Tiberius’ son Drusus and Livia Julia) and the senator C. Rubellius Blandus (cos. suff. 18, for whom cf. 3.23.2, 51.1, 6.27.1, 45.2 and see further *PIR*² R 111). His dynastic links and possible connections with other senators who were hostile to the emperor were perceived by Nero to be a threat to the security of his principate (Rudich 1993: 263, Rutledge 2001: 151);³⁵³ he was banished to his familial estate in Asia in 60 when a comet was interpreted as heralding his immediate usurpation of Nero and accession to the Principate (14.22.1). He was put to death two years later on the recommendation of Nero’s newly-appointed praetorian prefect Tigellinus (14.57.1–59.4, ps.-Sen., Dio locc. citt.); Plautus’ father-in-law L. Antistius Vetus, who had urged him to resist his assassins in 62, criticised Nero for his destruction, and was himself put to death for doing so (among other alleged acts of treason) in 65 (16.10.1).

³⁵⁰ The distribution of the compound in Tacitus (only in the memorable *sententia euulgato imperii arcano* at *Hist.* 1.4.2 and three times in *Annales* 13–14) may accord with Tacitus’ increasing preference for recherché compounds in the Neronian *Annales* (see 19.2n. *percara*).

³⁵¹ A later hand in M adds a supralinear variant *uero*, which affords no sense.

³⁵² Rubellius Plautus’ *praenomen* is uncertain, and not recorded by any literary source; an inscription on a water-pipe found at the site of his house at Rome (*AE* 1954: 70, *ARA* X 621, Syme 1958: 2.628, Eck ap. Steinby 1995: 2.172) attests to a Sergius Rubellius Plautus. This is more likely to refer to him than to a son (for Plautus’ children cf. 14.59.1) since his property was confiscated after his death (14.60.4); see further *PIR* loc. cit., Vogel-Weidemann 1982: 112.

³⁵³ For his links with Stoic senators hostile to Nero, cf. 14.57.3; he was a close friend of Barea Soranus, a prominent member of this circle (16.23.1).

Plautus was a biological descendant of the Julian line on his mother's side; he was a great-great-grandson of Augustus' sister Octavia, according to the genealogy Octavia>Antonia Minor>Livia Julia>Julia (his mother). Nero was a biological great-great-grandson of Augustus on his mother's side, since Agrippina's maternal grandmother was Augustus' daughter Julia; on his father's side, Nero was also a biological descendant of the Julian line, as a great grandson of Octavia (whose other daughter, Antonia Maior, was married to Nero's paternal grandfather, L. Domitius Ahenobarbus); for a stemma, see Griffin 1984: 12–13.

For *extollere aliquem ad aliquid* meaning 'to incite someone to a course of action', cf. 4.17.2 *ne quis mobiles adulescentium animos praematuris honoribus ad superbiam extolleret* and see further *TLL* 5.2.2036.53–5. This is an extension of the use of *extollere* meaning 'to rouse' (analogous to that of *concitare*), for which cf. 16.22.6, Sall. *Iug.* 65.3, Sen. *Ira* 1.7.1, *Ep.* 39.2 and see further *TLL* 5.2.2036.46–53.

coniugioque eius et imperio rem publicam rursus inuadere: 'and through her marriage to him and his accession to the Principate to seize control over the Roman state once again.' *Rursus* looks back to the period of Agrippina's utmost political ascendancy, both in the later years of the Claudian principate, following her marriage to that emperor in 49 (cf. 12.42.1–3), and in the first three months of Nero in 54 (cf. 1.1–3, 2.3, 5.1–2).

M's *coniugioque eius etiam perio* is untranslatable; the *vox nihili perio* after the meaningless *etiam* is strongly suggestive of the false division of *et imperio*,³⁵⁴ a conjecture first found in Vienna 49 and accepted by most modern editors.³⁵⁵ If this emendation is accepted, *coniugioque eius et imperio* creates a characteristically Tacitean instance of *coniunctio*, with *eius* construed as dependent upon both ablatives *apo koinou* (dependent upon *coniugio* as an objective genitive, but *imperio* as a subjective genitive).³⁵⁶ For *coniugium* governing an objective genitive of the person in the sense 'marriage to a husband,' analogous to *nuptiae* + obj. gen. pers., cf. 14.1.2 *redde<re>tur ipsa Othonis coniugio*, Prop. 4.11.11. For *rem publicam inuadere*, 'to seize control over the Roman state' (for this sense of *inuadere* see *TLL* 7.114.25–6), cf. Liv. 3.9.12, Flor. *Epit.* 4.2.11.

19.4 haec Iturius et Caluisius Atimeto, Domitiae Neronis amitae liberto, aperiunt: for *aperire aliquid alicui* meaning 'to reveal something to someone', cf. 16.15.2 *iussa imper<atoris> Ostorio aperit*, *Hist.* 4.83.2, Verg. *Aen.* 6.11–12, Plin. *Ep.* 5.6.42 and see further *TLL* 2.217.77–84. For Atimetus, a freedman of Nero's aunt Domitia,³⁵⁷ see further *PIR*² A 1315, Bauman 1992: 197, Rudich 1993: 263, Rutledge 2001: 32, 200–1. Nothing is known about him except for his status and his role in the *delatio* (here, 21.3, 22.2);³⁵⁸ the name is attested nowhere else in literature nor in inscriptions. Atimetus' role is that of a

³⁵⁴ False word division is a common error in M, which was perhaps descended from an exemplar in *capitalis* in *scriptio continua*.

³⁵⁵ Gronovius' (1672) *iam <im>perio* is accepted by Halm and Furneaux, but there is no semantic justification for *iam*, since Agrippina's planned marriage to Plautus and regaining of political ascendancy are perhaps best understood as being simultaneous; it is also easier to see M's *etiam perio* as being caused by a misreading of *et imperio* in *scriptio continua* combined with false word division than to account for the loss of <im> after *iam*. No editor accepts Muretus' *coniugioque eius etiam petito*; although the conjecture is economical, *etiam* seems without point and Agrippina's implied train of thought is perhaps more difficult to understand because no specific reference is made to the fact that Rubellius Plautus (by her scheme) becomes emperor, thereby securing political ascendancy for her; *imperio* of the other two solutions conveys this notion clearly.

³⁵⁶ On *coniunctio* see Woodman 2018: 258 ad 4.52.1 *ueneficia in principem et deuotiones obiectabat*.

³⁵⁷ This fact may be highlighted by the *paronomasia* and assonance (*Atimeto...amitae*).

³⁵⁸ His full name was probably L. Domitius Atimetus, but nowhere is this attested.

middle man (for which cf. 15.55.1), accepting the accusation's details from Iturius and Calvisius and reporting these to another freedman of Domitia, L. Domitius Paris, who was sufficiently close to the emperor to convince him of the allegations (Rutledge 2001: 32). Tacitus exploits the etymological connotations of Greek names as well as Latin to achieve *paronomasia* (Henderson 1989: 169, Woodman 1998: 221, Malloch 2013: 461, Ash 2018: 123); it is therefore highly apposite that a lowly eastern freedman who was not an especial favourite of Nero should have a name which means 'not honoured, despised' (LSJ ἀτίμητος) and be the only participant in this false accusation against the *Augusta* to receive the death penalty, in spite of his relatively minor role (22.2n.).

For Nero's paternal aunt Domitia, the sister of Domitia Lepida and therefore also the maternal aunt of Messalina, cf. 21.3, Quint. *Inst.* 6.1.50, 3.74, Suet. *Nero* 34.5, *Vit. Crisp.* p. 89.3, Dio 61.17.1 and see further *PIR*² D 171. Unlike Silana, she is not recorded as facing any penalty for *calumnia* in the aftermath of the failed prosecution of Agrippina; Nero had her killed in 59 (Suet., Dio locc. citt.) so as to inherit her estates at Baiae and Ravenna (for which cf. 21.3) after suppressing her will.

oblatis: the neuter plural substantive *oblata* means 'the information which had been presented' (*OLD offerre* 4, *TLL* 9.2.510.77–80).

quippe inter Agrippinam et Domitiam infensa aemulatio exercebatur: the collocation *infensa aemulatio*, 'hostile rivalry', is unparalleled; an analogous Tacitean expression is *aemulatio praua*, for which cf. *Hist.* 3.38.2 *ille* [sc. *Vitellius*] *infensus Blaeso aemulatione praua*. Tacitus shows a strong preference for the more artificial *infensus* over its common synonym *infestus* (by a ratio of 75:29); the only other Latin author to do so is Virgil (by 11:7; see further table at *TLL* 7.1.1406.30–48). For *aemulatio inter* + acc. pers., 'rivalry between two persons,' cf. 2.47.4, 6.4.3, *Hist.* 3.75.2, Liv. 28.42.10. Hostility between Domitia and Agrippina probably originated early in Claudius' principate, when the widowed Agrippina, recently returned from exile, forced Domitia to divorce her husband C. Sallustius Crispus Passienus (cos. 27, 44; see *PIR*² P 146) in order that she might marry him; cf. Quint. *Inst.* 6.1.50, 3.74, Suet. *Vit. Crisp.* p. 89.3. By late 48 (when she was proposed by Pallas as a fourth wife for Claudius; cf. 12.2.3), if not earlier,³⁵⁹ Agrippina had treacherously murdered Crispus, perhaps because in line with her characteristic *auaritia* (18.3n.) she coveted his vast estates (Suet. *Vit. Crisp.* p. 89.11, Schol. Juv. 4.81).

Paridem histrionem, libertum et ipsum Domitiae: for the freedman L. Domitius Paris, cf. 20.1, 21.3, 22.2, 27.3, Suet. *Nero* 54.1, Dio 63.18.1, Ulp. *Dig.* 12.4.3.5, *CIL* 14.2866 and see further *PIR*² D 156, Rudich 1993: 263–4, 307, Rutledge 2001: 223, Mouritsen 2011: 104–5, 166; his full name is a conjecture on the basis of *CIL* 14.2866. In 56 (27.3, Ulp. loc. cit), Paris purchased his freedom from Domitia, thereafter choosing Nero as his patron; Ulpian records that he had paid Domitia 10,000 sesterces, only to reclaim this when, at Nero's insistence (cf. 27.3), a court ruled that he was of free birth. Paris' career as a pantomime actor (cf. Ulp. loc. cit. *pantomimus*) brought him the emperor's friendship and patronage but also rivalry, since Nero, preoccupied with his own reputation as an actor, was jealous of his ability in this field; this perhaps led Nero to order his execution in 67 (Suet., Dio locc. citt.).³⁶⁰

³⁵⁹ This may be more likely, since Tacitus makes no reference to Crispus in the surviving Claudian *Annales* which begin in 47; see Weaver 1976: 215.

³⁶⁰ Paris, through *amicitia*, probably became sufficiently influential at court that Nero's disagreements with him were political as well as artistic (Drinkwater 2019: 232).

impulit ire propere crimenque atrociter deferre: ‘he urged him to go at once and report [OLD 8] the crime with acrimony [OLD 2]’. For *impellere* governing an accusative of the person ordered and an infinitive, analogous to *iubere*, a poetic variation (attractive to the artificial Livy and Tacitus) of the standard construction whereby *impellere* governs an indirect command (TLL 7.1.541.1–17), cf. *Hist.* 3.4.2, Verg. *Aen.* 1.11, Liv. 22.6.6, Ov. *Am.* 2.12.21–2 and see further G-G 570Bbδ, TLL 7.1.540.67–74.

20.1 prouecta nox erat et Neroni per uinolentiam trahebatur: ‘the night was well advanced, and was being extended [OLD *trahere* 16] as a result of Nero’s intoxication’. For the collocation *prouecta nox*, cf. 15.69.3 *prouecta nocte* with Ash 2018: 306. This use of adjectival *prouectus* corresponds with its wider use to describe a time of day or year in the sense ‘well-advanced’, for which cf. Apul. *Met.* 4.16.2, 8.15.8 *die iam prouecto* and see further TLL 10.2.2308.66–72. For the formula *nox erat et* followed by a temporal clause, used to set the scene for a dramatic narrative (as here), cf. Verg. *Aen.* 4.522–4, Ov. *Fast.* 6.673–4, Petron. 92.1. For *per uinolentiam*, ‘as a result of intoxication’, cf. 2.65.3 *per epulas ac uinolentiam incautum Cotyn*. For *noctem trahere*, an expression restricted to poetry until the end of the first century AD, cf. 3.37.2, Verg. *Aen.* 1.748–9, Ov. *Met.* 12.159, ps.-Quint. *Decl. Mai.* 13.9. For another instance in which alleged drunkenness leads to irrational behaviour on Nero’s part, cf. 14.2.1 *cum id temporis Nero per uinum et epulas incalesceret*.

The historicity of Tacitus’ accounts of Nero’s inebriation (and his more general reputation for drunkenness in the hostile source tradition, for which cf. Suet. *Nero* 51) is questionable; while there is no doubt that he feasted regularly in accordance with aristocratic custom, his heavy drinking sits awkwardly with the physical fitness required for acting and chariot-racing, as well as with the fact (also reported by Suetonius loc. cit.) that he was only infrequently ill while *princeps*.³⁶¹ It is possible that his drunkenness is merely a rhetorical construct of the source tradition, aligning his character with stock depictions of tyrants (cf. Cicero’s Antony [*Phil.* 2.63], Suetonius’ Claudius [*Claud.* 33] and Vitellius [*Vit.* 13], Juvenal’s Domitian [4.130–43]) in which immoderate consumption was a common trait (Mastellone Iovane 1992, Edwards 1993: 191–2, Goddard 1994: 67–76, D’Arms 1995: 306, Stevenson 2009b: 177–8, Goh 2018: 438–446, Drinkwater 2019: 307–8). Alleged drunkenness on Nero’s part might also have provided Tacitus with a plausible explanation as to why Nero was unusually fearful of the conspiracy here (while intoxicated), yet certain of Agrippina’s innocence at 21.6 (when sober).

cum ingreditur Paris, solitus alioquin id temporis luxus principis intendere: ‘when Paris entered,³⁶² always in the habit of intensifying the emperor’s over-indulgence at this hour of the night’. *Solitus alioquin* coheres with *sed tunc* in the following clause, affording the sense ‘always in the habit of...but on this occasion...’ (OLD *alioquin* 1). For *intendere* governing an abstract noun to mean ‘to augment, intensify’, cf. 4.2.1, 14.45.2, Ov. *Pont.* 3.9.29, Suet. *Tib.* 62.1 and see further G-G 662Bby, TLL 7.1.2115.3–14. For the generalising plural *luxus* meaning ‘over-indulgence’, cf. 4.67.3, Stat. *Silv.* 1.6.51 and see further OLD *luxus* 1.

sed tunc compositus ad maestitiam: for a similar expression, cf. 3.1.3 *cunctis ad tristitiam compositis*; this accords with the wider usage of *componere aliquem uel aliquid ad aliquid* to mean ‘to make something or someone disposed or conducive to a particular emotion’, for

³⁶¹ On these inconsistencies in the source tradition, see also Drinkwater 2019: 177, 305–6.

³⁶² For Paris, see 19.4n.

which cf. *Hist.* 1.71.1 *cuncta ad decorem imperii composita*, Cic. *Leg.* 2.32, Liv. 38.17.4 and see further *TLL* 3.2128.71–9, Woodman-Martin 1996: 83.

expositoque indicii ordine: ‘when the finer details of the information (*OLD indicium* 1b) had been explained’. For *indicii ordo*, cf. Quint. *Inst.* 4.2.99 *deinde ex personarum comparatione et indicii ordine et silentio repudiatae argumenta ducentur*; for the wider use of *ordo* governing a defining genitive to mean ‘the details or structure of an argument or narrative’, see G-G 1039 IIa, *TLL* 9.2.954.56–7. For *ordinem alicuius exponere*, ‘to explain the finer details of something’, cf. Sen. *Contr.* 7.8.5, Val. Max. 6.1.ext.2 *ultionis suae ordinem exposuit*, Curt. 6.11.32, ps.-Quint. *Decl. Min.* 385.2.

ut non tantum matrem Plautumque interficere, sed Burrum etiam demouere praefectura destinaret: in spite of his suspicious and impetuous mindset here, Nero did not banish Plautus from Rome until 60 (19.3n.). Similarly, it would be almost four years before he had his mother assassinated (in March 59; cf. 14.8.5). Nero’s hesitation in eliminating Agrippina and Plautus was perhaps caused by an erratic temperament, a volatile situation and a lack of courage in his early years as emperor (Rudich 1993: 20). It seems unlikely that Nero ever earnestly suspected that Burrus had been involved in this conspiracy to overthrow him (Bauman 1992: 197, Rudich loc. cit., Barrett 1996: 175–6, Rutledge 2001: 150, Drinkwater 2019: 177); Tacitus himself is sceptical of this (20.2n.), especially because Burrus had shown loyalty to Nero, in opposition to Agrippina, less than a year previously when determining the policy for the new regime (2.1, 5.1). There was no political change between late 54 and late 55 conducive to Burrus’ becoming disloyal to Nero.

For intransitive *destinare* governing an infinitive, see 19.3n. For *demouere aliquem aliquo* meaning ‘to remove someone from an official post’, cf. 11.2, 14.1 *demouet Pallantem cura rerum*, 2.43.2 and see further *TLL* 5.1.511.67–74; the usage is found only in Tacitus before 200, and derives from the more common, literal use of transitive *demouere* to mean ‘to move a person away from a place’ (*TLL* 5.1.511.36–51).

tamquam Agrippinae gratia prouectum et uicem reddentem: for Burrus’ securing Agrippina’s patronage under Claudius, see 2.1, 12.42.1. There are no parallels for elliptical *prouehere* governing only an acc. pers. meaning ‘to promote someone [sc. to a higher position]’. *Prouehere* meaning ‘to promote’ otherwise governs an acc. pers. and a prepositional phrase denoting a rank; see further *TLL* 10.2.2306.65–2307.10. For *uicem reddere*, ‘to return a favour’, used with ellipsis of the dative of the person to whom the favour is returned, cf. *Hist.* 3.75.3 *placatus ac uelut uicem reddens*, Ov. *Pont.* 2.10.51, 3.5.35, Plin. *Ep.* 2.9.6 and see further G-G 1766Ab1.

20.2 Fabius Rusticus auctor est scriptos esse ad Caecinam Tuscum codicillos: for *aliquis auctor est* governing an indirect statement, meaning ‘someone is the author of the account whereby’, cf. Liv. 2.58.1 *numero etiam additos tres...Piso auctor est*, 4.7.12, 6.42.5, Curt. 9.5.21, Sen. *Nat.* 4a.2.13, Plin. *NH* 2.169. *Codicilli* has the technical sense ‘letters patent’, whereby a Roman emperor informed an equestrian or senator of his being selected for an imperially-appointed office; cf. *Agr.* 40.2, *Dial.* 7.2, Suet. *Tib.* 42.1, *Claud.* 29.1 and see further *TLL* 3.1408.73–84, Millar 1977: 288–90.

The only ancient author to cite Fabius Rusticus, a historian of uncertain rank whose *praenomen* is unknown, is Tacitus;³⁶³ his work survives only in four Tacitean paraphrases, here (F2C), 14.2.2 (F3C), 15.61.3 (F4C), *Agr.* 10.3 (F1C). Of his life or career nothing is known, except for the possibility (suggested by Tacitus here) that he enjoyed the younger Seneca's patronage (*cuius amicitia floruit*). The nature of this relationship perhaps suggests that he was around 20 years of age in or around 49 when Seneca first became politically influential (Reed 1974: 929, Martin 1981: 23–4, Griffin 1984: 78, Champlin 2003: 42, Levick ap. Cornell 2013: 1.568–9, Woodman-Kraus 2014: 132, Ash 2018: 280).³⁶⁴ That he lived until the middle of Trajan's principate has often been suggested (Syme 1958: 1.293, 1985: 41–63, Townend 1960: 106, Sherwin-White 1966: 512, Reed loc. cit., Sailor 2008: 255, Levick loc. cit.) because a Fabius Rusticus appears as a legatee in the will of a Lucius Dasumius dated to the summer of 108 (*CIL* 6.10229.24, inscribed on a tomb on the Via Appia); but one cannot for certain identify this man with the historian.³⁶⁵

It is unknown whether Fabius wrote more than one work, and whether Tacitus used more than one of these as a source; the *terminus ante quem* for the work cited at *Agr.* 10.3 is probably 83 (Sailor 2008: 83, Levick loc. cit.), since Tacitus shows Fabius' description of the shape of Britain as resembling a rhombus (*formam totius Britanniae Liuius ueterum, Fabius Rusticus recentium eloquentissimi auctores oblongae scutulae uel bipenni adsimilauere*) to be inaccurate; these misconceptions suggest that his history must predate Agricola's fleet's circumnavigation of the island in that year.³⁶⁶ If Fabius wrote a biography of Seneca,³⁶⁷ used by Tacitus here and in Seneca's death-scene at 15.61.3, it is difficult to divine how his accounts of the shape of Britain and Nero's incest with Agrippina (14.2.2) could derive from this unless he was exceedingly prone to digression; it seems more probable that Fabius wrote an annalistic history at some point between 69 and 83 (Levick, Ash locc. citt.) which covered both political and military affairs both at Rome and abroad, probably encompassing at least the Claudian and Neronian regimes;³⁶⁸ Tacitus' comparison of Fabius with Livy (*Agr.* 10.3) is further suggestive of an annalistic work. If Tacitus' paraphrases are accurate and fair, Fabius' tone was anti-Neronian in line with the general Flavian *Zeitgeist* (Syme 1958: 1.179–80, Wilkes 1972: 201, Drinkwater 2019: 9).³⁶⁹ Tacitus therefore seeks to correct his misconceptions about Neronian court intrigue here and at 14.2.2, but nonetheless praises him (*Agr.* 10.3) for the elegance of his prose style. The extent to which Tacitus used Fabius

³⁶³ Syme 1958: 1.179 n.8 and Levick ap. Cornell 2013: 1.572, 3.1053–4 suggest that the unnamed historian at Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.104 may be identifiable with him. Perhaps Rusticus, the dedicatee of Plin. *Ep.* 9.29, dated 106–108, is also identifiable with our Fabius; see Sherwin-White 1966: 512, Reed 1974: 929.

³⁶⁴ Peter 1967: 2.clxii speculatively suggests that he was born in 30, but the only assertion which can confidently be made, given Tacitus' suggestion of patronage, is that he was younger than Seneca by some years; any Tiberian birth date is plausible.

³⁶⁵ This is the conclusion of Eck (1978: 277–295) following the publication of a stone fragment in *AE* 1976: 77; he concludes further that Tacitus' and Pliny's names could not have been present in the inscription, a conjecture on which Syme, Townend and Sailor all rely. *Fabii Rustici* are commonly found in inscriptions of Baetica (cf. *ILS* 1354a); it is not a recondite family name (Matthews 2010: 150). Seneca's patronage may be suggestive of a Baetican origin for our Fabius (Syme 1958: 1.293, Wilkes 1972: 201, Reed 1974: 929 n.15).

³⁶⁶ On a probable Flavian date for Fabius' work, see further Townend 1964: 343. A *terminus post quem* is difficult to establish with any certainty; *pace* Townend, the fact that there is no mention of Fabius in Tacitus' *Dialogus*, whose dramatic date is 75, cannot rule out the possibility that he was writing, or had even completed his work, before then.

³⁶⁷ As suggested by Townend (1964: 343).

³⁶⁸ The prelude to a narrative of the Claudian invasion of Britain in 43 would have been an ideal place for an excursus on Britain's shape (Levick loc. cit.).

³⁶⁹ If, at times, overly sympathetic to Seneca, as suggested here and at 15.61.3.

elsewhere cannot be known (Martin 1981: 23).³⁷⁰ See further *PIR*² F 62, Schanz-Hosius 2.648, Syme 1958: 1.141, Griffin 1976: 88, 371, 428, 1984: 235–7, Martin 1981: 208–12.

The equestrian C. Caecina Tuscus' full name is given by P.Ryl. 2.119, which records his career as a *iuridicus* in the province of Egypt from 51 to 52, immediately after which he returned to Rome.³⁷¹ P.Ryl. 11.14 confirms his appointment as ἡγεμών (prefect) of Egypt at the start of September 63. Suetonius (*Nero* 35.5) records that he was the son of a nurse of Nero;³⁷² his father is likely to have been of Etruscan origin, perhaps from Volterra, the origin of the Caecinae Tusci family (for whom see Torelli 1984: 290, 1995: 48–55). Suetonius (loc. cit.) and Dio (63.18.1) record that he was later dismissed from the prefecture and exiled for using baths specifically built for a prospective imperial visit to Egypt. He had been recalled to Rome by the start of the principate of Vitellius (with whom he enjoyed amicable relations) in 69 (*Hist.* 3.38.3). Nothing is known of his career after this date, although he was probably of advanced years and destined for retirement. See further P.Ryl. 11.3–6, 65–7, 5154, *PIR*² C 109, Parassoglou 1970: 88–90.

mandata ei praetoriarum cohortium cura: for *curam alicuius alicui mandare*, 'to put someone in charge of something', cf. 36.1 *curam praesidiorum Paccio Orfito...mandat* [sc. *Corbulo*], Liv. 35.13.2, Val. Max. 3.7.ext.5, Curt. 5.2.16, Sen. *Brev. Vit.* 18.6.

sed ope Senecae dignationem Burro retentam: for *ops* governing a subjective genitive of the person meaning 'someone's assistance', cf. Liv. 44.7.11 *sine ulla ope hostis*, Claud. *Carm. Min.* 50.5 and see further *TLL* 9.2.806.34, 41–4. The rare *dignatio* is attested from Cic. *Att.* 10.9.2 (its only instance in Cicero) onwards as a recondite synonym for *dignitas* (*TLL* 5.1.1133.9–39);³⁷³ thereafter it appears three times each in Livy and Velleius,³⁷⁴ once each in the elder Seneca and Curtius, five times in the younger Seneca, ten times in the elder Pliny, once in Quintilian, twice in the younger Pliny,³⁷⁵ thirteen times in Tacitus,³⁷⁶ six times in Suetonius and three times in Apuleius. The word's artificiality is suggested by its relative prevalence in those imperial authors who freely admit artificialities of diction (specifically the elder Pliny and Tacitus) and its relative rarity elsewhere. *Dignationem retinere* is not otherwise attested, but cf. Cic. *Agr.* 1.17, *Phil.* 7.7, *Att.* 1.13.2, *Fam.* 12.22a.1, Vell. 2.79.5 *dignitatem retinere*.

Plinius et Cluuius nihil dubitatum de fide praefecti referunt: 'Pliny and Cluvius record that there had been no doubt as to the prefect's loyalty'. The historian C. Plinius Secundus

³⁷⁰ Reed's (1974: 928–33) argument that Tacitus relied on Fabius for his accounts of the Boudiccan revolt in 61 (14.29.1–39.3, *Agr.* 16.1–3) is supported by no evidence.

³⁷¹ Fabius' suggestion that Nero had intended him to succeed Burrus as praetorian prefect is therefore chronologically plausible.

³⁷² Pace Demougin 1992: 563–4, there is no compelling evidence that his mother was one of Nero's two Greek-speaking nurses, Egloge and Alexandria, who are described by Suetonius at *Nero* 50.1.

³⁷³ Although synonyms, *dignatio* and *dignitas* are only interchangeable when used independently (pace Eriksson 1934: 17–18). There are a number of fixed idioms and collocations in which only *dignitas* is admissible, such as *ex dignitate*, *equestris/senatoria dignitas*, *dignitas formae*, *dignitas ac salus* (Adams 1972b: 352–3). Even when these fixed expressions are disregarded, one observes that no author prefers *dignatio* to *dignitas* except for the mannered elder Pliny (by 10:9), and that *dignatio* is an artificial usage.

³⁷⁴ Livy uses it only in his First Decade (2.16.5, 7.25.10, 10.7.12), which is suggestive of its artificiality, as he shows a marked tendency to discard artificial lexemes after book 10 (Adams 1974: 62, Murgia 1993: 97, Oakley 1997: 146–7).

³⁷⁵ Both times in the *Panegyricus* (47.1, 77.5).

³⁷⁶ Here, 42.4, 2.33.3, 53.3, 3.75.1, 4.16.4, 52.1, 6.27.2, *Germ.* 13.2, 26.2, *Hist.* 1.19.2, 52.4, 3.80.2 (see G-G 292–3).

(Pliny the Elder, *PIR* P 373) was an equestrian from Comum (modern Como). He was Pliny the Younger's uncle, adoptive father and namesake, cited by Tacitus here (F4C) and at 1.69.2 (F2C), 15.53.3–4 (F5C), *Hist.* 3.28.1 (F8C). Born around 24 of northern Italian aristocracy, Pliny fulfilled a largely typical equestrian career, serving as *praefectus alae* in Germany (Plin. *NH* 12.98, 16.2, 17.47, *CIL* 12.10026.22) under Claudius with the patronage of the consular legate Q. Pomponius Secundus (cos. 41) whose biography he later wrote (*NH* 14.56); there he became a military tribune in 58 (*NH* 33.143, 34.47). The younger Pliny suggests (*Ep.* 3.5.7) that following the end of his tribunate in 59, he went into retirement for some years at least, managing his estate and devoting himself to literary pursuits, focusing on the writing of history. His report of the eclipse in Campania (where he owned estates) in 59 at *NH* 2.180 appears to be that of an eyewitness, while *NH* 5 suggests that he was in Italy during the final three years of Nero's principate (*pace* Sherwin-White 1966: 221). He probably resumed his career in or just after 69, and is known from *NH* 19.10, 35, 20.199, 215, 22.120, 25.27, 87, 90, 27.18, 31.24, 33.145 to have been procurator of Hispania Tarraconensis from 72 to 74 (Syme 1969: 215–18, 225–6); in the light of eyewitness accounts of features of these provinces in his *Naturalis Historia*, he probably also served as procurator of Gallia Narbonensis (cf. *NH* 14.43) around 70, Africa Proconsularis (cf. *NH* 7.36, 17.41) between 70 and 72 and possibly Belgic Gaul (cf. *NH* 18.183) between 74 and 76 (Syme 1969: 224–6, Pflaum 1978: 112). In 77, the year of the completion of the *Naturalis Historia*, he was appointed *praefectus classis Miseni*, an appointment which he fulfilled until his death in Vesuvius' eruption in 79 (Plin. *Ep.* 3.5.7–8). On his career, see further Pflaum 1961: 45, Demougin 1992: 603–5.

In his letter to Baebius Macer, the younger Pliny (*Ep.* 3.5.3–6) catalogues his uncle's literary *oeuvre*, some of which was produced during a period of self-imposed retirement under Nero as well as under Vespasian. Of the works described there,³⁷⁷ only the encyclopaedic compendium *Naturalis Historia*, written under Vespasian and probably published late in 79, survives. The work which Tacitus is likely to have used as a source for both the Neronian *Annales* and the *Historiae* is the *Historia a fine Aufidi Bassi*,³⁷⁸ a work in 31 books whose title the elder Pliny confirms himself (*NH* *pf.* 20).³⁷⁹ Now wholly lost except for the three Tacitean paraphrases cited, it narrated the history of imperial Rome (probably in an annalistic format) from the year with which the annalist Aufidius Bassus (for whom cf. also *Sen. Ep.* 30.1, 3, 5, 10) ended his work; this may have been 31, the year of Sejanus' fall (Wilkes 1972: 197), or any year between 31 and 47 (Townend 1961: 233, Marincola 1997: 240, 292 n.7). The scholarly consensus is that the history *A fine Aufidi Bassi* ended with Vespasian's conquest of Judaea in 71 (Levick 2013: 1.533); although speculative, this seems plausible, because Pliny suggested that his annalistic history was already complete when he commenced writing the preface to his *Naturalis Historia* (*pf.* 20), by which time its dedicatee Vespasian was already emperor (*pf.* 1). The extent to which Tacitus relied on this work as a source elsewhere is uncertain (Goodyear 1981: 126, Martin 1981: 23, Baldwin 1995: 56–7, Woodman 1998: 233–4, 2018: 116, 236, 265, 328). Tacitus follows Pliny's account here, but is sceptical of his evaluation of Antonia's role in the Pisonian conspiracy at 15.53.4

³⁷⁷ For the sum total of his *oeuvre*, see Schanz-Hosius 2.768–82, Levick ap. Cornell 2013: 1.526–34, 3.1012–1023.

³⁷⁸ The *Bella Germaniae* are cited by Tacitus at 1.69.2 (F2C); see further Goodyear 1981: 126, Levick ap. Cornell 2013: 1.531, 3.1016–1017.

³⁷⁹ As does his nephew at *Ep.* 3.5.6.

(regarding this a naïve account showing Pliny's credulity)³⁸⁰ and tacitly corrects Pliny by attributing Silanus' murder to Agrippina (1.1).³⁸¹

That anti-Neronian sentiment pervaded the elder Pliny's annalistic history, as it did his *Naturalis Historia*,³⁸² is generally accepted (Syme 1958: 1.180, Sherwin-White 1966: 221, Martin 1981: 23, Baldwin 1995: 72–5, Marincola 1997: 251 n.172, Champlin 2003: 44, Doody 2013: 295–6, Levick ap. Cornell 2013: 1.533, Ash 2018: 6, Drinkwater 2019: 9, 346–7), particularly in the light of the Flavian *Zeitgeist* in which the elder Pliny acquiesces (cf. *NH* 2.18 *Vespasianus Augustus fessis rebus subueniens*, 20.160 *Iulium Vindicem adsertorem illum a Nerone libertatis* with Baldwin 1995: 73). However, as Sherwin-White (loc. cit.) suggests, it is not strictly necessary to link the anti-Neronian sentiment of Pliny's *oeuvre* (chiefly the product of a political and literary *Zeitgeist*) with any personal animosity harboured during periods of inactivity under that emperor.

The historian Cluvius Rufus (*PIR*² C 1206, Levick ap. Cornell 2013: 1.549–60; his *praenomen* is not recorded by any source) was a senator of consular rank under Nero. The date of his consulship is uncertain; *pace* Sherwin-White (1966: 503) and Martin (1981: 23), the consular Κλουῖος recorded by Josephus (*AJ* 19.91–2) as being in the theatre at the time of Gaius' assassination in 41 (who was probably consul in 39 or 40) is more likely to have been his father, or another relation (Feldman 1962: 322–3, Wilkes 1972: 202, Gallivan 1978: 423, Wardle 1992: 467–8, 478). Although not a sycophant (a quality for which he was praised even by Helvidius Priscus at *Hist.* 4.43.1), he nonetheless enjoyed cordial relations with Nero, who appointed him herald at his theatrical performances both at Rome and on his Greek tour (Suet. *Nero* 21.2, Dio 63.14.3 with Sansone 1993: 189, Champlin 2003: 44, Drinkwater 2019: 163–4). He remained in favour under Galba and Vitellius, being appointed by Galba as consular legate of Hispania Tarraconensis (*Hist.* 1.8.1, *Plin. Ep.* 9.19.5 with Sherwin-White 1966: 503, Shotton 1967: 370–1, Drinkwater 2019: 96, 404), an office which he retained (despite his apparent ignorance of military affairs) until the death of Vitellius on 20th December, 69 (*Hist.* 4.39.4). Of his subsequent career nothing is known.

The nature of his history, which Tacitus twice cited as a source in the *Annales* (here [F2C] and 14.2.1–2 [F3C]), is uncertain,³⁸³ as is its date (it is either late Neronian or Flavian [Levick ap. Cornell 2013: 1.558]). Tacitus had perhaps cited him in a lost part of the *Annales* covering Gaius or Claudius, since he cites him here only by his gentile name (as with Pliny, whom he had already cited at 1.69.2, where he gives his *praenomen*) but Fabius by his gentile

³⁸⁰ Tacitus similarly rejects Pliny's naïve attribution of the responsibility for the sacking of Cremona to Antonius Primus (*Hist.* 3.28.1). For credulity as Pliny the Elder's greatest flaw, see also Syme 1958: 1.291–5, Wilkes 1972: 200, Martin 1981: 211, Champlin 2003: 44, Drinkwater 2019: 220.

³⁸¹ Tacitus is sometimes thought to have criticised Pliny for preoccupation with *minutiae* unsuited to the dignity of history (Syme 1958: 1.291, Koestermann 1967: 294, Wilkes 1972: 183–4, 201, Marincola 1997: 251 n.172), but the only evidence for this is his comment on the tedium of the year 57 (31.1 *pauca memoria digna euenere, nisi cui libeat laudandis fundamentis et trabibus, quis molem amphitheatri apud campum Martis Caesar exstruerat*). Although Pliny twice describes Nero's amphitheatre in the *Naturalis Historia* (16.200, 19.24), Tacitus' remark is unlikely to be directed at him alone, or even any specific predecessor (Goodyear 1972: 42).

³⁸² Cf. Pliny's depiction of prodigies late in Nero's principate at *NH* 2.232, his portrayal of Nero as *hostis generis humani* at *NH* 7.46 and his attribution of Junius Silanus' murder in 54 to Nero, rather than Agrippina, at *NH* 7.58; see also Wilkes 1972: 201, Griffin 1984: 254 n.32, Drinkwater 2019: 234.

³⁸³ Cluvius is cited by Plutarch as an authority on both Otho's use of travel warrants bearing Nero's name (*Otho.* 3.1–2 [F4C]) and an improbable etymology of *histrion* (*Quaest. Rom.* 107 [F1C] with Maltby 1991: 280); it is uncertain whether the latter was derived from his history, which perhaps included an excursus on the theatre like Tacitus' at 14.20.2–21.4 (Wardle 1992: 482), or a separate monograph on the history of the Roman theatre (Sansone 1993: 189, Levick ap. Cornell 2013: 1.558).

name and *cognomen* (Townend 1961: 233).³⁸⁴ That Cluvius was the common source for *Hist.* 1–2, as well as Plutarch and Suetonius’ biographies of Galba and Otho, is possible but uncertain (Townend 1960: 103);³⁸⁵ one can only speculate as to the extent to which Tacitus relied on Cluvius. As a consular close to Nero, Cluvius perhaps provided Tacitus with choice anecdotes concerning the private affairs of the Neronian court (such as the incest story at 14.2.1–2; see further Townend 1960: 103, 1961: 227, Martin 1981: 23, Champlin 2003: 42–4). His treatment of Nero was perhaps less tendentious than that of Pliny and Fabius, rendering him useful to Tacitus in his pursuit of the truth as a control against these two writers’ excesses (Feldman 1962: 325, Wilkes 1972: 201, Wardle 1992: 476).³⁸⁶ Tacitus always seems to agree with Cluvius whenever he cites him (cf. 14.2.2); he also praises him for his eloquence (*Hist.* 1.8.1 *uir facundus*).

For *nihil dubitare de aliquo*, ‘to have no doubts about something’, cf. Cic. *Fin.* 3.38, Colum. 3.6 *nihil dubitandum est de fecunditate*, ps.-Quint. *Decl. Min.* 263.2.

sane Fabius inclinatur ad laudes Senecae, cuius amicitia floruit: *ad laudes alicuius inclinare* is itself an unparalleled expression, but for intransitive *inclinare ad aliquid*, ‘to incline towards a given course of action’, cf. *Dial.* 28.6, *Hist.* 4.68.5 *ad mitiora inclinantes Galliarum ciuitates*, Liv. 8.31.8 and see further *TLL* 7.1.945.32–43.

For *amicitia alicuius florere*, ‘to flourish as a result of someone’s friendship’, cf. Plin. *Paneg.* 44.7 *hi [sc. boni] amicitia tua, hi iudicio florent*. For the wider use of *florere* with an ablative of cause to mean ‘to thrive as a result of something’, cf. 5.2.2 *is [sc. Fufius consul] gratia Augustae floruerat*, Cic. *Fam.* 4.13.2, Suet. *Nero* 6.4, Auson. 9.27–8 and see further *TLL* 6.1.918.77–82.

nos consensum auctorum secuturi: <si> qui diuersa prodiderint, sub nominibus ipsorum trademus: that Tacitus gives such a programmatic statement here is puzzling, since it is unclear why he would modify his strategy for engaging with sources only here, one year into the Neronian *Annales*, after being consistent in his determination to follow the consensus (cf. 4.10.1, 57.1, 65 with Woodman 2018: 108, 301) and his sparing use of citation and frequent use of anonymous references such as *ferebatur* (for which cf. 14.1) throughout the *Historiae* and *Annales* 1–12, even where different versions of events must have existed in the tradition (Goodyear 1981: 125, Martin 1981: 211, Champlin 2003: 44, Woodman 2018: 108, 271). Not once in the Tiberian hexad is Velleius (an authority on the early part of that principate) named, nor are there any references to Aufidius Bassus, as might be expected (Syme 1958: 1.290–1, Woodman 2018: 108). Moreover, Tacitus does not consistently uphold his promise, since on numerous occasions in the Neronian *Annales*, he continues to give two or more differing but anonymous versions of events (Ash 2018: 3, Woodman loc. cit.), often introduced by such passives as *adnotatum est* (15.23.4) and *ferebatur* (14.1, 43.5, 15.45.3, 50.4) or such vague expressions as *ferunt* (15.10.4), *(satis) constitit* (35.1, 14.4.4, 33.2, 15.16.1, 16.15.2), *plerique...crediderunt* (15.52.3), *tradidere quidam* (15.45.3) and *alii tradidere* (15.53.2); the only occasions in the Neronian *Annales* on which any source is cited by name are here, 14.2.2, 15.53.3 and 15.61.3 (Marincola 1997: 251, Woodman 2018: 108).

³⁸⁴ This fact is hardly conclusive, however, since Tacitus is notoriously inconsistent with nomenclature (Wardle 1992: 478); he continues to include Fabius’ *cognomen* at 14.2.2 and 15.61.3, while Pliny’s *praenomen* reappears at 15.53.3 and *Hist.* 3.28.1 (he never gives Pliny’s *cognomen*).

³⁸⁵ For Suetonius’ and Dio’s possible use of Cluvius in their respective accounts of Nero’s death, see Sansone 1993: 188–9.

³⁸⁶ On Tacitus’ concern for the truth, see also Malloch 2013: 306, Woodman 2018: 115.

This resulted in the suggestion (for which see Syme loc. cit., Ash 2018: 280) that, had Tacitus revised these books, he would have expunged this sentence; later in the Neronian *Annales*, he perhaps found his lofty promise to be untenable on the ground that many accounts of Neronian court intrigue were attributable only to *fama*,³⁸⁷ and therefore abandoned it. He perhaps also became concerned that excessive levels of precise citation would be at odds with the belletristic, rather than technical, nature of historiography (Syme loc. cit., Woodman-Martin 1996: 172).

More generally, the ancient historian, although never conceived as omniscient, was not expected to employ precise citation (Wilkes 1972: 180, Martin 1981: 211, Marincola 1997: 94, Woodman loc. cit.).³⁸⁸ Tacitus' reader should not, therefore, be surprised by the paucity of references to previous historians. Tacitus tends to cite his sources by name only when he discovers a point of especial interest in one specific work (Goodyear 1981: 125, Woodman 2018: 262) or feels that a previous authority (specifically a historian with literary *auctoritas*) affords grave misconceptions of an event, often resulting from tendentiousness or malice (Marincola 1997: 251, Malloch 2013: 306–7, Woodman 2018: 175). This explains his desire to cite, and then refute, the potentially biased Fabius here, and to strengthen his own refutation by invoking the *auctoritas* of Pliny and Cluvius, who both contradict Fabius; he follows a similar strategy at 14.2.2, where he invokes the authority of Cluvius (in addition to a number of *ignoti* in agreement with him) to convince his audience that Fabius' distinctly anti-Neronian account is implausible, while at *Agr.* 10.3, he suggests that despite his evident *auctoritas* (on account of being the most eloquent of recent historians), Fabius' depiction of the shape of Britain can be shown to be inaccurate.³⁸⁹

For *diuersa prodere*, 'to give differing accounts' (*OLD prodere* 6), cf. Plin. *NH* 18.210,³⁹⁰ Heges. 1.6 *uniuersi qui diuersa de Antipatro prodiderant induci praecipuntur*. <Si> *qui* (to be preceded by a colon) is the emendation of Walther (1828), accepted by Halm, Andresen and Wellesley. M's relative clause *qui diuersa prodiderint* reads awkwardly: one expects it to refer to *nos*, the subject of *secuturi*, but given *prodiderint*, its only possible antecedent is *auctorum*, which produces a paradox ('we will follow the consensus of our authors, who have given differing accounts').³⁹¹ Walther's conjecture affords good sense, cohering well with *sub nominibus ipsorum*, and restores both Tacitean idiom (for which cf. *Hist.* 4.65.2 *si qui ex Italia aut prouinciis alienigenae in finibus nostris fuerant, eos bellum absumpsit uel in suas quisque sedes refugerunt*)³⁹² and a conditional clause which is desirable in the context of a programmatic statement: 'I will follow the consensus of my sources: if any authors have given different accounts, I will record these under their individual names'. On the use of the

³⁸⁷ On *fama* meaning 'rumour' see Shatzman 1974: 549–78, Levene 1993: 19–20, Oakley 1997: 643, Hardie 2012: 284–313, Malloch 2013: 222, Woodman-Martin 1996: 172, 196, Woodman 2018: 107.

³⁸⁸ Perhaps to avoid diverting readers to rival accounts (Marincola loc. cit.).

³⁸⁹ It is for a similar purpose that Pliny the Elder is cited at 15.53.3, *Hist.* 3.28.1. For the correction of predecessors as a form of *aemulatio*, see Wilkes 1972: 184, Marincola 1997: 128–33, Malloch 2013: 306, Woodman 2018: 115. In citing literary predecessors by name (contrary to custom), Tacitus can be seen to grant them an especial *auctoritas* which he then challenges in an agonistic fashion in order to establish a greater *auctoritas* for himself, offering a more balanced, nuanced account.

³⁹⁰ It may be significant that in a context in which Tacitus evaluates Pliny the Elder's version of events, Pliny the Elder provides a parallel for Tacitus' expression.

³⁹¹ This fact prompted a later hand in Vat. Lat. 1958 to conjecture *quae diuersa prodiderint*, accepted by Koestermann and Heubner; this affords sense ('I will follow the consensus of my sources; any different accounts which they have given, I will record under their individual names') but coheres poorly with *sub nominibus ipsorum*, which implies that Tacitus will name individual historians who deviate from the established consensus.

³⁹² Cf. also Cic. *Dom.* 39, Liv. 6.32.4, 34.50.3.

pluralis auctoris (nos), see further Woodman 1977: 198, Martin-Woodman 1989: 129, Sinclair 1995: 54.

20.3 Nero *trepidus et interficiendae matris auidus*: although Tacitus presents the claim that Nero sought to kill his mother at this point as fact, it is doubtful whether Nero truly had any intention of doing so (as Bauman 1992: 197 believes), or whether he merely said so in a fit of rage prompted by an unhealthy combination of panic and drunkenness (for this view, see Rutledge 2001: 151, Drinkwater 2019: 176); in the light of Tacitus' language, and the very different way in which Nero deals with the alleged conspiracy when sober (21.6n.), one should probably assume the latter.³⁹³

The adjective *trepidus* (a more artificial synonym of *timidus*) is perhaps best categorised as an artificiality of diction, used only by poets and historians in the republican, triumviral and Augustan periods, which became more generally admissible in post-Augustan literary Latin; while common in poetry from Lucretius onwards, it is not found in prose before Sallust (*Jug.* 40.4, 55.2, 91.5, 97.5); its pattern of attestation in Livy is similar to that of other artificial lexemes (for which see Murgia 1993: 97), whereby it is most common in the First Decade (with 41 attestations), with its usage declining slightly in the Third Decade (with 33 attestations) and sharply in the Fourth and Fifth Decades (with 13 and 3 attestations respectively). Its usage becomes noticeably more widespread in prose after Augustus, being used freely by historians but also admitted for the first time by prose writers in genres other than historiography; it appears three times in Valerius Maximus, six times in Curtius, eleven times in the philosophical prose of the younger Seneca, four times in the elder Pliny, three times in Quintilian, thirty-seven times in Tacitus (once each in the *Agricola* and *Dialogus*, twenty-three times in the *Historiae* and twelve times in the *Annales*), once in the younger Pliny (*Ep.* 8.14.8), six times in Suetonius and sixteen times in Apuleius. A lexical field of fear, conveyed by a variety of verbs and adjectives, is pervasive throughout Tacitus' characterisation of Nero in *Annales* 13–16, enabling his depiction in the mould of the paranoid tyrant who is at times driven to act irrationally out of fear, the emotion which best characterises his relationship with his subjects; cf. 15.73.1 and see further Griffin 1984: 104, Bartsch 1994: 15–16, Wright 1996: 78–106, Mastellone Iovane 1998, Ash 2018: 9, Drinkwater 2019: 317–19.

For *auidus* governing an objective genitive qualified by the gerundive, meaning 'eager to do something', cf. 3.42.3 *Iulius Indus...ob id nauandae operae auidior*, *Hist.* 4.72.1 *auido milite eruendae ciuitatis*, Curt. 4.8.3, 6.5.25, 7.5.23. This construction is attested only in Curtius and Tacitus. More usually, *auidus* governs the genitive of the gerund, which in turn governs a direct accusative, attested in poets as well as writers of historical prose from Livy onwards; cf. Liv. 10.34.4, 35.32.14, Ov. *Met.* 10.56, Curt. 5.1.19, Plin. *NH* 30.2, Stat. *Theb.* 6.249.

non prius differri potuit: for transitive *differre* governing an accusative of the person, meaning 'to delay a person [sc. from doing something]', cf. 1.58.2, Ov. *Ep.* 3.13, Curt. 8.8.6

³⁹³ Bauman (1992: 268 n. 26) believes that Nero's eventual decision to murder his mother in 59 was prompted by the fact that he believed that she had conspired against him in 55, but that he could find no plausible capital charge which could be levelled against her, and resorted to murder after lengthy deliberation. Agrippina's disappearance from the Tacitean narrative between the conclusion of her defence speech in 55 (21.5) and the events leading up to her murder in 59 (14.1.1–8.5) is certainly conspicuous, but Bauman's explanation of it is unconvincing, since it does not account for the fact that Agrippina appeared to be back in Nero's favour after she had given her defence (21.6–22.2), nor for other factors which caused relations between Nero and his mother to deteriorate in the intervening years, such as his infatuation with Poppaea Sabina (45.1–46.3, 14.1.1–3) and the possibility that rumours of incest were being spread publicly (14.2.1–2).

Lyncestem uero Alexandrum...per triennium tamen distuli and see further *TLL* 5.1.1077.74–81. Here *differre* is used in a pregnant sense, with the implication *adducere aliquem ut se differat* (G-G 292Bbβ).

quam Burrus necem eius promitteret, si facinoris coargueretur: ‘until Burrus promised her death, if she could be proved guilty of the crime’. Burrus here fulfils the role of the voice of reason, calming Nero’s hysteria with a series of reasoned counsels in *oratio obliqua*; the *hysteron-proteron* construction (for which see H-S 698–9) confers the main emphasis of the sentence upon the more reasonable course of action implied in the conditional protasis, namely that Agrippina should only be put to death if her guilt can be proved following a trial. The fact that Tacitus’ Nero appears to confide in Burrus here suggests that the historian lends little credence to Fabius Rusticus’ suggestion that he doubted his loyalty. For *aliquem alicuius* [genitive of charge] *coarguere*, ‘to prove someone guilty of a given charge’, cf. Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.153, *Sull.* 44, Plin. *NH* 11.187, Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 9.3 and see further *TLL* 3.1389.21–6.³⁹⁴

sed cuicumque, nedum parenti, defensionem tribuendam: ‘but anyone, most of all [*OLD nedum* 2] a mother, should be allowed the opportunity to speak in their own defence’. Burrus here appeals both to Nero’s sense of filial *pietas* and to his sense of justice (for which cf. 5.1) in encouraging him to grant his mother a fair trial. The expression *defensionem alicui tribuere*, ‘to grant someone the opportunity to speak in his defence’, is not elsewhere attested, but cf. Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.175 *ne illam quidem tibi defensionem reliquam fecisti*, Liv. 34.31.7 *res mihi duplicem defensionem praebet*.

nec accusatores adesse, sed uocem unius et <ex> inimica domo adferri: Burrus here stresses the unreliability of the evidence against Agrippina by invoking the *inimica domus*, by which he means the house of Nero’s aunt and Agrippina’s rival Domitia (*unius* must refer to Paris); he alludes to the possibility whereby Domitia had sent one of her freedmen to denounce Agrippina to Nero in revenge (19.4n.).

For *inimica domus*, ‘a hostile household’, cf. ps.-Quint. *Decl. Mai.* 9.1; for *uocem adferre*, ‘to convey an account’, cf. Quint. *Inst.* 5.7.5 *non enim ipsos esse testes, sed iniuratorum adferre uoces*. Transmitted *uocem unius et inimica domo adferri* affords pointed sense, ‘but the account of one man, and at that [*OLD et* 1b] from a hostile household, was borne’, but the use of a bare ablative of separation to modify *adferre* (rather than the expected *ex* + abl.) is awkward and unparalleled (*TLL* 1.1198.29–30), and accepted by no editor. It is therefore preferable to follow Andresen (1913: ad loc.) in reading *et <ex> inimica domo*; the corruption is easily explicable as the simple omission of a monosyllabic word of similar shape.³⁹⁵

reputaret tenebras et uigilatam conuiuio noctem omniaque temeritati et incitiae propiora: ‘he should reflect upon the darkness, and the night which he spent awake partying, and the fact that everything was rather conducive to rashness and ignorance.’ The modification of *noctem uigilare* by a modal ablative to mean ‘to spend the night awake

³⁹⁴ Cf. also *aliquem alicuius arguere*, a more common expression using the simplex form (*TLL* 2.552.31–52).

³⁹⁵ Andresen’s conjecture is accepted by Goelzer and Heubner. For a possible similar corruption, cf. 14.60.5 *inde crebri questus nec occulti per uulgum, cui minor sapientia et <ex> mediocritate fortunae pauciora pericula sunt* (*et <ex> Puteolanus, et M, ex M¹*). Other editors accept the original scribe of M’s emendation of transmitted *et* to *ex* here, but this is an inferior solution as it eliminates a pointed usage of *et*.

performing a particular activity’ is unparalleled,³⁹⁶ but cf. Plin. *Ep.* 7.27.6 *diraeque noctes per metum uigilabantur*; for *noctem uigilare* elsewhere, cf. Lucr. 1.142, Prop. 3.15.2, Ov. *Ep.* 12.169, Quint. *Inst.* 11.3.23 and see further *OLD uigilare* 3b. This phrase is restricted to poetry until the late first century, and is perhaps an artificiality of diction which developed on the analogy of intransitive *uigilare* modified by the temporal accusative *noctem*, for which cf. Cic. *Cluent.* 198, Hor. *Serm.* 1.1.76. Tacitus employs the expression here to provide a vivid depiction of a night of revelry, thereby enabling his character of Burrus to encourage Nero to see his fears of a conspiracy against him as being a mere product of late-night drunken fantasy (hence *omnia...temeritati et inscitiae propiora*). The almost pleonastic collocation *temeritas et inscitia* recalls Livian diction, with *inscitia* implying thoughtlessness (an implication of *temeritas*) as well as ignorance; cf. Liv. 6.30.6, 8.33.17, 22.9.7, 26.2.7, 42.9.4 with Oakley 1997: 582–3, 627. For *propior* governing the dative of an abstract noun to mean ‘conducive to a particular state of mind’, cf. *Germ.* 30.3 *cunctatio propior constantiae est*, Cic. *Off.* 2.22, ps.-Quint. *Decl. Min.* 251.4 and see further *TLL* 10.2.2030.43, 51–3.

Reputaret is Lipsius’ (1574: ad loc.) conjecture for M’s *refutare* (although a ‘t’ stands *in rasura* after the final ‘e’); while the infinitive is construable, the context whereby Burrus exhorts Nero to consider how fears can be magnified when drunk late at night requires a jussive subjunctive to reflect an imperative (or similar) in *oratio recta*. In addition, *refutare tenebras* (‘to refute the darkness’) is semantically obscure; Lipsius’ *reputaret* restores good sense, since *reputare* (G-G 1386bβ, *OLD* 1b) can govern a direct acc. rei to mean ‘to consider or reflect upon something’; cf. 2.67.1, 15.54.4, *Hist.* 2.16.2, Liv. 30.30.11. The corruption is explicable as a confusion of majuscule ‘F’ and ‘P’, a common error when transcribing text from a *capitalis* exemplar. *Propiora* is also a near-certain conjecture, first found in Vat. Lat. 1958, for M’s *propiora*, which is at odds with the context and corrupt by phonological error.

21.1 sic lenito principis metu: for *metum alicuius lenire*, ‘to assuage someone’s fear’, cf. Sil. 3.131–2 *cum lenire metus properans aegramque leuare | attonitis mentem curis sic Hannibal orsus*.

luce orta: for the ablative absolute *luce orta* meaning ‘at daybreak’, cf. Caes. *Gall.* 5.8.1, Liv. 2.51.7 *postero die luce orta*, Curt. 4.13.17, Gell. 2.28.13. This expression, attested only here in Tacitus, is a synonym of the hackneyed *prima luce* (used 20 times in Caesar, 73 times in Livy and 6 times in Curtius) which Tacitus uses only three times (*Hist.* 2.49.2, 3.6.3, 70.1) before discarding it. The other Tacitean expression meaning ‘at daybreak’ is *coepta luce* (1.65.3, 3.15.3, 15.55.1). The non-standard expression is highlighted by its unusual positioning (as the second element of the sentence rather than the first) and its sylleptic coordination with the preceding ablative absolute *lenito principis metu*.

itur ad Agrippinam ut nosceret obiecta dissolueretque uel poenas lueret: ‘Agrippina was approached so that she might learn of the charges and refute them [*OLD dissoluere* 7b, *TLL* 5.1.1500.31–47] or pay the penalty’. Nero’s advisors Seneca and Burrus, accompanied by an unspecified number of imperial freedmen acting as witnesses, visited Agrippina at her house on the Palatine (for which see 18.3n.) in accordance with Burrus’ resolution (20.3n.) that Agrippina be allowed to hear the charges brought against her by the *delatores* and to attempt to refute them. For the use of the neuter plural substantive *obiecta* as a synonym of *crimina* (‘charges’), first attested in Quintilian, cf. 15.57.1 *quin obiecta denegaret*, 16.24.1, Quint.

³⁹⁶ This is one of only two instances of the verb *uigilare* in Tacitus (G-G 1773); the other is the comparative form of the present participle *uigilantior* at *Hist.* 4.2.3.

Inst. 7.2.29, *Apul. Apol.* 28 and see further *TLL* 9.2.59.75–60.5. This usage is derived from that of *obicere aliquid alicui* meaning ‘to lay something to one’s charge’, attested from Plautus onwards, for which see *OLD obicere* 10, *TLL* 9.2.57.23–33. *Obiecta noscere* is not elsewhere attested, but cf. Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.29 *populus Romanus...accusationem...cognouit*; *obiecta dissoluere* is similarly unparalleled, but cf. Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.68, *Sull.* 69, *Opt. Gen.* 15 *crimen dissoluere*.

M’s awkward *poena* (abl.) *lueret*, paralleled only in hexameter verse (Verg. *Aen.* 1.136, *Priap.* 67.4, *Sil.* 2.301), was emended by a later hand to *poenas lueret*. This restores good sense; the use of the plural *poenas* (in the generalising sense ‘the penalty’, as in the common expression *poenas dare*) as the object of *luere* is supported by 35.4, 3.16.4, 6.25.3, 12.54.4, *Hist.* 2.54.2, Cic. *Mil.* 104, *Liv.* 38.25.16, *Plin. Ep.* 6.29.8, *Suet. Vesp.* 1.1.³⁹⁷ M’s corruption is explicable as a *Perseverationsfehler* after *obiecta*.

Burrus iis mandatis Seneca coram fungebatur: the anastrophe of prepositional *coram* is common in poetry from the triumviral period onwards (cf. *Hor. Serm.* 1.4.95, *Tib.* 1.2.21, *Ov. Ep.* 8.59, *Sen. HF* 1264, *Stat. Theb.* 9.97) but relatively rare in prose of all periods; it is admitted by Livy only once (29.19.6 *Locrensibus coram*) out of 14 instances of the preposition and by Tacitus only in the *Annales* (Goodyear 1972: 211, Ash 2018: 139), in which it occurs here and on 12 other occasions (32.2, 38.3, 1.19.3, 75.1, 3.14.2, 18.3, 24.4, 49.1, 4.8.5, 11.2.1, 15.24.2, 61.2); in the *Annales* instances of *coram* in anastrophe outnumber those in which *coram* precedes the noun which it governs (6.4.3, 14.59.2) by a 13:2 ratio.³⁹⁸ The conspicuous rarity of the anastrophe of *coram* in prose coupled with Tacitus’ strong preference for it in the *Annales* (but not *Historiae* or minor works) perhaps suggests that it is a conscious poeticism on Tacitus’ part.³⁹⁹

Mandatis fungi is paralleled only at *Lact. Inst.* 4.12.15; more usual expressions are *mandata peragere* and *mandata exsequi*. The *mandata* are those of Nero, who (following Burrus’ counsels) consents to Agrippina’s being given the opportunity to refute her charges (20.3n.).

aderant et ex libertis arbitri sermonis: the purpose of these (supposedly impartial) witnesses was to secure for Agrippina a fair hearing,⁴⁰⁰ despite the unprecedented and unorthodox nature of a defendant’s being tried privately in her own home (Ginsburg 2006: 45), in line with Nero’s policy (supported by Seneca) of granting senators and members of the *domus* fair trials, in place of the more arbitrary judicial proceedings favoured by Claudius (5.1). For the predicative use of *ex* + abl. meaning (as if there were an ellipsis of *aliquis*) ‘one/some of [sc. a particular group]’, cf. Cic. *Fam.* 3.1.3, *Liv.* 30.42.6, *Sen. Contr.* 7.7.15, *Quint. Inst.* 2.20.1 and see further *TLL* 5.2.1115.76–1116.4. For *arbiter* governing an objective genitive meaning ‘a witness to something’, cf. *Dial.* 5.4, Cic. *Att.* 15.1.2, *Hor. Carm.* 3.20.11 and see further *TLL* 2.406.15–20.

³⁹⁷ Halm’s (1856: ad loc.) conjecture *poenam lueret* is possible, but has fewer parallels (only 6.4.1, 14.10.3, *Liv.* 8.28.8, *Ov. Met.* 3.625, *Hom. Il. Lat.* 38); although Tacitus uses both the singular and plural as the object of *luere*, he prefers the plural by a 5:2 ratio.

³⁹⁸ The only other prose authors before 200 to admit *coram* in anastrophe are Suetonius (*Nero* 33.2, *Otho* 1.2 *se coram*) and Apuleius (once, at *Apol.* 44); Seneca the Younger allows the anastrophe only in tragedy, never in prose.

³⁹⁹ On the anastrophe of prepositions in literary Latin, see p. 31 and n. 190

⁴⁰⁰ Although Tacitus discredits the view that Nero doubted Burrus’ loyalty (20.2), it is entirely possible that Nero distrusted his advisors and Agrippina to the extent that he felt witnesses to be necessary to ensure the hearing’s fair and proper conduct (Barrett 1996: 176).

deinde a Burro, postquam crimina et auctores exposuit, minaciter actum: the stage is set for Agrippina's trial *intra cubiculum* (but nonetheless fair); on the trial's quasi-theatrical depiction see Ginsburg 2006: 45. For *crimen exponere*, 'to set out a charge', cf. Cic. *Cluent.* 20, Quint. *Inst.* 5.13.28; *auctores* means 'those bringing the accusation' (*OLD* 10b). For the impersonal passive *agi* meaning 'to conduct oneself' (*OLD agere* 36), cf. Caes. *Gall.* 5.50.5, Liv. 32.32.16, Sen. *Phaedr.* 702.

21.2 et Agrippina ferociae memor 'non miror' inquit 'Silanam numquam edito partu matrum adfectus ignotos habere: Tacitus grants the first *oratio recta* of the Neronian *Annales* to Agrippina;⁴⁰¹ this may reflect the *ferocia* ('defiant spirit'; see G-G 458b, *OLD ferocia* 2) of Agrippina (for which cf. 2.2 *certamen utriusque* [sc. *Senecae et Burro*] *unum erat contra ferociam Agrippinae*) which is a recurrent theme throughout Tacitus' narrative of the first two years of Nero's principate and accords with the *dux femina* stereotype (Ginsburg 2006: 115–6). Tacitus could hardly have known how Agrippina responded to Burrus in this very private hearing (Ginsburg 2006: 45 n. 72), but rather uses *inuentio* to advantage in presenting Agrippina as possessing sufficient influence (achieved partly through vehemence of diction) over her son and his two advisors to secure not only her acquittal, but also the appointment of her favourite equestrians to the most prestigious offices (22.1n.). That Agrippina, as opposed to her son, is granted the first direct speech of the Neronian *Annales* perhaps also reflects Nero's continued submission to his mother's wishes in the early part of his principate (cf. 6.2 *quod subsidium in eo, qui a femina regetur*) as well as his inability to assert confidently his own views and desires at this point (cf. 3.2 *Neronem alienae facundiae eguisse*);⁴⁰² see further Devillers 1994: 253, Barrett 1996: 176, Drinkwater 2019: 176–8.

Agrippina's speech in *oratio recta* provides an impassioned refutation of the charges against her, emphasising both the importance of a fair hearing and the vexatious nature of the prosecution, as well as her natural outspokenness of character (for which cf. 14.1 *superbia muliebris*). A sober and rational Nero (as contrasted with the Nero of 20.1) is unlikely to have been convinced by Junia Silana's allegations against Agrippina, especially in the light of Junia Silana's own disreputable character (Rudich 1993: 19–20, Devillers loc. cit., Drinkwater 2019: 177); the Tacitean version of Agrippina's speech therefore serves more to illustrate Agrippina's character and influence at court. Once Burrus reveals that Agrippina's enemy Junia Silana has initiated the prosecution (by suborning the *delatores* Iturius and Calvisius), Agrippina attacks her, ironically castigating her for her childlessness (for which Agrippina herself may be held partly responsible; see 19.2n.), which has prevented her from understanding maternal affection. Agrippina's invocation of *matrum adfectus* fulfils a strongly rhetorical purpose, stressing to all the parties present that on account of the strong bonds of affection between her and her son, which endure despite their frequent quarrels (cf. 5.1–2, 13.1, 14.2–3, 18.2–3 with Barrett 1996: 176), it would be inconceivable for her to have plotted to depose her son and replace him with Rubellius Plautus.

For *partum edere*, 'to give birth, produce offspring', see *TLL* 10.1.540.51–58; to the parallels there cited, add 1.10.5 *necdum edito partu*, Cic. *Nat. Deor.* 2.129, Plin. *NH* 7.34. For *matris adfectus*, 'a mother's affection [sc. for her children]' (*OLD affectus* 7), cf. ps.-Quint. *Decl. Mai.* 16.6 *amicitia...fortior quam matris adfectus*. For *aliquid ignotum habere*, 'to be ignorant of something', cf. Sen. *Ep.* 79.15 *quod ipsos illa nobilis Graecia non ignotos solum habuisset, sed paene inauditos*, Plin. *NH* 2.116, Tert. *Adv. Marc.* 4; for the wider usage of

⁴⁰¹ See further p. 24 and n. 156.

⁴⁰² This may be supported by the fact that Tacitus' Nero does not speak in *oratio recta* until he opposes Seneca's retirement in 62 (14.55.1–56.2), three years after Agrippina's murder.

habere governing a direct object and a predicative adjective in a sense analogous to that of *putare* or *numerare*, see *TLL* 6.3.2444.21–46.

neque enim proinde a parentibus liberi quam ab impudica adulteri mutantur: ‘for mothers do not change their children in the same way as an unchaste woman changes her lovers’; Agrippina here uses a gnomic statement to emphasise her piety and discredit Silana in the process;⁴⁰³ Agrippina thereby forces Seneca and Burrus to question the credibility of Silana’s accusation, in addition to stressing her own virtue by characterising herself in the ideal mould of the *matrona* (Ginsburg 2006: 45), as contrasted with the disreputable *impudica* (with its connotations of promiscuity, for which see 19.2n.). Agrippina’s description of Silana as *impudica* here specifically recalls 19.2 *impudicam et uergentem annis dicitans*,⁴⁰⁴ where Tacitus depicts Agrippina as invoking Silana’s sexual profligacy in order to dissuade Sextius Africanus from marrying her.

Proinde is M’s reading, affording unobjectionable sense; Puteolanus’ (1476: ad loc.) *perinde*, accepted by Halm (1856: ad loc.), is plausible but uncertain, since the distribution of the synonymous pairs of correlatives *proinde...quam* and *perinde...quam* in both the First and Second Medicean codices is suggestive of the fact that Tacitus himself alternated between the two pairs of correlatives (Holmes 1997: 67–9).⁴⁰⁵

Iturius et Caluisius: for these two *delatores* see 19.3n.

adesis omnibus fortunis: *fortunas adedere*, ‘to consume one’s fortune’, is unparalleled, but cf. *Hist.* 1.4.3 *adesis bonis* (suggestive of self-imitation on Tacitus’ part here), Cic. *Quinct.* 40 *adesa...pecunia*, Caes. *Gall.* 1.11.6 *fortunis...consumptis*.

nouissimam suscipiendae accusationis operam anui rependunt: although construable, M’s *nouissimam suscipiendam accusationis operam anui rependunt* ‘they repay the old woman with the final service that they had to undertake, of an accusation’ affords awkward sense; the conjecture *suscipiendae*, first found in Vat. Lat. 1958 and accepted by all modern editors, restores good sense, ‘they repay the old woman with their final service of undertaking an accusation’;⁴⁰⁶ M’s *suscipiendam* is probably corrupt by perseveration after *nouissimam*. *Operam alicui rependere*, ‘to render someone a service in return’ is not elsewhere attested, but see *TLL* 9.2.666.80–1. For *accusationem suscipere*, ‘to undertake an accusation’, cf. 6.7.2, *Dial.* 34.6, Cic. *Cluent.* 48, ps.-Quint. *Decl. Mai.* 15.7, Apul. *Apol.* 66.

Anui is here used contemptuously of Iunia Silana (in the sense ‘old hag’), mirroring Agrippina’s alleged criticism of her as being *uergentem annis* at 19.2; this is the only place in Tacitus where *anus* has explicitly pejorative connotations;⁴⁰⁷ it is otherwise used sympathetically (denoting an aged woman who has lost a child) of Livia at 4.12.4 and Vitia at 6.10.1 (G-G 87β, Rosivach 1994: 108).

⁴⁰³ On Tacitus’ use of gnomic statements see introduction pp. 35–6, 19.1n.

⁴⁰⁴ For the semantics of the feminine substantive *impudica* in Tacitus, see 19.2n.

⁴⁰⁵ Holmes argues strongly for the retention of the paradosis in all instances of these correlative pairs.

⁴⁰⁶ *Suscipiendae accusationis* is to be understood as a defining genitive.

⁴⁰⁷ On these connotations see Rosivach 1994: 109–15, who argues that the term has strong associations with both ugliness and sterility in Roman rhetoric; its use here corresponds with the topos of the aged nymphomaniac (19.2n.).

ideo aut mihi infamia parricidii aut Caesari conscientia subeunda est: ‘is that a reason as to why I should be subjected to [OLD *subire* 11] the infamy of parricide, or the emperor to complicity [OLD *conscientia* 1b] in it?’ The genitive *parricidii* is to be taken *apo koinou* as the complement of the two abstract nouns *infamia* (as a defining genitive) and *conscientia* (as an objective genitive).⁴⁰⁸ For *infamia* governing a defining genitive denoting the cause of infamy, cf. Cic. *Cluent.* 83, *Leg. Agr.* 2.91, *Sest.* 82 and see further OLD *infamia* 1c, TLL 7.1.1338.11–13. Agrippina’s utterance here is deeply ironic, given that she was already tainted with the infamy of parricide (12.67.2); the idea that the emperor might himself be implicated in parricide anticipates his destruction of Agrippina in 59 (14.8.5). This rhetorical question is perhaps designed less to convince Agrippina’s listeners, and more to exploit the dramatic irony inherent in Agrippina’s speech by insinuating her impending fate, just before the point at which she leaves the Tacitean annalistic narrative (21.6), not returning until the historian begins his account of her own murder in the annalistic year 59 (14.1.1).

21.3 nam Domitiae inimicitis gratias agerem: the only other instance of *gratias agere* in Tacitus is at *Agr.* 42.2; he otherwise employs the synonymous (and equally common in extant Latin) *grates agere* (for which see TLL 6.2.2204.16–36) throughout the *Historiae* (2 times) and *Annales* (17 times). It is probable that Tacitus sought to vary his expression here (especially given that it occurs in a speech); by this point he had already used *grates agere* 11 times in the *Annales*, and he perhaps feared that this expression would seem trite.⁴⁰⁹

si benevolentia mecum in Neronem meum certaret: for *certare cum aliquo* modified by an ablative of respect, ‘to vie with someone for a given quality’, see TLL 3.894.19–50; to the parallels there cited, add Liv. 1.35.2 *benignitate erga alios cum rege ipso certasse*, 38.13.6, Flor. *Epit.* 1.22.5, Fronto p. 98.1. This is the only instance of the construction in Tacitus. For the affectionate, colloquial use of *meus* qualifying a proper name, meaning ‘my dear, beloved’ (OLD *meus* 2b), especially common in passages which recall colloquial diction, cf. 6.5.1 *me autem tuebitur Tiberiolus meus*, *Dial.* 5.7, Verg. *Aen.* 1.231 *meus Aeneas*, Cic. *Att.* 10.8.1 *mea Tullia*, *Off.* 3.88 *Catone meo*, Tib. 1.5.31 *Messalla meus* and see further G-G 831β, Mayer 2001: 104, Biville 2006: 1–11, Woodman 2017: 109. Tacitus’ use of the colloquialism here continues the theme of Agrippina’s maternal *pietas* towards her son Nero (cf. Venus’ use of *meus* predicated of her son Aeneas at Verg. *Aen.* 1.231, in a similar context of *pietas*), thereby stressing the implausibility of the allegations made against her by the *delatores*.

nunc per concubinum Atimetum et histrionem Paridem quasi scaenae fabulas componit: for Domitia’s two freedmen, Atimetus and L. Domitius Paris, see 19.4n. Tacitus’ Agrippina here exploits the pejorative connotations of *concubinus* and *histrion*, calling the reliability of the freedmen’s testimony into question by stressing the disreputable (and low-class) elements of their characters. For *concubinus* (only here in Tacitus; see G-G 200) in the pejorative sense ‘adulterer’, here implying that Atimetus and Silana are sleeping with each other and reinforcing Silana’s status as an *impudica* (19.2n.), cf. Curt. 10.2.27 *bonis uero militibus cariturus sum, paelicum suarum concubinus*, Mart. 6.22.1, 12.49.4 and see further TLL 4.99.54–7; for the pejorative use of *histrion*, see 19.4n. Agrippina here alludes to the notion of theatricality (Bauman 1992: 197–8, Bartsch 1994: 11–12, Rutledge 2001: 152), not only to highlight Paris’ unseemly profession, but also to emphasise how the relationships

⁴⁰⁸ For this construction see H-S 835.

⁴⁰⁹ Ritter’s (1863: 113–14) emendation of transmitted *gratias* to *grates* is therefore unconvincing, and accepted by no editor. The secure attestation of *gratias agere* at *Agr.* 42.2 shows that the phrase can hardly be alien to Tacitean usage.

between members of the imperial *domus* were increasingly characterised by dissimulation and role-play at this time; it was difficult to differentiate between true sentiments and those which were feigned as part of political intrigue. Agrippina thereby warns Nero's advisors and the witnesses of the possibility that the accusation is entirely false; the connotations of *scaenae fabulas*, alongside *histrionum*, serve to denigrate the accusation further, as being not only ridiculous, but also more worthy of comic theatre than any real-life political situation (Bartsch 1994: loc. cit.).

Concubinam was restored by a later hand in the mid-fifteenth-century *Codex Corbinelli* (Naples IV C 21); M's *concupinam* gives the wrong gender (the masculine form of the substantive is needed to agree with Atimetus) and is probably corrupt by phonological error.

Baiarum suarum piscinas extollebat: 'she was embellishing the fishponds of her beloved Baiae'; for this sense of *piscina*, cf. Cic. *Att.* 1.18.6, 2.1.7, Varr. *RR* 3.3.2 *piscinas dico eas, quae in aqua dulci aut salsa inclusos habent pisces ad uillam*, 17.2–9, Colum. 8.16, Plin. *NH* 9.172 *apud Baulos in parte Baiana piscinam habuit Hortensius orator* and see further *TLL* 10.1.2203.19–39, G-G 1118a. Domitia owned vast estates at Baiae as well as at Ravenna; cf. Dio 61.17.1, who records that Nero, in his eagerness to inherit these estates, poisoned his aunt (cf. Suet. *Nero* 34.5) soon after murdering his mother in 59; see further D'Arms 1970: 94, 211–12, Maiuro 2012: 283. Fishponds, containing both saltwater and freshwater fish, were a common feature of the coastal *uillae* (estates) of Roman aristocrats, as is suggested by the passages of Varro and Pliny the Elder cited. The use of *extollere* in a similar sense to *exornare* ('to embellish') is unique to Tacitus and paralleled only at 11.1.1 *hortis...quos ille [sc. Valerius Asiaticus] a Lucullo coeptos insigni magnificentia extollebat*; see further G-G 435γ, *TLL* 5.2.2039.25–27, Malloch 2013: 58; this sense is an extension of its more common meaning 'to amplify, make bolder', for which cf. Sen. *Ep.* 79.9, Quint. *Inst.* 10.4.1, 12.10.62 and see further *TLL* 5.2.2039.8–24.

The reference to fishponds coupled with the overly sentimental connotations of *Baiarum suarum* (for which see *OLD suus* 7) affords a derogatory tone,⁴¹⁰ suggesting that Domitia, in Agrippina's view, was more concerned with the inventory of her estate (for her avarice, cf. Quint. *Inst.* 6.1.50) than with the career of her nephew, in whose upbringing and rise to power (unlike her sister Domitia Lepida, for whom cf. 12.64.2–4) she is not recorded as playing any major role. Agrippina thereby seeks to present herself as being the member of the *domus* chiefly responsible for securing Nero's rise to power and ensuring the continued security of his principate, in the hope of rendering the accusation that she sought to depose him incredible (Rudich 1993: 19).

cum meis consiliis adoptio et proconsulare ius et designatio consulatus et cetera apiscendo imperio praepararentur: following her marriage to Claudius in 49 (12.8.1), Agrippina then secured Nero's adoption on 26th February 50 (12.25.1–2); at the start of the following year (1st January 51), she secured for him *proconsulare imperium* (12.41.1), whereby, following the precedent of Augustus' grandsons Gaius and Lucius (Suet. *Aug.* 26.2 with Griffin 1984: 29–30), Claudius granted him the same powers as a provincial governor of consular rank, although unlike other such governors, whose *imperium* could only be

⁴¹⁰ Fishponds, as Varro's treatment in *RR* 3.3.2, 17.2–9 suggests, were sometimes (in elite moralising discourse) negatively associated with the frivolous pastimes of wealthy but unambitious Romans as well as a form of conspicuous consumption (*luxuria*) which was at odds with traditional aristocratic virtues; see further Higginbotham 1997: 55–64, Bannon 2014: 176–8. On the technical specifications of fishponds in Roman *uillae* see Higginbotham 1997: 69–226.

exercised outside the boundaries of Rome, Nero held *imperium* within Rome as well as outside it (Levick 1990: 85–6); therefore, when the triumph over the Silures in Britain was celebrated, Nero (although only thirteen years old at this point) was present in full triumphal dress while Britannicus wore the child's *toga praetexta* (12.41.2). Nero's appointment by Claudius (under the influence of Agrippina) to the ordinary consulship of 57, his twentieth year, was concurrent with his being granted *proconsulare imperium* (12.41.1);⁴¹¹ Nero himself chose to fulfil the ordinary consulship with L. Antistius Vetus for the first two months of 55, his eighteenth year (11.1), perhaps in emulation of Augustus' holding the consulship aged nineteen (*RG* 1). On Agrippina's schemes to ensure Nero's accession to the Principate, see further Bauman 1992: 179–89.

The expression *proconsulare ius* is not elsewhere attested, but cf. the usual and expected *proconsulare imperium* at 52.1, 1.14.3, 76.2, 3.58.2, 12.41.1, 59.1, Val. Max. 6.9.7, Gell. 12.17.1; *ius* here is a near-synonym of *imperium* (*OLD ius* 13). Tacitus' motivation for varying the expression was perhaps twofold: he consciously sought to vary official terminology, particularly if he felt that he had over-used a given official expression earlier in the *Annales*, and was also aware of the need to avoid iteration of the lexeme *imperium* (given *apiscendo imperio* in the same sentence). For *designatio consulatus*, 'appointment to the consulship' (in which *consulatus* is an objective genitive), cf. Suet. *Iul.* 9.1 *Publio Sulla et L. Autronio post designationem consulatus ambitus condemnatis* and see further *OLD designatio* 4, *TLL* 5.1.714.18–21. *Imperio* is to be construed as a dative of purpose qualified by a gerundive (*apiscendo*), an archaising usage of which Tacitus is fond, for which see K-S 1.749, Woodcock 1959: 165, Pinkster 2015: 895–6.

Apisci, the recondite simple form of the common compound *adipisci*, achieves paronomasia with *piscinas* in the preceding clause, further enhancing the dichotomy between Domitia's characteristically feminine frivolity and Agrippina's influence in the male political sphere (Barrett 1996: 176). *Apisci* was already an archaism by the late Republic, and therefore attractive to archaising writers of the imperial period.⁴¹² On its distribution in extant Latin, see further G-G 88, *TLL* 2.238.79, 239.3–42, Kuntz 1962: 78–9, Adams 1972b: 364, Woodman-Martin 1996: 280.

Tacitus employs *apisci* 11 times,⁴¹³ more often than any extant writer of Latin, although he makes no use of the form in any of his writings before *Annales* 3 (while there is 1 instance of *adipisci* in the *Dialogus*, with 13 in the *Historiae* and 7 in *Annales* 1–2) nor in *Annales* 11–12 (in which *adipisci* is attested 10 times); the ratio of *adipisci* to *apisci* is 10:8 in *Annales* 3–6, and 8:3 in *Annales* 13–16. *Imperium apisci* is not elsewhere attested, but cf. *imperium adipisci* at 1.1, 1.53.2, 2.42.3, *Hist.* 3.74.1, Val. Max. 5.4.1, Suet. *Tib.* 38.1. Although Agrippina is very unlikely to have used such a form in spoken Latin in the mid-first century, Tacitus includes the form in her speech in order to emphasise the solemnity of the act of the securing of imperial power for a new *princeps*, and thereby to stress that once the new *princeps* had been installed, the office was rightfully his for life; Tacitus' Agrippina therefore makes it unthinkable that she would contemplate the deposition of a *princeps*.

⁴¹¹ For the emperor's role in appointing consuls under the Principate, see introduction p. 11.

⁴¹² M's original *apiscendo* was corrected to *adipiscendo* by the original scribe; a later hand restored *apiscendo*. This suggests that the recondite form, which appears here for the first time in M, caused difficulty for the original scribe, and that he sought to replace it with a familiar one.

⁴¹³ M also reads *apisceretur* at 15.12.3, but in the light of its awkwardness in this passage, all modern editors assume it to be corrupt by metathesis and follow Lipsius in emending it to *aspiceretur*. This instance is not counted in the usage statistics.

21.4 aut existat qui cohortes in urbe temptatas, qui prouinciarum fidem labefactam, denique seruos uel libertos ad scelus corruptos arguat: Agrippina suddenly changes her train of thought from her unconditional loyalty to Nero to the implausibility of the *delatores*' charges, setting out the shortcomings of the prosecution in a forceful rising tricolon; she succinctly argues that in order to make a successful case for *res nouae*, one would need evidence that the urban soldiery, in addition to the legions and their generals in the provinces and the slaves and freedmen of the imperial *domus*, had successfully been compelled to shift their loyalty from the *princeps* to a usurper (as happened in the downfall of both Gaius and Vitellius). It would therefore be impossible to make a compelling case for Agrippina's participation in such a conspiracy (Bauman 1992: 198, Rudich 1993: 20, Barrett 1996: 176).

Cohortes in urbe refers not only to the nine praetorian cohorts, stationed in the *castra praetoria* on the Viminal and under the control of the praetorian prefect, of which one kept guard at the *Palatium* each night (Millar 1977: 61–2, Fuhrmann 2012: 115, 129), but also to the three urban cohorts under the control of the *praefectus urbi* as well as the seven libertine *cohortes uigilum* (under the *praefectus uigilum*), of which the latter (although primarily responsible for identifying and extinguishing fires) helped to maintain law and order within the boundaries of Rome more generally (*Dig.* 1.15.3 with Rainbird 1986: 151, Sablayrolles 1996: 42–3). Although not directly responsible for the emperor's security, the urban cohorts and *uigiles* nonetheless maintained unwavering loyalty to the emperor unless they had been influenced to revolt against him, as in 41 (when Gaius was assassinated) and 69 (when they fought for Vespasian's brother, the city prefect Flavius Sabinus, against Vitellius); cf. *Hist.* 3.64.1, 69.1–70.4, Suet. *Claud.* 10.3, Jos. *AJ* 19.160, *BJ* 4.645 with Rainbird 1986: 156, Sablayrolles 1996: 43–5, Fuhrmann 2012: 116–7, 127–8.

For *cohortem temptare*, 'to attempt to influence a cohort' (*OLD temptare* 6), cf. *Hist.* 2.63.1 *addidit temptatam cohortem, quae Ostiae ageret*, Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.105. For *fidem alicuius labefactare*, 'to undermine someone's loyalty', cf. Cic. *Cluent.* 194, Liv. 24.20.14, Suet. *Vesp.* 4.3; the frequentative form *labefactare* is attested only here in Tacitus, while *labefacere* occurs six times (G-G 735). The semantics of *labefactare* are perhaps better categorised as emphatic rather than truly frequentative, possibly affording the nuance of meaning 'to undermine severely'; see further *TLL* 7.765.46–50, 62–3. Although less common than *labefacere* in all authors and periods, the frequentative form *labefactare* is in use throughout the Republic and imperial periods until the 6th century, with 50 instances in Cicero, and (unlike certain other such forms) appears neither artificial nor recondite.

For *aliquem corrumpere ad scelus*, as here, cf. 4.10.2 *corrupta ad scelus Liuia*; for *aliquem corrumpere ad aliquid* meaning 'to induce someone to commit something [sc. a crime or perverse action]', cf. 16.18.3 *corrupto ad indicium seruo*, *Hist.* 1.72.1 *corrupto ad omne facinus Nerone*, Cic. *Brut.* 1.4.3, Frontin. *Strat.* 1.11.2 and see further *TLL* 4.1054.73. For *arguere* governing an indirect statement with ellipsis of the infinitive, common in compressed diction, cf. 6.25.2, *Hist.* 4.10.1 *tum inuectus est Musonius Rufus in Publium Celerem, a quo Baream Soranum falso testimonio circumuentum arguebat*, Liv. 21.11.1, Verg. *Aen.* 11.393 and see further *TLL* 2.553.21–8. For the use of *denique* to introduce the final element of a rising tricolon, as here, cf. *Dial.* 9.3, *Hist.* 3.66.2, 4.58.4 *sunt alii legati, tribuni, centurio denique aut miles*, Cic. *De Orat.* 3.84;⁴¹⁴ for the wider use of *denique* as an

⁴¹⁴ Our tricolon might be even more emphatic if <qui> were inserted after *denique* (as Prof. Woodman suggests *per litteras*), thereby continuing the anaphora of the pronoun from the preceding two clauses. The pronoun would easily be lost by haplography after *denique* at a stage of transmission in *capitalis in scriptio continua*.

adverb of gradation, introducing the emphatic final element of a sequence of clauses, see G-G 276b, *TLL* 5.1.532.65–533.9.

21.5 uiuere ego Britannico potiente rerum poteram? By the homoeoarchon and etymological word-play of *potiente...poteram*, Agrippina stresses once again that her power within the *domus* relies solely upon Nero's being *princeps* (19.1n.), thereby refuting the *delatores'* case. Agrippina's attitude to her fortune under a putative emperor Britannicus differs from that at 14.3 and 18.2, suggesting that the extent of her alleged affection for Britannicus was determined predominantly by political advantage at any given time, and that her changing attitudes towards her stepson were carefully engineered products of *dissimulatio* (Bauman 1992: 198, Rudich 1993: 20, Bartsch 1994: 11–12, Barrett 1996: 176, Drinkwater 2019: 176). Here, it is politically advantageous for her to suggest that she would have been executed by Britannicus, who, being bound by filial piety towards Claudius, would have sought to avenge her murder of her husband.

Transmitted *potentie* (intelligible as the genitive or dative singular of *potentia* in medieval orthography) is not construable; M's original hand restored construable syntax by emending this to *potente*. *Potiente rerum*, the conjecture of a later hand in M (also in Vat. Lat. 1958), is preferable as it affords the more pointed sense 'seizing control of affairs' (*OLD potiri* 1) rather than merely 'being in control of affairs' (*OLD potens* 2); the paradosis is corrupt by metathesis.

ac si Plautus aut quis alius rem publicam iudicaturus obtinuerit: 'and if Plautus or some other potential judge of mine gains control over the Roman state'. Agrippina shockingly concludes her speech by alluding to her own guilt in murdering Claudius, in order to emphasise the (for her) politically disastrous implications of the assumption of the Principate by Plautus (or any man other than Nero) and thereby the implausibility of the conspiracy. For absolute *iudicare* meaning 'to be a judge, exercise judgement', cf. Cic. *Inv.* 1.92, *Verr.* 1.30, Sen. *Med.* 194 and see further *TLL* 7.618.45–54.⁴¹⁵ For *rem publicam obtinere*, 'to seize control over the state', cf. Eutrop. 7.8.2 *ex eo rem publicam per quadraginta et quattuor annos solus obtinuit*; for the wider usage of transitive *obtinere* meaning 'to seize control over something', cf. *Hist.* 5.3.2, Cic. *Att.* 5.21.5, Curt. 10.10.4 and see further G-G 1002ca, *TLL* 9.2.287.21–36.

The extent of Agrippina's friendship with Plautus is unclear, although the alleged conspiracy is nonetheless implausible because Agrippina's power would be significantly weakened if the Principate had been assumed by any aristocrat other than Nero, since she might have been liable to prosecution for the murder of Claudius (Rudich 1993: 19–20, Barrett 1996: 176, Drinkwater 2019: 176–7), in which she alludes to her own complicity (*ea crimina...quibus nisi a filio non possim*).

desunt scilicet mihi accusatores: *scilicet* here is deeply ironic (for this sense see H-S 837, *OLD scilicet* 4), implying the opposite meaning; perhaps the most apposite translation is 'there will really be a shortage of accusers'. The conditional sequence is best interpreted as a 'future more vivid' sequence (*obtinuerit* in the protasis is future perfect) in which the present

⁴¹⁵ For transmitted *iudicaturus*, Heinsius conjectured *uindicaturus*, but there are no parallels for this absolute use of *uindicare*, whereas *iudicare* has good parallels and affords good sense.

indicative is used in the apodosis for added vividness (Woodcock 1959: 149, Pinkster 2015: 401).⁴¹⁶

qui non uerba impatientia caritatis aliquando incauta, sed ea crimina obiciant, quibus nisi a filio absolui non possim': 'who would impute to me not the occasional rash utterance brought about by the impetuosity of my affection, but those crimes of which I cannot be absolved of guilt except by my son?'.⁴¹⁷ For *impatientia caritatis*, cf. ps.-Quint. *Decl. Mai.* 8.4 *uultis intellegere, iudices, nihil impatientia caritatis fecisse patrem*, Ennod. *Ep.* 4.33; for the wider use of *impatientia* governing an objective gen. rei to mean 'the impetuosity of an emotion', see *TLL* 7.1.526.44–60. The collocation *incauta uerba* is unparalleled, but for the wider use of *incautus* qualifying an abstract noun meaning 'rash', cf. Cic. *Att.* 8.9a.1, Sen. *Contr.* 2.1.38, Plin. *NH* 9.59, Sil. 2.278 and see further *TLL* 7.1.852.16–23.

Agrippina here ends her impassioned speech, reconciling her quarrels with her son with her unconditional love for him. She suggests that such utterances as her threat to support Britannicus (for which cf. 14.2–3) were merely the result of impassioned arguments with her son (of the kind which all parents might be expected to have with their children), which she perhaps saw as being designed to encourage her son to conduct himself in a manner more befitting of a *princeps* (Rudich 1993: 19, Drinkwater 2019: 176). Her final remark (*quibus...non possim*) serves as a poignant reminder to her listeners that the deposition of Nero would be detrimental to her interests.

21.6 commotis qui aderant ultroque spiritus eius mitigantibus conloquium filii exposcit: 'although those who were present were deeply moved [sc. by these words] and were seeking spontaneously to calm [*OLD mitigare* 4] her anger, she demanded a dialogue with her son'. The ablative absolute has adversative force (K-S 1.777, Woodcock 1959: 35); in addition, the verb *commouere* (with its connotations of 'stimulating someone to action' as well as 'moving or affecting someone emotionally' [*OLD* 8, 10]) may serve as a dramatic cue for the *peripeteia* which results from the speech (for which see p. 70 and n. 321).

Since Nero did not himself hear Agrippina's defence speech, Agrippina requested from Seneca and Burrus a private meeting with Nero at which she could both reassure him that the accusations were false (a fact to which her witnesses would testify) and demand that he prosecute her accusers for *calumnia* (malicious prosecution) under the *Lex Remmia* (for which cf. Gaius *Inst.* 4.176, *Dig.* 48.16.1.5 and see further Camiñas 1990: 117–33, Rutledge 2001: 303). For *conloquium* governing an objective genitive of the person to mean 'a dialogue with someone', see *TLL* 3.1652.10–14. *Conloquium alicuius exposcere* is unparalleled, but cf. 15.14.2, Nep. *Dat.* 10.3 *conloquium alicuius petere*, *Hist.* 2.41.1 *conloquium alicuius postulare*.

M's *ultroque sp̄m eius mitigantibus* is unintelligible; the letter *m̄* (together with the feint macron) appears to be the work of a later hand. Intelligible, contextually apposite Latin is

⁴¹⁶ Heinsius' emendation of M's *desunt* to *deerunt* is therefore unnecessary, and eliminates the desirable vividness of the present subjunctive.

⁴¹⁷ Acidalius' (1607) *impotentia* for transmitted *impatientia* is superfluous and accepted by no editor; while *impotentia* governing an objective gen. rei meaning 'the impetuosity of an emotion' is attested (cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 4.34 and see further *TLL* 7.1.672.50–8), *impatientia* is also attested in this sense and there are good parallels for the transmitted expression *impatientia caritatis*.

restored by Leiden BPL 16B's *ultraque spiritus eius mitigantibus*, accepted by all editors; it is highly likely that M's *sp.* was a remnant of a lost *spiritus*, although the meaning of the later hand's *m* is obscure.

ubi nihil pro innocentia, quasi diffideret, nec <de> beneficiis, quasi exprobraret, disseruit: 'in which [*OLD ubi* 7] she said nothing as regards [*OLD pro* 16] her innocence, as though she were diffident, nor did she speak about her services to Nero, as though she were implying reproach'. Agrippina is characterised as showing considerable tact in convincing Nero of her innocence: the fact that she does not intend to give a defence speech, as she did before Seneca, Burrus and the imperial freedmen at her house, suggests to Nero that she has no case to answer; the fact that she takes care to ensure that none of her utterances could be construed as reproachful suggests that she is both mindful of his sensitivity to reproach (for which see 25.2n.) and intent upon amicable relations, further rendering the allegations of conspiracy against him incredible. See further Bauman 1992: 198.

In the light of the awkwardness of the paradosis, Acidalius (1607) conjectured <de> *beneficiis*, accepted by some modern editors (Fisher, Andresen, Goelzer and Heubner). The conjecture is probably necessary, since the syntax (given *nec*) requires us to take *disseruit* as the verb of both clauses (*nihil...diffideret* and *nec...exprobraret*) in an *apo koinou* construction (H-S 834–5), understanding it as transitive in the first (*nihil pro innocentia...disseruit*) and intransitive in the second (*nec beneficiis...exprobraret*). Without a preposition, the syntactic relation of *beneficiis* to intransitive *disseruit* is obscure, whereas intransitive *disserere de aliquo* is an intelligible and attested expression (*TLL* 5.1.1461.69–1462.2).

sed ultionem in delatores et praemia amicis obtinuit: for the characteristically Tacitean constructional *uariatio*, whereby *ultionem* governs *in* + acc., but *praemia* a bare dative of advantage, see Draeger 1882: 105, Sörbom 1935: 81–2. For *ultio in* + acc. pers., 'revenge against someone', cf. 1.48.1 *parata in defectores ultione*, *Hist.* 4.40.3. The usage is not attested before Tacitus, but perhaps developed in the light of *uindicare in* + acc. pers., for which cf. 4.15.3 *et quia priore anno in C. Silanum uindicatum erat*, *Hist.* 4.45.2.⁴¹⁸ *Ultionem obtinere* is unparalleled, but for *obtinere* governing an abstract object, cf. Cic. *Fam.* 4.13.2 *obtinemus ipsius Caesaris summam erga nos humanitatem*, Curt. 10.6.8 *ut uictoriam partam...obtinere possimus* and see further *TLL* 9.2.286.22–35. *Ultionem* here is pointed in the light of 19.3 *spe ultionis oblata*; Silana's intention was turned on its head. This sentence anticipates the details of the offices awarded to Agrippina's senatorial and equestrian protégés (22.1n.) and those of the penalties meted out to her *calumniatores* (22.2n.).

22.1 praefectura annonae Faenio Rufo: this is the first appearance of the *eques* L. Faenius Rufus (*PIR*² F 102) in the historical record. On the *praefectura annonae* see introduction p. 15 and n. 79. That Faenius Rufus replaced Seneca's father-in-law Pompeius Paulinus, the dedicatee of *De Breuitate Vitae*, who was perhaps around 65 years of age at this point, is plausible (Griffin 1962: 104–5, 110–11, 1976: 85–6) but cannot conclusively be proved (Williams 2003: 20). Perhaps, as Griffin (1976: 85) argues, the idea that Nero was compelled to cut short Paulinus' tenure of the office in order to secure it for Agrippina's protégé would have provided the ideal context for a Senecan consolatory treatise on the benefits of

⁴¹⁸ *Ulcisci in* + acc. pers. is not attested until the fourth century; cf. Bibl. Vulg. *Psalm.* 98.8 *ulciscens in omnes adinuationes eorum* and see further *TLL* 7.1.749.75–6.

retirement.⁴¹⁹ Faenius Rufus constructed granaries (the *horrea Faeniana*) during his tenure of the office (cf. *CIL* 6.37796, a brick-stamp from the granaries giving his full name, with Cairns 1999: 218, Ash 2018: 230) and at the end of his tenure in 62 was judged to have managed the corn supply efficiently (14.51.2). In the same year, following Burrus' death, he was appointed to the office of praetorian prefect (ibid.), which he held jointly with Tigellinus, who undermined his position by stressing to Nero his former friendship with Agrippina (14.57.1), prompting the emperor to remove him from office and retain Tigellinus as sole prefect. Perhaps in revenge for his dismissal from the praetorian prefecture, he joined the Pisonian conspiracy in 65 (15.50.3), escorting Piso to the praetorian camp (15.53.3) before being denounced to Nero by his fellow conspirator Flavius Scaevinus (15.66.1–2) and duly executed (15.68.1). See also 15.58.3–4, 61.3, 16.12.1, *CIL* 15.1136, Demougin 1988: 99, 1992: 478–9, Drinkwater 2019: 177–8.

Tacitus perhaps juxtaposes *praefectura annonae* with *Faenio* to allude ironically to the gentile name's folk etymologies, with the name supposedly derived either from *faenum* (hay) or *faenus* (interest on loans, profiteering);⁴²⁰ both these etymologies are exploited at 14.51.2 *Faenium Rufum ex uulgi fauore, quia rem frumentariam sine quaestu tractabat*. On onomastic irony elsewhere in Tacitus, see introduction pp. 37–8.

M's *senio rufo* is meaningless; Leiden BPL 16B conjectured *fenio rufo*, easily interpreted as a medieval spelling of *Faenio Rufo*, which the cited inscriptions confirm.

cura ludorum, qui a Caesare parabantur, Arruntio Stellae...permittuntur: for *ludos parare*, 'to hold games', see *OLD parare* 7. Of the games which Stella was appointed by Nero to oversee, nothing else is known; this prefecture, not attested elsewhere, was probably an exceptional office created by the emperor on an *ad hoc* basis, and was not part of the regular equestrian (or senatorial) career progression (Demougin 1992: 433). The responsibility for overseeing games at Rome (including those held as part of the ancient festivals) under the Principate usually fell to the praetors (cf. 11.11.1, *Agr.* 6.4, Dio 54.2.3), with some games (including those commemorating triumphs) being overseen by consuls (cf. *RG* 9.1, 22.2); see further Talbert 1984: 59–64, 276–7, Shaw-Smith 1997: 327.

For L. Arruntius Stella, cf. *CIL* 15.7150 (which gives his *praenomen*) and see further *PIR*² A 1150, Pflaum 1961: 1027; in literature his name is attested only here. Nothing else is known of his career; he was probably an equestrian rather than a senator. Perhaps he was the grandfather of the L. Arruntius Stella who was friends with Martial and Statius (for whom cf. *Mart.* 1.61.4, 8.78.3, *Stat. Silv.* 1.pf.1, 1.2.176–7 and see further *PIR*² A 1151) who was adlected into the Senate under the Flavians (Syme 1958: 2.666, Eck 1970: 33 n.14, 108 n.87), becoming praetor in 93 and a suffect consul early in Trajan's principate (Eck 1970: 108). The family's origin is probably Patavian (*Mart.* 1.61.4 with Syme 1958: 1.88 nn.4–5).

Aegyptus C<laudio> Balbillo: Demougin (1992: 449) suggests that this *eques* was a Romanised provincial from the Greek East (probably Ephesus in Asia) who was accepted

⁴¹⁹ For the women of the imperial *domus* as a source of patronage, see further Saller 1982: 64–6, Bauman 1992: 137, 171, 198, Wallace-Hadrill 1996: 302–5.

⁴²⁰ References to hay (*faenum*) were proverbial (Otto 1965: 93, 133, Gowers 2012: 161), both in the distinction between men (fed on corn [*frumentum*]) and beasts (fed on hay), for which cf. *Cic. de Orat.* 2.233, and in the likening of men of unpredictable temperament (ironic in the somewhat timid Faenius' case; cf. 15.66.1–2) to bulls which had hay wrapped around their horns as a warning, for which cf. *Hor. Serm.* 1.4.34, *Plut. Quaest. Rom.* 71, *Crass.* 7.8.

into the equestrian order. For a summary of his career (which included a procuratorship in Asia, as recorded by *Inscr. Eph.* 3041–2) up to his appointment to the Egyptian prefecture, see Pflaum 1961: 34–7, Demougin 1992: 447–9.⁴²¹ His retention of the Egyptian prefecture until at least the end of 59 is confirmed by *Inscr. Fayoum* 1.99 (from Theadelphia in Egypt, dated 11th October 59). He was perhaps in retirement at Rome in the early 60s when Seneca wrote the *Naturales Quaestiones*, in which he is cited (*Nat.* 4a.2.13) as the eyewitness of a battle between dolphins and crocodiles at the mouth of the Nile. Balbillus' friendship with Agrippina was perhaps the result of familial connections with the *domus*; one of his nieces, Ennia Thrasylla (for whom cf. 6.45.3, Suet. *Cal.* 12.2, 26.1, Dio 58.28.4) was married to Tiberius' praetorian prefect Sutorius Macro and sought to marry Agrippina's brother, the future emperor Gaius. Cf. also Plin. *NH* 19.3, *AE* 1924: 78, *CIL* 3.6707;⁴²² see further *PIR*² C 813, Crook 1955: 44, Bastianini 1975: 273, Devijver 1976: 124, Griffin 1976: 86, Demougin 1988: 384, 727, Woodman 2017: 270–1, Davenport 2019: 308, 320–1, Drinkwater 2019: 178.⁴²³

M's *c. balbillo* is contradicted by epigraphic evidence. *CIL* 3.6707 gives the prefect's gentile name Claudius, confirming Ritter's (1863: 114) conjecture *C<laudio>*, accepted by all modern editors; this restores the convention in this sequence of clauses whereby the equestrian *protégés* of Agrippina are named by their *nomina gentilicia* and *cognomina*. Perhaps a scribe unfamiliar with abbreviation conventions wrote *c.* for Claudius.

Syria P. Anteio destinata: P. Anteius (*PIR*² A 731) was a consular senator under Nero; the *terminus ante quem* for his suffect consulship is 51 (Gallivan 1978: 421), the year in which he was appointed legate of Dalmatia (*CIL* 3.1.1977), an office which he probably fulfilled until 54, during which time he oversaw the rebuilding of the legionary headquarters at Burnum. Nothing else is known about his career. Tacitus (16.14.1) suggests that his friendship with Agrippina led to Nero's hatred of him; he was forced to commit suicide early in 66 after being accused by the *delator* Antistius Sosianus of writing a libellous biography of Nero's Stoic victim Ostorius Scapula (16.14.2–3 with Griffin 1976: 245, Levick ap. Cornell 2013: 1.535). See further Jagenteufel 1958: 34, Wilkes 1969: 444, Griffin 1976: 86–7, Goodyear 1981: 202, Barrett 1996: 177, Fratantuono 2018: 82.

For *destinare aliquid alicui*, 'to earmark something [sc. an office vel sim.] for someone', cf. 6.40.2 *Blaesis sacerdotia... destinata*, *Hist.* 1.10.3, *Agr.* 40.1, Liv. 21.22.1, Plin. *Paneg.* 57.1 and see further G-G 281ε, *TLL* 5.1.759.52–59.

M reads *Syria pantelo destinata*; *pantelo* is a *vox nihili*, and the sense requires a proper noun. Lipsius' (1574 ad loc.) *P. Anteio* is accepted by all modern editors, positing a corruption of 'i' to 'l' which is common in Beneventan minuscule;⁴²⁴ that the senator's name was P.

⁴²¹ On the Egyptian prefecture, see further introduction pp. 15–17.

⁴²² This inscription (from Smyrna) gives the equestrian's full name but no other information.

⁴²³ For the question as to whether this Ti. Claudius Balbillus is related to, or the same person as, the ambassador of the Alexandrians to Claudius in 41, or the astrologer who lived in Rome under Nero and Vespasian (for whom cf. Suet. *Nero* 36.1, Dio 66.9.2), see Crook 1955: 44, Pflaum 1961: 37, Demougin 1988: 727, 759, 1992: 449. That his father's full name was Tiberius Claudius Thrasyllus prompted Crook, Pflaum and Demougin (loc. cit.) to argue that his father was the astrologer Thrasyllus (for whom cf. 6.20.2 with Woodman 2017: 173, 270, Suet. *Aug.* 98.4, *Tib.* 62.3, *Cal.* 19.3) who was a friend of Tiberius; this suggestion is plausible but speculative.

⁴²⁴ On the palaeographical plausibility of M's corruption see Newton 2020a: 122. The scribe of Leiden BPL 16B improved the paradosis to *p. antello*, but **Antellus* is not an attested gentile name or *cognomen*.

Anteius is confirmed by 16.14.1 (where M reads *p. anteio*, followed by the accusative *anteium*) and *CIL* 3.1.1977.

et uariis mox artibus elusus, ad postremum in urbe retentus est: for the instrumental ablative *uariis artibus*, ‘by varied stratagems’, cf. 4.1.2 [sc. *Seianus*] *mox Tiberium uariis artibus deuinxit*, 12.68.2, *Hist.* 2.8.1, 101.2, *Sen. Ben.* 1.1.5 *uariis artibus necessitates properantes elusit*. For *aliquem eludere*, ‘to defeat someone’s expectations’, cf. 15.10.1 *eludi Parthus tractu bello poterat*, 16.3.2, *Hist.* 4.86.1, *Cic. Verr.* 2.3.92 and see further *TLL* 5.2.430.2–43. For *ad postremum*, ‘finally’, cf. 46.3, 2.45.4, 16.21.1 and see further *TLL* 10.2.216.59–80.

Nero perhaps devised a strategy (with the aid of Seneca and Burrus) whereby Anteius, like Agricola at *Agr.* 40.1, was earmarked for the legateship of Syria (receiving the *codicilli* appointing him, for which see 20.2n.) but never sent there; Nero thereby placated Agrippina while ensuring that Corbulo’s opportunities for glory were not diminished by a rival. This was achieved by retaining the cautious and aged Ummidius Quadratus (8.2) as legate of Syria until his death in 60 (Syme 1981b: 132), at which point, with Agrippina no longer alive, Corbulo could be appointed governor without opposition (14.26.2); in the light of the rivalry between Nero and his mother, he would not have wished one of Agrippina’s *protégés* to overshadow Corbulo. For this interpretation, see further Brunt 1959: 554–5, Griffin 1976: 245. Griffin (1976: 86–7) additionally suggests that Anteius would have been a far younger and more energetic legate than Ummidius, a view supported by his achievements in Dalmatia immediately prior to his nomination.⁴²⁵ Anteius remained at Rome in retirement until his suicide.

13.22.2 at Silana in exilium acta; Calvisius quoque et Iturius relegantur: the *uariatio* of the two expressions meaning ‘driven into exile’, *in exilium acta* and *relegantur*, perhaps reflects differences in penalty, whereby Silana was sentenced to capital exile (*deportatio*), involving loss of property and social status as well as banishment (Ulp. *Dig.* 48.22.14.1), while Iturius and Calvisius were sentenced merely to *relegatio*, resulting in their being banished to a place (usually an island) more than twenty miles from the *pomerium* (Ulp. *Dig.* 1.12.1.4) but allowed to retain their property, rank and citizenship (Rutledge 2001: 151; for the difference between these two types of exile, see further Garnsey 1970: 111–17, Peachin 1994: 322–4, Woodman 2018: 147–8).⁴²⁶ If Silana’s penalty was truly of greater severity than those of Iturius and Calvisius, this would probably reflect the fact that the malicious prosecution was conceived by Silana as an act of revenge (cf. 19.2, 14.12.4), whereas Iturius and Calvisius were merely clients suborned by her (Rutledge loc. cit.). For *aliquem in exilium agere*, ‘to drive someone into exile,’ cf. 4.63.2 *Atilius in exilium actus est*, 12.52.1, 16.20.1, 33.1, *Ascon. in Pis.* p. 15.21, *Plin. NH* 7.111. Immediately after Agrippina’s death in March

⁴²⁵ Energy was not necessarily a desirable trait in a legate of Syria, perhaps on account of the province’s proximity to the volatile Parthians, with whom relations were best managed with subtle tact rather than violence, as well as the presence of three Roman legions in the province, which could potentially be exploited (as Vespasian later did) in insurrections against the emperor. Anteius’ perceived energetic character might have dissuaded Nero from sending him to the province (as Agricola’s did Domitian). See further Bowersock 1973: 133–5, Syme 1981b: 128–9, Wheeler 1996: 265–9, Dąbrowa 1998: 277–96, Woodman-Kraus 2014: 290.

⁴²⁶ One should nonetheless be cautious in drawing such conclusions given Tacitus’ notoriously imprecise use of legal terminology, which is often used (for variation’s sake) in senses different from its strict technical sense; variations in terminology, therefore, may not reflect accurately the true differences in legal practice. See especially Garnsey 1970: 120 n.2 (discussing 4.63.2 *Atilius in exilium actus est*), Woodman-Martin 1996: 467, Woodman 2018: 148 (discussing Tacitus’ non-technical use of *relegare* to denote capital exile at 3.68.2); see also Woodman 2017: 319 s.v. ‘technical...language’.

59, Nero demanded that Silana, Iturius and Calvisius be recalled from exile (14.12.4); Silana died immediately upon her return to Italian soil at Tarentum, and never reached Rome (ibid.). Nothing is known of their places of exile; given that Silana died at Tarentum, it is conceivable that she was in exile in a territory in the south-eastern Mediterranean.

de Atimeto supplicium sumptum: the harshness of Atimetus' sentence compared with those meted out to the other *delatores* may reflect his stigmatised libertine status (which is likely to have caused him to be treated less sympathetically in judicial proceedings); see further Garnsey 1970: 119–20, 262–3, Rutledge 2001: 32, Mouritsen 2011: 66–7. His severe sentence may also reflect his pivotal role in the plot, as the *delator* who denounced Agrippina to Nero's close friend, the actor Paris. For the onomastic irony surrounding his name, see 19.4n.

ualidior apud libidines principis Paride quam ut poena adficeretur: 'since Paris was too influential a figure in the emperor's debaucheries to be liable to punishment'. in this *phrase à rallonge*, the precise connection which this ablative absolute appendage has with the preceding clause is deliberately left unclear; a plausible interpretation is that Atimetus was punished severely in place of Paris (as a token gesture to Agrippina) because the latter was too close to the emperor to face any penalty (Drinkwater 2019: 232). For *ualidus apud* + acc., 'to be influential among a given group', cf. 1.57.1 *ualidior apud eos Arminio* and see further *TLL* 2.343.46–59. For *aliquem poena adficere*, 'to make someone liable to punishment, see *TLL* 1.1210.47–50; to the parallels there cited, add 11.35.3, 14.28.2 *ne grauiore poena adficeretur*, *Sen. Ira* 2.27.4.

Plautus ad praesens silentio transmissus est: *ad praesens* contrasts with 22.1 *ad postremum*, emphasising that while the narrative of one Neronian victim (P. Anteus) is concluded here, the fate of Plautus remains undecided; this closing sentence therefore ominously foreshadows the fate of Rubellius Plautus at 14.22.1 (for which see also 19.3n.).⁴²⁷ Tacitus gives the impression that although Nero sought to remove a prominent dynastic rival to his Principate, he had not yet acquired the courage to bring about his exile or execution (Rudich 1993: 20).

For *aliquem uel aliquid silentio transmittere*, 'to pass over sb./sthg. in silence', a favourite expression of Tacitus, cf. 1.13.4 *Scaurum...silentio transmisit* (with Goodyear 1972: 188), 14.12.1 *Thrasea Paetus silentio uel breui adsensu priores adulationes transmittere solitus*, *Hist.* 1.13.2, 4.9.2, 31.2; for the wider use of *transmittere* in the sense 'to pass over something' (almost in the sense *praetermittere*), often with the implication 'in silence', cf. 49.4, 4.21.2, 55.2, 15.31.1, *Sil.* 7.162 and see further *OLD transmittere* 8. It is probable that *transmittere* acquired this sense during the first century AD, hence its first attestation in Silius; see further Goodyear loc. cit.

⁴²⁷ For *ad praesens*, 'for the present', cf. 4.40.7 *omittam ad praesens referre*, 14.6.1, *Hist.* 1.44.2 and see further G-G 1168bα, *TLL* 10.2.847.50–5.

Pallas' and Burrus' Alleged Conspiracy, Theatrical Licence and the End of 55 (23.1–24.2)

Tacitus concludes his narrative of the year 55 with brief but dramatic expositions of three unrelated incidents which nonetheless provide a satisfying and coherent conclusion to the preceding accounts of divine anger against Nero (17.1) and conspiracy within the *domus* (18.1–22.2) which dominate the later part of that year's narrative, while simultaneously looking forward to the unruliness of theatrical spectators and gratuitous acts of *saevitia* on the emperor's part which characterise the start of the narrative of 56 (25.1–4). He thereby achieves a smooth transition from the events of 55 to those of 56 through his skilful arrangement of material.⁴²⁸ The quashing of another farcical allegation, that whereby an otherwise obscure *delator* Paetus accuses the freedman secretary *a rationibus* Pallas (*PIR*² P 70) and the praetorian prefect Burrus of conspiring to depose Nero and install Cornelius Sulla (a descendant of the republican *dictator*) as *princeps*, provides Nero and his *consilium* with renewed impetus for checking *delatio* (23.1–2). Tacitus thereby concludes the theme of failed conspiracies; he also achieves a ring composition with the start of the narrative of 55 (11.1–2), in which Nero (both in his speech to the Senate and through the restoration of Plautius Lateranus' senatorial rank) makes a commitment to the checking of vexatious *delatio*, which had been an unwelcome feature of the previous Claudian regime (4.2). The very end of the year's narrative, signalled by the characteristic expression *fine anni* (24.1n.), includes (as is conventional) details of two events which are not sufficiently significant from a historical point of view to warrant exposition in the main body of the year's narrative but nonetheless fulfil a valuable narratological function: Nero's removal of soldiers from theatres (24.1n.) provides the Roman people with an impression of *ciuilitas*, *clementia* and even *munificentia* on his part (recalling the themes of 11.2 at the start of the year's narrative) but looks forward ominously to the unrest of 56, which results in the reintroduction of cohorts and expulsion of *pantomimi* in the following year (25.4n.), while his lustration of the city in response to Jupiter's and Minerva's temples' being struck by lightning looks back to his transgressive act of parricide (17.1n. *iram deum*) and forward to his transgressive acts of *saevitia* (culminating in Julius Montanus' being forced to commit suicide) in the subsequent narrative of 56 (25.1–3).

The accusation against Pallas and Burrus is self-evidently farcical: there is no plausible explanation as to why the unlikely trio of Pallas, Burrus and Sulla should be implicated in the one conspiracy,⁴²⁹ and the reader's impression of the affair's absurdity is heightened when he ascertains that the *delator* Paetus is himself of ill-repute for profiteering from state confiscations of property (23.1n.) and that Burrus awkwardly fulfils the role of judge despite being implicated in the conspiracy (23.2n.). Although Tacitus (20.2n.) discounts Fabius Rusticus' account of Burrus' participation in a previous conspiracy to marry Agrippina to Rubellius Plautus, and thereby to depose Nero, Fabius' account perhaps reflected a popular rumour whereby Burrus' loyalty to Nero was wavering following the death of Britannicus (cf. Dio 61.7.5). It is possible that the *delator* Paetus took advantage of the questioning of Burrus' loyalty to make a fresh accusation against him, ostensibly in the hope of securing his deposition from the praetorian prefecture (Rudich 1993: 21, Rutledge 2001: 253). Nonetheless, the accusation has some serious implications for the direction of Nero's principate: Nero grows increasingly suspicious of the republican *dictator's* descendant Cornelius Sulla, suspecting that he harbours anti-imperial sentiment, a fact which plays a

⁴²⁸ On this aspect of Tacitean narrative technique see Ginsburg 1981: 128–30, Woodman-Martin 1996: 268, Bartera 2011: 161–81.

⁴²⁹ There is no compelling reason to deem Burrus an ally of Pallas; see further Drinkwater 2019: 178.

major part in the emperor's decision to exile him to Massilia in 58 (47.1–3) and to have him assassinated in 62 (14.57.1–59.4).⁴³⁰ Although Pallas had been dismissed from the secretariat *a rationibus* earlier in 55 (14.1), his continued insolence and arrogance (23.2n.) remained burdensome to Nero and his *domus*, a fact which (combined with his vast fortune and unwelcome status as Agrippina's former lover [14.2.2]) perhaps encouraged Nero to have him executed shortly after Sulla in 62 (14.65.1).

23.1 deferuntur dehinc consensisse Pallas ac Burrus: for the personal passive of *deferre* governing an infinitive to mean 'someone is denounced for doing something', a construction attested only in Tacitus' *Annales*, cf. 2.27.1 *Libo Drusus defertur moliri res novas*, 3.22.1, 6.19.1 and see further G-G 267Bβ4, *TLL* 5.1.317.71–4. The construction is derived from that whereby *deferre* governs an accusative and infinitive to mean 'to denounce someone for doing something' (*TLL* 5.1.317.64–7), not used by Tacitus.

M. Antonius Pallas (*PIR*² P 70), the freedman of Claudius and protégé of Agrippina (2.2), fell from favour at court earlier in the year, when Nero (14.1) dismissed him from the imperial secretariat *a rationibus*. Although Pallas was now distanced from the imperial administration, his previous eminence and the likelihood of his being angered by his removal would have rendered plausible the accusations of conspiracy levelled against him (Oost 1958: 135, Rutledge 2001: 111, Drinkwater 2019: 178).

ut: for *consentire* governing a final clause, introduced by *ut*, meaning 'to formulate a conspiracy whereby', cf. Plin. *NH* 14.64 *Tiberius Caesar dicebat consensisse medicos ut nobilitatem Surrentino darent*, Hygin. *Fab.* 194.1 and see further *TLL* 4.399.82–400.2. This usage is a post-Augustan variant of the more common use of *consentire* governing an infinitive in the same sense, attested from Cicero onwards, for which cf. *Germ.* 34.2, Cic. *Phil.* 2.17, Sen. *Otio* 7.2 and see further *TLL* 4.399.75–81. The use of *consentire* governing a final clause perhaps developed on the analogy of *coniurare* and *conspirare* governing final clauses in a similar sense; see further *TLL* 4.341.1–5, 502.6–11.

Cornelius Sulla: for the consular senator Faustus Cornelius Sulla Felix, cf. 12.52.1, 13.47.1–3, 14.57.1, 3–4, ps.-Sen. *Oct.* 439, 465, Frontin. *Aqu.* 13, Suet. *Claud.* 27.2, *CIL* 6.2037, 2039–40 and see further *PIR*² C 1464. His full name is given by the *Acta Arualia* (*CIL* 6.2037),⁴³¹ which, together with 12.52.1 and Frontin. *Aqu.* 13, recall his ordinary consulship of 52, to which Claudius appointed him for the entire year (Gallivan 1978: 425), perhaps more on account of his being his protégé and son-in-law than because of his political acumen.⁴³² He was unlikely to have been much older than thirty when consul (Syme 1958: 2.572), and was known for his apathy and lack of ambition (47.1 *socors ingenium*, 47.3 *nullius ausi capax*, 14.57.3 *inops*).⁴³³ In addition to being Claudius' son-in-law, he was Nero's first cousin, being the son of Domitia Lepida (Nero's paternal aunt) and her second husband Faustus Cornelius Sulla (*PIR*² C 1459); he was, therefore, also the step-brother of Messalina. He was the last surviving descendant of the republican *dictator* L. Cornelius Sulla, whose statesmanship he can hardly have inherited (47.1, 3, 14.57.3 with Syme loc. cit.). Tacitus' characterisation of him invites audiences to question the allegations against him of

⁴³⁰ See further Rudich 1993: 20–1.

⁴³¹ He was a *frater Arualis* in 55.

⁴³² He married Antonia (Claudius' daughter by his second wife Aelia Paetina) following the death of her first husband Cn. Pompeius Magnus and was therefore Claudius' son-in-law; cf. Suet. *Claud.* 12.1, 27.2, Dio 60.5.21 and see further *PIR*² A 886. The couple produced a son who died in early childhood (Suet. loc. cit.).

⁴³³ As was another prominent victim of the regime, Junius Silanus (1.1).

conspiracy, although one should consider that Sulla's apparent lethargy may merely have been a product of *dissimulatio*, intended to veil his treasonous ambitions (Drinkwater 2019: 74–5, 191). Nero's deep distrust of him (47.1) was almost certainly engendered by his descent from distinguished republican nobility. Nero exiled him to Massilia in 58 (47.3, ps.-Sen. *Oct.* 465) when the imperial freedman Graptus accused him of plotting an ambush against Nero at the Mulvian Bridge (47.2); he remained there until Nero ordered his death (at Tigellinus' urging) in 62.⁴³⁴ Assassins murdered Sulla at his Massilian dinner-table, and brought his severed head to Rome (57.4). Nero justified Sulla's murder and that of Rubellius Plautus (for whom see 19.3n.) in a letter to the Senate (59.4), in which he declared them both public enemies. In a mocking display of *crudelitas*, the Neronian Senate (*ibid.*) posthumously expelled them both from its ranks.

claritudine generis: for *claritudo generis*, 'the illustrious nature of one's lineage,' found only in Tacitus' *Annales*, cf. 45.2, 2.43.5, 4.13.3, 44.3, 12.6.1, 14.47.1, 16.7.1; for analogous *claritas generis*, cf. Ascon. *Scaur.* p. 20.16, Quint. *Inst.* 8.6.7, Plin. *Ep.* 4.9.4, *Paneg.* 58.3, 70.2.

Claritudo and *claritas* are synonyms (*TLL* 3.1270.8–9); the distribution of *claritudo* in extant Latin suggests that it is an elevated, archaising synonym, attractive to historians (*TLL* 3.1270.6–7), of the common (and Ciceronian) *claritas*. *Claritudo* is first attested in Cato's *Origines* (F28C); after Sisenna (F15C) it is absent from extant Latin for almost half a century,⁴³⁵ until it is adopted by the archaising Sallust (*Iug.* 2.4, 7.4), who avoids *claritas*. Thereafter, it appears only in certain historians and archaising writers; cf. Vell. 2.11.3, 17.2, 130.1, Gell. 3.7.19, 6.5.1, Fronto p. 98.7, Apul. *Florid.* 16, 17.⁴³⁶ In the minor works, Tacitus uses only *claritas* (*Agr.* 45.3, *Germ.* 34.2); in the *Historiae*, he introduces *claritudo* (1.85.1, 2.78.2, 3.86.1), employing it as often as he uses *claritas*.⁴³⁷ In the *Annales*, *claritudo* outnumbers *claritas* significantly, by a ratio of 31:2 (*claritas* appears only at 2.64.3 and 16.30.1). This is suggestive of Tacitus' development of a strong preference for the archaising *claritudo* over *claritas* (akin to that of Sallust) during the course of his *oeuvre* (Löfstedt 1948: 1, Heubner 1968: 274, Goodyear 1972: 232, Woodman 2018: 123), in line with his greater archaising tendencies (for which see introduction p. 33 and n. 207). For the adoption of the suffix *-tudo* as an archaising and elevated equivalent of the common *-tas*,⁴³⁸ cf. Tacitus' use of *firmitudo* (an archaism by his time)⁴³⁹ at 3.6.2, 4.8.2, 72.1, 6.46.5, 14.49.3, 15.62.2 as a replacement for the common *firmitas* (which he uses at 4.63.1, *Dial.* 23.3, *Hist.* 2.34.2 before discarding).⁴⁴⁰

adfinitate Claudii, cui per nuptias Antoniae gener erat: for *adfinitas* governing a defining gen. pers. meaning 'connection to someone by marriage' (*OLD* 1a), cf. Ter. *Andr.* 247, Cic.

⁴³⁴ Tigellinus believed that Sulla, while at Massilia, was sufficiently close to the German legions (stationed on the Rhine, at least three hundred miles away) to orchestrate a coup against Nero.

⁴³⁵ Its absence from the entire Ciceronian corpus is conspicuous.

⁴³⁶ Velleius, Gellius and Fronto avoid *claritas*, while Apuleius uses it twice (*Mund.* 3, 26).

⁴³⁷ For *claritas*, cf. *Hist.* 1.49.3, 3.39.2, 4.15.2.

⁴³⁸ Cf. Gell. 17.2.19 'sanctitas' quoque et 'sanctimonia' non minus Latine dicuntur, sed nescio quid maioris dignitatis est uerbum 'sanctitudo' and see further Löfstedt 1948: 1.

⁴³⁹ Relatively common in Cicero, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and Caesar (with 7, 6 and 3 attestations respectively), but used only by the elder Pliny (once at *NH* 13.61) and Tacitus among imperial writers.

⁴⁴⁰ *Firmitas* is common in writers of less elevated prose (Valerius Maximus, Columella, the elder and younger Senecas, the younger Pliny and the pseudo-Quintilianic *Declamationes*) throughout the first and early second centuries AD.

Red. Sen. 15, *Caes. Civ.* 3.83.1; for analogous *adfinitas cum* + abl. pers., cf. *Hist.* 3.4.1 *tamquam adfinitatis cum Vitellio meminisset*, *Cic. Brut.* 98.

Cui is Rhenanus' emendation (1533: ad loc.) of M's *qui*, which affords no sense in the context.

ad imperium uocaretur: for *aliquem ad imperium uocare*, 'to call someone to the Principate', cf. *Hist.* 1.15.1, *SHA Maximin.* 16.1. Unless the conspirators had conceived of a full-scale revolution whereby the Republic was restored, which is not the impression given here by Tacitus, Sulla would have been an implausible (and dynastically weak) replacement for Nero since his relation to the established *domus* was tenuous; he was related to the *Gens Claudia* only by marriage to Antonia, although as the son of Domitia Lepida (the granddaughter of Augustus' sister Octavia), he was a great-great nephew of Augustus. Dynastically, he was a far less suitable candidate for the Principate than Rubellius Plautus (19.3n.), who, as a great-grandson of Tiberius and a great-great grandson of Augustus' sister Octavia, was a direct descendant of the Julian line. See further Rudich 1993: 20–1, Rutledge 2001: 111.

eius accusationis auctor exstitit Paetus quidam: for *auctor alicuius exstare*, 'to be the originator of something', cf. *Liv.* 1.18.2, 44.22.6, *Vell.* 2.68.2 and see further *TLL* 5.2.1935.32–34.⁴⁴¹

For the *delator* Paetus (of uncertain rank), see *PIR*² P 60, Oost 1958: 135, Rudich 1993: 20–1, Rutledge 2001: 111, 252–3. He is referred to in extant literature only here (*quidam* perhaps ensures that readers distinguish him from the more celebrated *Paeti* among the aristocracy), and he leaves no trace in the epigraphic record.

exercendis apud aerarium sectionibus famosus: 'infamous for carrying out auctions of property confiscated by the treasury'. Paetus was a known *sector*, who bought the confiscated estates of those sentenced to capital punishment at state auctions, and sold them for a profit (*OLD sectio* 2). Perhaps the implausible accusation against Pallas and Burrus was motivated by a self-centred desire on Paetus' part to profit from the sale of their confiscated property (which would have been of considerable value; see Woodman 2004: 256 n. 46); he probably hoped that their conviction (ostensibly under a revived *Lex maiestatis*)⁴⁴² would result in their each being sentenced to either capital exile or death, both of which mandated confiscation of property (Garnsey 1970: 112–13). Rudich (1993: 20) and Rutledge (2001: 253) both speculatively suggest that Paetus sought to reclaim from Pallas money embezzled from the treasury during his tenure of the secretariat *a rationibus*.⁴⁴³ The sole plausible reason for Burrus' implication in the conspiracy is that his loyalty to Nero had been suspected following Iturius' and Calvisius' accusations (20.2n., Rudich 1993: 21); Paetus thereby took advantage of Burrus' weak position at court and his supporter Agrippina's temporary fall from favour.

For *famosus* governing an ablative of cause in the negative sense 'infamous for', cf. 3.7.2 *famosam ueneficiis Martinam*, 6.30.1, 11.25.3, 16.14.1, *Hist.* 4.41.2, *Amm.* 15.3.8 and see further G-G 450β, *TLL* 6.1.257.1–5. *Sectiones exercere* ('to carry out auctions of confiscated property') is unparalleled, but cf. *commercium exercere* (Mela 2.10, *Plin. NH* 12.54); for

⁴⁴¹ For the wider predicative use of *exstare* as a synonym of the copula *esse*, see *TLL* 5.2.1935.35–46.

⁴⁴² For possible attempts to revive the *Lex maiestatis* early in Nero's principate, see 10.2.

⁴⁴³ For suspicions of financial impropriety on Pallas' part, see 14.1.

exercere meaning ‘to carry out, perform’ governing the accusative of a noun denoting buying, selling or acquisition, see *TLL* 5.2.1374.58–83.

et tum uanitatis manifestus: for *manifestus* governing a genitive of charge, meaning ‘manifestly guilty of a crime or wrongdoing’, cf. 26.3 [sc. *libertos*] *crimum manifestos*, 2.85.3 *in uxore delicti manifesta*, 15.60.2, Sall. *Cat.* 52.36 and see further *OLD manifestus* 1, *TLL* 8.311.36–40.⁴⁴⁴ For *uanitas* meaning ‘falsity, untruthfulness,’ cf. Cic. *Off.* 1.150, Liv. 36.22.1, Curt. 3.2.10 and see further *OLD uanitas* 1b.

23.2 nec tam grata Pallantis innocentia quam grauis superbia fuit: this ironic formulation, highlighted by the *concinntitas* of *tam...quam*, the homoeoarchon of *grata...grauis* and the homoeoteleuton of *innocentia...superbia*, provides a dry reminder of Pallas’ unpopularity among both the Senate and the imperial *domus*, for which cf. 2.2, 14.1. The senators would hardly have mourned the destruction of Pallas,⁴⁴⁵ although his acquittal is perhaps a sign of Nero’s careful avoidance of vengeful *saeuitia* in the initial years of his principate (Griffin 1984: 54). For *grauis superbia*, ‘unbearable arrogance’ (*OLD grauis* 10b, *TLL* 6.2.2288.40, 80–81), cf. Liv. 33.46.6, Flor. *Epit.* 1.7.4; for analogous *grauis adrogantia*, Cic. *Cluent.* 109.

quippe nominatis libertis eius quos conscios haberet, respondit nihil unquam se domi nisi nutu aut manu significasse: ‘for when the freedmen whom Pallas was said to have used as his accomplices had been named, he [sc. Pallas] replied that in his own home, he had intimated orders only by nodding or by hand gestures.’⁴⁴⁶ Tacitus here exemplifies Pallas’ *superbia* by recalling the condescending manner in which he gave orders to the freedmen who assisted him in the office of *a rationibus*: Pallas believed that it was beneath his status to converse with the freedmen who assisted him, in spite of the fact that he too was an ex-slave, and therefore their social equal; see further Griffin 1984: 54, Edwards 1993: 154, Mouritsen 2011: 100.

For *aliquem conscium habere* meaning ‘to use someone as an accomplice,’ cf. Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.76 *ita populos habent uniuersos non solum conscios libidinis suae, uerum etiam administros*, Liv. 39.34.9, Sen. *Contr.* 9.6.15, ps.-Quint. *Decl. Min.* 307.5. For *aliquid nutu significare*, ‘to intimate something by nodding’ (*OLD significare* 1), cf. Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.26 *negat me recitare totum; nam id significare nutu uidetur*, Varr. *RR* 3.2.10, Apul. *Met.* 10.30.5. For *aliquid manu significare*, ‘to intimate something by hand gestures,’ cf. Sall. *Iug.* 60.4, Verg. *Aen.* 12.692, Plin. *Ep.* 7.27.9, Suet. *Aug.* 34.2.

uel, si plura demonstranda essent, scripto usum, ne uocem consociaret: ‘or, if more explanation had been required, he had used writing, so as to avoid joining in the interchange of speech [*OLD uox* 7]’. For *scripto uti*, ‘to employ the medium of writing’ (*OLD scriptum* 2b), cf. Cic. *Inv.* 2.44. *Vocem consociare* is itself unparalleled, but cf. *seria consociare*, ‘to join in serious undertakings’ (as at 14.4.4 *quasi seria consociaret*), and *imperium consociare*, ‘to join in the command’ (as at Liv. 8.4.6 *consociandi imperii...tempus*); for *consociare* meaning ‘to join in,’ see G-G 211aß, *OLD consociare* 2, *TLL* 4.475.26–31.

⁴⁴⁴ For the use of other adjectives denoting guilt or innocence governing a genitive of charge, see K–S 1.447–8.

⁴⁴⁵ Cf. Pliny the Younger’s denunciation of Pallas in his letters to Montanus (*Ep.* 7.29.2, 8.6 with Sherwin-White 1966: 439).

⁴⁴⁶ The verb of the relative clause (*haberet*) is best understood as an oblique subjunctive which makes it clear that the clause’s content is the subjective opinion of another (perhaps that of Pallas himself) rather than objective fact (see 15.1n. *quo tamen fauorem late quaesiuisset*).

Burrus quamuis reus inter iudices sententiam dixit: Nero countenanced Paetus' accusation insofar as he heeded its content and put those members of the *domus* who were accused of treason by Paetus, namely Pallas and Burrus, on trial. Although the defendants were accused of *maiestas*, which was generally under the jurisdiction of the Senate (Garnsey 1970: 33), the case was heard by Nero and members of his *consilium* privately in the *Palatium (intra cubiculum)*, which was perhaps untypical at this stage of his principate (4.2 with Rudich 1993: 20–21), but more suited to the status of the two defendants, who were imperial officials and confidants (of libertine and equestrian status respectively), not senators. *Maiestas* trials (heard either by the emperor *intra cubiculum* or by the Senate) were not otherwise a feature of the Neronian principate until 62 (10.2, 14.48.1–49.3). Despite the apparent seriousness of the case, Burrus was allowed to sit as a judge and deliver a verdict even though he was himself a defendant.⁴⁴⁷ This suggests that Nero paid lip service to the accusation, so as to show concern for the security of his principate, but was unable to take its implausible content seriously. Perhaps Nero and his advisors, convinced of the accusation's falsehood, took the opportunity to stage a *maiestas* trial in full knowledge that the defendants would be acquitted, in order to show that *calumniatores* would face the full force of the law (Rudich 1993: 20). This was part of a wider Neronian policy of checking vexatious *delatio* (4.2, 10.2, 11.2, 22.2, 43.5), in an effort to combat the excesses of the Claudian regime.

exiliumque accusatori inrogatum: *exilium* was conjectured by a later hand in M's margin for transmitted *auxilium*, which affords no sense in the context of a convicted *calumniator*; M's *auxilium* was probably caused by the scribe's phonological error. The usual penalty for *calumnia* under the *Lex Remmia* (for which cf. *Dig.* 22.5.13, 48.16.1.2) was capital exile or *indictio aqua et igni*, involving loss of citizenship and property as well as banishment outside Italy (*Cod. Theod.* 10.10.12.1 with Garnsey 1970: 33, 112); this same penalty was perhaps imposed upon Iunia Silana after she was convicted of *calumnia* following her false accusations against Agrippina (22.2n.).

For *inrogare* governing the accusative of the punishment and the dative of the person punished in the sense 'to inflict [sc. a given punishment] upon someone', cf. 4.10.3, Sen. *Phaedr.* 1222, ps.-Sen. *Herc. O.* 899 *nemo nocens sibi ipse poenas inrogat*, Papin. *Dig.* 46.1.47 and see further *TLL* 7.437.72–438.28.

tabulae exustae sunt: 'the account-books [*OLD tabula* 7] were burnt'. For *tabulas exurere*, cf. Suet. *Aug.* 32.2 *tabulas ueterum aerari debitorum, uel praecipuam calumniandi materiam, ex[c]ussit*. For *exurere* used more widely as a synonym for *comburare* in the sense 'to destroy [sc. a letter, book, writing] by burning', cf. Sen. *Suas.* 7.10, Ulp. *Dig.* 29.3.10.2 and see further *TLL* 5.2.2124.7–17. Nero follows Augustus (Suet. loc. cit., Dio 53.2.3) in sanctioning the burning of records of disputes between debtors and the treasury (drawn up by the censors, when this magistracy was filled, and the treasury's quaestors), avoiding situations whereby *delatores* found in these records material for vexatious prosecutions against personal enemies; this was part of Augustus' and Nero's strategies for checking *delatio*. See further Millar 1963a: 31–3, Wardle 2014: 262, Howley 2017: 213–36.

quibus oblitterata aerarii monimenta retrahebantur: although the text is uncertain in two places, the sense of this clause is clear, namely that by retaining the treasury's old account

⁴⁴⁷ For a similar instance, cf. 12.54.4 (the trial of the Judaeen procurators Antonius Felix and Ventidius Cumanus by the Syrian governor Ummidius Quadratus, who allowed Felix to sit as a judge despite being a defendant).

books, previously forgotten cases of debt to the treasury could be brought to the state's attention by malicious *delatores*: hence the decision by Nero and his advisors to burn the account books. For the perfect passive participle *oblitteratus* meaning 'forgotten,' cf. *Hist.* 1.55.4, Liv. 3.59.3 *nam neque uetera peccata repeti iam oblitterata placet*, Quint. *Inst.* 1.6.40 and see further *TLL* 9.2.105.6–44.

M's *monimenta* affords sense and is accepted by the most recent editor (Wellesley 1986: ad loc.), but is not above suspicion. *Oblitterata aerarii monimenta* means 'the forgotten records of the treasury,' with *monimentum* governing an objective genitive to mean 'a written record of something', for which cf. 4.43.2, 11.14.1, 15.41.1, Cic. *Off.* 3.4, Liv. 6.1.2, Sen. *Suas.* 7.10 and see further G-G 861b, *TLL* 8.1464.58–66. However, *monimenta* seems to re-state *tabulas* somewhat ('the account-books by means of which the forgotten records of the treasury were being brought back to light were burnt'), perhaps to the extent that the relative clause in which it stands (modifying *tabulas*) reads awkwardly. Gronovius (1672: ad loc.) sought to eliminate this pleonasm by emending *monimenta* to *nomina*, which means 'the account-book by means of which the treasury's forgotten ledger-entries [*OLD nomen* 22] were being brought back to light [*OLD retrahere* 2] were burnt'; the conjecture, accepted by all modern editors except Wellesley, is attractive but not entirely convincing, since although *nomina* can be understood to mean 'ledger-entries' (*OLD nomen* 22), there are no parallels for *nomina aerarii*; perhaps it is prudent to retain transmitted *monimenta*, especially since its connotations of heaviness are attractive alongside *retrahebantur*, and its grandiloquent associations are conspicuously bathetic in a context of shady financial records.

M's *retraebant* affords no sense in the context; singular *retraebat* of Vat. Lat. 1958, accepted by all modern editors, restores sense (positing an error of assimilation following the neuter plural *monimenta*) but remains awkward: a third-person singular subject (such as *Paetus*) needs to be understood from the context, as it is not stated, and the third-person singular form of an active verb sits awkwardly in the relative clause since the sentence's main verb (*exustae sunt*) is third-person plural and passive. The faint oblique stroke above the word-final 't' of *retraebant* in M, probably the work of a later hand, could be interpreted as an abbreviation for the passive *retraebantur*, as Wellesley (1986: app. crit. ad loc.) conjectured. *Retraebantur* affords good sense ('the account-books by which the records of the treasury, once consigned to history, were being brought back to light were burnt') and cohere well (achieving *concinntas*) with the main clause, whose verb is also third-person passive and plural; it would also allow the relative clause to function as a gnomic statement, suggesting (as is desirable from the context) that there were numerous unspecified *delatores* who sought to draw attention to forgotten cases of public debt. The simple omission of the stroke denoting the passive suffix *-ur* in a minuscule exemplar of M probably led to M's *retraebant*.

24.1 fine anni statio cohortis adsidere ludis solita demouetur, quo maior species libertatis esset: 'at the end of the year, the cohort which was customarily stationed to watch over the games was disbanded, to give a greater impression of liberty.' For *fine anni* concluding the Tacitean annalistic year, a formula unique to Tacitus,⁴⁴⁸ cf. 6.1, 2.41.1, 3.30.1, 49.1, 4.61.1, 6.14.1, 39.3, 14.28.2, 15.47.1 and see further Ginsburg 1981: 128–30, Woodman-Martin 1996: 268. Like *isdem consulibus* at 30.1, *fine anni* is a narratological formula which customarily introduces the events of the last section of the Tacitean annalistic year, often those which are of insufficient historical significance to warrant an exposition in

⁴⁴⁸ Cf. *extremo anni*, an annalistic narrative formula of similar meaning used at 6.27.2, Liv. 39.6.3, 23.3.

that year's main narrative,⁴⁴⁹ but nonetheless of considerable narratological significance in providing a link with the events of the annalistic year which follows. Events introduced by *fine anni* need not take place at the year's end chronologically (Ginsburg loc. cit.).

In addition to ensuring the corn supply and providing games and amusements, including gladiatorial contests and theatrical spectacles (cf. Suet. *Nero* 10–12), Nero endeared himself to the people (whose goodwill was essential if an emperor was to maintain his *auctoritas*; see p. 9 n. 12) by granting them greater freedom from restrictions (*libertas*) in the theatres (Yavetz 1988: 34), which he accomplished by suspending armed guards (cf. Dio 61.8.2–3). The urban and praetorian cohorts had been employed to prevent unrest in theatres from the end of Augustus' principate onwards (*Dig.* 1.12.1.12 with Cameron 1976: 160, Yavetz 1988: 24, Manuwald 2011: 52–4, Fuhrmann 2012: 127); their presence had been constant since 47 (11.13.1 with Malloch 2013: 211–212), when Claudius, as censor, sought to quell spectators' unruliness. This was sometimes prompted by adverse reactions to the drama which was being staged, particularly if it addressed a contemporary cause of grievance for the Roman people (Edwards 1993: 99–100, Malloch loc. cit.); at other times, it arose following disagreements among supporters of rival actors (Cameron 1976: 223). The propensity of audiences to rioting led to the periodic expulsion from Rome of actors who encouraged such behaviour (particularly the more subversive *pantomimi*, on whom see especially Lada-Richards 2008: 292–8), or whose supporters were perpetually unruly (cf. 1.77.1, Val. Max. 2.4.1, Suet. *Aug.* 45.4, Dio 56.47.2 and see further MacMullen 1966: 170–3, Goodyear 1981: 173, Edwards 1993: 127, Jory 1994: 62, Slater 1994: 120–9, Fagan 2011: 148–9, 152–4, Fuhrmann loc. cit., Wardle 2014: 339–40).

Despite Nero's promotion of *libertas* among theatrical audiences, their unruliness soon escalated to such levels that he had to expel the *pantomimi* and reintroduce soldiers to theatres (25.4n., Suet. *Nero* 16.2).⁴⁵⁰ Nero therefore provided a *species libertatis*, but his act of goodwill did not succeed in promoting civil conduct among the masses at games. Relations between Nero and the *plebs* disintegrated as his principate progressed (Yavetz 1988: 35); in 61, riots broke out in front of the Curia following the passing of a decree whereby all servile members of the city prefect Pedanius Secundus' household were to be executed after the prefect was murdered by one of his slaves (14.45.1–2); the following year, rioting ensued after Nero's divorce of Octavia (14.61.2).

utque miles theatri licentiae non permixtus incorruptior ageret: 'and so that the military, not embroiled in the unruliness of the theatre, might behave in a less wanton manner'. An intended by-product of Nero's decision to remove soldiers from theatres was an improvement in military discipline through reduced exposure to civil unrest;⁴⁵¹ perhaps Nero thereby sought to ensure that the military could not follow the *plebs urbana* in revolting against him, as may have happened before the fall of Gaius.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁹ Such material includes records of foreign disturbances (6.1), monuments (2.41.1), senators' deaths (3.30.1, 4.61.1, 6.14.1, 39.3), outcomes of senatorial trials (3.49.1, 14.28.2) and prodigies (15.47.1).

⁴⁵⁰ Praetorian and urban cohorts were thereafter stationed in theatres throughout Nero's principate; cf. 14.15.4.

⁴⁵¹ Excessive exposure to acting was also felt to induce in soldiers traits incompatible with the Roman martial ideal; see further Edwards 1993: 100, Csapo 2010: 193–6.

⁴⁵² The praetorian tribune C. Cassius Chaerea's plot to murder that emperor at the Palatine Games was almost certainly inspired by the mood of the audiences at the time, who were protesting against the emperor's failure to ensure the corn supply (Jos. *AJ* 19.24–7 with Wiseman 1991: 49, Suet. *Cal.* 56.2, Dio 59.29.1).

For *theatralis licentia*, cf. Suet. *Dom.* 8.3 *suscepta correctione morum licentiam theatralem promiscue in equite spectandi inhiuit* (describing measures taken early in Domitian's principate to curb the unruliness of theatrical spectators), the only parallel for the collocation; *licentia* denotes unruly conduct (*OLD* 2). For analogous *theatri licentia*, cf. 1.77.1 with Goodyear 1981: 173; for *theatralis lasciua*, 11.13.1 with Malloch 2013: 211–12. *Theatralis* (semantically equivalent to the genitive *theatri*; see *OLD theatralis*) is a recondite adjective, with only 14 other attestations, all of which, except Mart. 5.23.2, are in prose, before 200; cf. 1.16.3, 11.13.1, 14.21.1, Cic. *Sest.* 115, Vell. 2.126.2, Plin. *NH* 4.30, 7.117, 33.32, Mart. 5.23.2, Quint. *Inst.* 2.2.10, 3.6.19, Plin. *Ep.* 7.24.7, Suet. *Aug.* 40.1, *Dom.* 8.3. For *permixtus alicui rei*, 'embroiled in something', cf. 3.38.2, 4.40.6, Sil. 13.499, Plin. *Ep.* 2.11.23 and see further G–G 1107d, *TLL* 10.1.1545.4–16. For *incorruptus* meaning 'morally sound', cf. Cic. *Nat. Deor.* 2.71, Sen. *Ben.* 3.15.3, Stat. *Silv.* 2.3.68, Quint. *Inst.* 5.12.20 and see further *TLL* 7.1.1035.14–21. The comparative form (here used predicatively) is paralleled only at Cic. *Marcell.* 29, *Mil.* 60, Liv. 1.18.4, Colum. 7.12, Plin. *NH* 16.22, Gell. pr.16.

et plebes daret experimentum an amotis custodibus modestiam retineret: 'and that the common people might show whether they would keep up their good behaviour [*OLD modestia* 2] once the guards had been withdrawn [*OLD amouere* 1]'.⁴⁵³

For the archaic fifth-declension forms of the singular of *plebs* (*plebes*, *plebei* instead of the common third-declension *plebs*, *plebis*), see Wölfflin 1867: 102, Neue-Wagener 1.571, Leumann 1977: 447, *TLL* 10.1.2378.46–47, 64–69, 2379.18–19. The fifth-declension forms were standard until around 150 BC; thereafter, under the influence of both the accusative *plebem* and the by-form of the dative singular, *plebi*, the genitive *plebis* arose by proportional analogy; the noun was subsequently assimilated into the third declension, with the resultant back-formation (on the analogy of *urbs*) of a third-declension nominative, *plebs*, first attested in the second-century BC annalist L. Cassius Hemina (F15C).⁴⁵³ The assimilation of *plebes* into the third declension was well underway at the time of Cicero, who uses both the fifth-declension nominative *plebes* (10 times) and the third-declension nominative *plebs* (5 times); the grammarian Scaurus (*Gramm.* 7.27.13) writes that Varro felt *plebs*, *plebis* to be the correct and current usage in his day (cf. Probus *Inst. Gramm.* 4.126.1 with Neue-Wagener loc. cit., *TLL* 10.1.2379.18–19).

By the end of the first century BC, the third-declension forms were standard in everyday educated usage, and the fifth-declension forms conscious archaisms, admitted only by prose writers who countenanced artificialities of diction. This distinction is neatly explained by Priscian (*Gramm.* 3.475.37–8 *antiqui...et plebes plebei dicebant, quod nunc plebs plebis dicimus*).⁴⁵⁴ Sallust uses the nominatives *plebes* and *plebs* twice each in the *Bellum Catilinae*, but shows a stronger preference for *plebes* (which outnumbers *plebs* by a 5:2 ratio) in the *Bellum Iugurthinum*, and avoids *plebs* in the extant *Historiae* (in which he uses *plebes* seven times). Livy admits both *plebes* and *plebs*, although *plebs* still outnumbers *plebes* (by ratios of 59:42 and 13:6) in the first and third decades; in the fourth decade, *plebes* outnumbers *plebs* by 5:3, and in the fifth decade, *plebs* disappears (while *plebes* is used once). Pliny the Elder admits both nominative forms, with a slight preference for archaising *plebes* (outnumbering *plebs* by 5:4). Tacitus admits both *plebes* and *plebs* in the *Historiae*, although standard *plebs* outnumbers archaic *plebes* by 7:3. In line with Sallust, his taste for the archaism increases as he refines his style (Woodman-Martin 1996: 86 ad 3.2.2), with *plebes*

⁴⁵³ The fifth-declension noun *fames* undergoes a similar assimilation into the third declension in the late Republic (Leumann loc. cit.).

⁴⁵⁴ That *plebes* is a recondite, archaising form might explain the banalising conjecture *plebs* in Laur. plut. 68.5.

being used four times in *Annales* 1–6, to the exclusion of *plebs*. *Plebs* is admitted again in *Annales* 13–16, but the archaism *plebes* still outnumbers it, by a ratio of 3:2. Only Livy (in the first decade), Velleius, Columella and Pliny the Elder admit the archaising fifth-declension genitive *plebei* (except in the phrases *tribunus plebei* and *plebei scitum*, which were perhaps fossilised idioms) after the end of the Republic; the fifth-declension dative *plebei* is not much more common, being found twelve times in Livy (in the first and third decades only), five times in Pliny the Elder and twice in Tacitus (31.2, 12.41.1) after the end of the Republic.

For *experimentum dare*, ‘to give a demonstration or proof’ (*OLD experimentum* 3), cf. 12.6.1, 15.24.2 *datum et lenitatis experimentum*, Sen. *Ben.* 6.31.5, Suet. *Nero* 22.3. This is the only instance in which *experimentum* governs an indirect question (*TLL* 5.2.1656.57); in all other instances, *experimentum* is either used absolutely or governs an objective genitive (*TLL* 5.2.1656.58–83). The unparalleled construction here was perhaps developed either on the analogy of the noun’s near-synonym *documentum* governing an indirect question, which is common in literary Latin generally (*TLL* 5.1.1804.23–4), or that of *experiri* (the verb from which deverbative *experimentum* is derived) governing the same construction, which became common in first-century technical prose; cf. Cels. 2.17, Plin. *NH* 9.122, 30.104 and see further *TLL* 5.2.1663.80–1664.4.

24.2 urbem princeps lustravit ex responso haruspicum, quod Iouis ac Mineruae aedes de caelo tactae erant: the verb *lustrare* and its derivative noun *lustratio* are used to denote the practice whereby the city of Rome was ritually purified in order to expiate prodigies (for this technical sense see *OLD lustrare* 1, *lustratio* 1). Throughout the Republic and Empire (up until the reign of Constantine) the *lustratio* of Rome was a standard response to the sighting of prodigies within the city (Ogilvie 1965: 177, Millar 1977: 359, Rosenberger 1998: 140). To perform *lustratio*, the *Pontifex Maximus* (a priesthood fulfilled by the emperor under the Principate; cf. *Hist.* 1.87.1, Dio 53.17.8 and see further Millar 1977: 277, 355, 359) ritually walked three times around the *pomerium* (the city’s sacred boundary) before sacrificing a pig, a sheep and an ox. For *lustratio* under the Republic, cf. Liv. 3.29.9 (458 BC), 21.62.7 (218 BC), 35.9.5 (193 BC), 39.22.4, 27.5 (186 BC), 44.18.6–7, 45.16.6 (167 BC), Plin. *NH* 10.35–36 (107 BC). For *lustratio* under the Empire, as here, cf. *Hist.* 1.87.1 with Damon 2003: 280, describing the response of Otho to an omen of defeat prior to his campaign against Vitellius in 69. For the expression *urbem lustrare* in this technical sense, cf. *Hist.* loc. cit., Liv. 21.62.7, 35.9.5, 39.22.4, 45.16.6, Plin. *NH* 10.35.

The expiation of prodigies (and the restoration of the *pax deorum* thereby achieved) was deemed essential to both the security of the Principate and the success of the *princeps*’ campaigns (Damon loc. cit.), just as it was thought essential for republican generals’ military successes (Rosenberger 1998: 140). The role of the *haruspices* (‘diviners’) was to assist either the general under the Republic or the emperor under the Principate in interpreting the prodigies witnessed, and in determining whether there were signs of ill omen necessitating the city’s *lustratio*; cf. 15.47.2, *Hist.* 1.27.1, Cic. *Div.* 2.52, Liv. 25.16.3, 32.1.13, 36.1.3, Plin. *NH* 10.19 and see further MacBain 1982: 43–59. *Ex responso* (for which cf. Liv. 24.10.3 *ex haruspicum responso*) is the *editio princeps*’ conjecture for M’s *et responso*; *ex* is idiomatic, while *et* has neither semantic nor syntactic justification.

Although Tacitus does not state this explicitly,⁴⁵⁵ the temples referred to here are likely to be the *aedes* of Jupiter Libertas and Minerva which stand opposite each other on the Aventine (ARA XIII 752, 760 tav. 164, Andreussi ap. Steinby 1996: 3.144, Vendittelli ap. Steinby 1996: 3.254) and were both restored by Augustus (RG 19.2); the reader's image of the lightning strike is most conceivable if the temples are close to each other, while in the light of their restoration under Augustus their being struck by lightning during the first full year of Nero's principate might be suggestive of a decline in the emperor's divine favour as the Julio-Claudian dynasty progressed from Augustus to Nero.⁴⁵⁶ Lightning strikes at Rome were potential signs of divine wrath against the emperor or his people; cf. 14.12.2, Suet. *Galba* 1.1. Here, they could be considered a delayed response to Nero's murder of Britannicus at the start of the year; Nero perhaps sought to expiate these to secure an auspicious start to 56. *Aliquid de caelo tangi* is an idiom meaning 'to be struck by lightning'; to the examples cited under *OLD tangere* 4c, add Cic. *Div.* 1.92, Liv. 25.7.7, Plin. *NH* 36.10.

⁴⁵⁵ *Aedes* could be a generalising plural ('temples of Jupiter and Minerva'), although this reading seems less pointed.

⁴⁵⁶ That the temple of Jupiter Libertas (situated on the Aventine, an area strongly associated with the *plebs* under the Principate) was struck by lightning might be suggestive of divine anger at Nero's granting excessive *libertas* to plebeian theatrical audiences (24.1n.) which resulted in civil unrest; the Aventine temple of Minerva's being struck might also be significant because it served as a meeting-place for associations of poets and actors, many of whom were responsible for the raucous entertainments of the Neronian theatre (Vendittelli loc. cit., Cooley 2009: 190 ad RG 19.2).

Neronian Licentiousness, the Fight with Julius Montanus and Rioting in the Theatres (25.1–4)

Tacitus begins his narrative of the events of 56, a year which (in his view) saw few events of great political or military significance, either in Rome or in the provinces (25.1). He therefore chooses to invest his short narrative of this year (25.1–30.2) with details of prominent scandals surrounding the emperor's debauched and dangerous behaviour in public (cf. 25.1 *otium foris, foeda lasciua domi*) and the unrest among pantomime actors and their clagues in the theatres (for the latter cf. also 28.1), in addition to a senatorial debate on possible counter-measures against the excesses of freedmen (26.1–27.2), a digression on the administration of the *aerarium Saturni* (29.1–2), details of the outcomes of senatorial trials (30.1) and obituary notices for prominent senators (30.2), all of which bring into sharp focus the problems surrounding the Principate as a system of government, and the extent of both continuity and change in the Roman administration. Tacitus uses his annalistic framework to advantage in describing the progressively worsening character of Nero, whose vices become more marked with each passing year (as 25.1–3 amply illustrates). Nero's vice is designed to contrast with the upstanding character of the noble Volusii Saturnini, with whose rites of passage the narrative of 56 begins (25.1) and ends (30.2): Q. Volusius is appointed ordinary consul for the year along with P. Scipio, another senator of distinguished republican ancestry (25.1), while his father Lucius dies peacefully at the age of ninety-three, following a long and illustrious senatorial career.⁴⁵⁷ Following on from the murder of Britannicus one year previously, the narrative of the tragic fate of the senator C. Iulius Montanus, forced to commit suicide before he had even attained the quaestorship after falling victim to the emperor's nocturnal violence, forces Tacitus' readers once again to regard even the early years of Nero's principate as being characterised by frequent acts of *saeuitia*, exercised through quasi-tragic role-play which is misunderstood by the emperor's victim.⁴⁵⁸

Tacitus, Suetonius and Dio agree on the main aspects of Nero's *licentia* at the start of 56. All three writers (25.1, Suet. *Nero* 26.1, Dio 61.9.2–3) suggest that the emperor took part in acts of violent criminality late at night in disguise; both Tacitus and Suetonius (loc. cit.) describe him as being dressed in a slave's costume, while Dio (61.9.2) suggests that he sought to maintain anonymity using a variety of outfits. Tacitus seems less interested than Suetonius and Dio in the finer details of his disguises, seeking rather to give a more impressionistic portrait of the emperor's playing an unseemly role (perhaps in his concern for the dignity of historiography, for which concept see introduction p. 32 and n. 197) and gives no more information than *ueste seruili*. Suetonius suggests that he sometimes wore the *pilleus*, the round cap typically associated with slaves and freedmen, and at other times the *galerus*, another kind of servile cap made of skin; Dio rather suggests that he disguised himself using a variety of wigs. All three writers agree that Nero gratuitously assaulted passers-by in the streets, often violently;⁴⁵⁹ Dio additionally suggests the sexual assault of women to be one of

⁴⁵⁷ On this annalistic framing device, see also Ginsburg 1981: 96–9.

⁴⁵⁸ For the question as to whether Nero's principate had a discernible turning-point, see further Griffin 1976: 423–7, 432. Dio (61.7.5) suggests that following the death of Britannicus, Seneca and Burrus ceased to exert any influence over Nero's public behaviour; this (in Dio's view) quickly led to greater licentiousness on the emperor's part.

⁴⁵⁹ Dio (61.9.3) also specifies the injuries which Nero sustained from retaliating victims, including black eyes and facial contusions; these are also described by the elder Pliny (*NH* 13.22, 126) in passages about ointments. Although perhaps part of the shared source tradition and conducive to *enargeia*, Tacitus may have considered these details excessively bathetic, and therefore did not include them. This is somewhat at odds with his attitude towards the finer details of Britannicus' bowel movements (15.4), but the fact that Montanus was a senator,

Nero's crimes, while Suetonius records that Nero threw those victims who dared to retaliate into open sewers.⁴⁶⁰ Tacitus, Suetonius (loc. cit.) and Dio (61.9.3) all record that shops were looted during Nero's nocturnal wanderings; Dio additionally suggests that private homes were broken into. However, whereas Tacitus suggests that Nero's accomplices (*comitantibus*) performed the looting, both Suetonius and Dio suggest that Nero himself was responsible. Suetonius nowhere suggests that Nero was accompanied on his wanderings; Dio (61.9.2) suggests that he had an ἀκολουθία (band of accomplices). Nero's accomplices in Tacitus and Dio may well have been pantomime actors and their partisans, to whom (Suet. *Nero* 16.1) he had granted the right to wander throughout Rome, committing gratuitous acts of violence and looting shops. That Suetonius does not include the accomplices in his account of the emperor's looting is concomitant with his literary strategy, whereby he presents Nero, the subject of his biography, as the instigator and perpetrator of all his crimes. This strategy is also noticeable in Suetonius' narrative of the murders of Britannicus and Agrippina; see further Santoro L'hoir 2006: 213, Hurley 2013: 38.

The three main sources (25.2–3, Suet. *Nero* 26.2, Dio 61.9.3–4) differ with regard to the aspects of the altercation with Montanus which they emphasise: while all three refer to the extent of Nero's injuries and his employment of a bodyguard following the incident, it is notable that Suetonius (*Nero* 26.2) never explicitly names Montanus, simply describing him as *quidam laticlavius*, and at no point suggests that the senator committed suicide: rather, he focuses on Nero's having been almost fatally injured during the brawl. Both Suetonius and Dio (61.9.3) suggest that the brawl was instigated by Montanus as an act of revenge after Nero had sexually assaulted his wife, a detail which Tacitus does not include, perhaps in order to give a more compelling depiction of imperial *saevitia* by suggesting that Nero instigated the violence himself in order to fulfil his own sadistic, quasi-theatrical pleasure.⁴⁶¹ A more sympathetic picture of Montanus therefore emerges from Tacitus, in whose account he is seen merely to act in self-defence, assuming Nero to be a common criminal (*quia ui attemptantem acriter reppulerat*). Dio (61.9.4) suggests that Montanus knew all along that he was fighting Nero, οὐκοῦν ἦδει Νέρωνα τύπτων, while Tacitus (25.2) suggests that the moment of recognition came later; in both accounts, Montanus' apology to Nero seals his fate, as he is forced to admit openly to fighting with the emperor; had he played the role which the emperor had subconsciously demanded of him, and allowed Nero to remain under the illusion that he had not been recognised, he may never have been compelled to take his own life (Plass 1985: 206, Bartsch 1994: 17–20).

The rioting in the theatres outlined at 25.4 is also recorded by Suetonius (*Nero* 16.2) and Dio (61.8.1–3). Discord among factions of pantomime actors and their clagues had once more led to widespread civil unrest in Roman theatres, resulting in the failure of Nero's experiment (from the previous year) whereby the soldiers of the praetorian and urban cohorts usually stationed in theatres to maintain order were removed (24.1n.); these cohorts were quickly reinstated and the pantomime actors who were responsible for the disruption were once again expelled from the city.⁴⁶²

rather than a mere child of the imperial household, may be a significant factor in the historian's judgment. Tacitus' attitude towards unseemly material is not always consistent (Goodyear 1972: 343 n.2).

⁴⁶⁰ Tacitus and Dio do not include this detail, not only on the ground that it is sordid and therefore unsuited to the dignity of historiography, but also because they rather seek to stress the extent to which Nero himself sustained injuries, risking his own life by fighting his assailants at close quarters during brawls.

⁴⁶¹ For gratuitous acts of *saevitia* as a part of Nero's character which cannot be rationalised, see Schulz 2019: 114.

⁴⁶² This rioting had perhaps been exacerbated by Nero (cf. 25.4 *ludicram quoque licentiam et fautores histrionum uelut in proelia conuertit*, Dio 61.8.2). The expulsion and restoration of these often riotous actors

The historicity of the acts of criminality on the emperor's part which are described in this narrative cannot be established for certain: although Tacitus is likely to have acquired the basic details of his account from an earlier source also used by Suetonius and Dio (given that all three sources agree on the basic outline of the story), it is conceivable that much of the account as given by the shared source was exaggerated or fabricated as part of an anti-Neronian rhetorical *Zeitgeist* during the Flavian period (Townend 1967: 95–6, Doody 2013: 295–6, Hurley 2013: 38, Drinkwater 2019: 9–10). Allegations of nocturnal wanderings involving riotous behaviour, thieving and gratuitous assault are common in the hostile biographical traditions of Mark Antony (an important paradigm for Nero in the light of his being related to him; see Griffin 1984: 12–13) as well as those other emperors who were known for *saevitia*, and the descriptions of their behaviour share many details in common (Drinkwater 2019: 296): according to Plutarch (*Ant.* 29), Antony is alleged to have roamed the streets of Alexandria at night while disguised as a slave, awakening disgruntled citizens, insulting them and even brawling with them.⁴⁶³ Suetonius (*Otho* 2.1) records that the young Otho had a penchant for *sagatio* (the act of wrapping an inebriated man in a cloak and tossing him skywards, before causing him to fall violently to the ground) in which he engaged purely for sadistic pleasure. The *SHA* record (*Ver.* 4.4) that Lucius Verus sexually assaulted women and even installed a lowly tavern in his home on the Palatine in order to attract unseemly characters, while Commodus, at the start of his reign (*Comm.* 3.7), visited taverns and brothels during his late-night wanderings. It is possible that this narrative of Neronian *licentia* was structured in order to conform with a stock depiction of an immature and sadistic tyrant, accustomed to wanton and violent conduct. Such accounts may have arisen after successive tyrants' deaths in order to show that *saevitia* was an innate part of their character. For a similar account of licentiousness on Nero's part, dating from 58, cf. 47.2, which describes his activity outside the city walls in the vicinity of the Mulvian Bridge.

Despite these concerns over the account's historicity, C. Iulius Montanus, Nero's unsuspecting victim in this chapter, is a verifiable person from Roman history. Inscriptional evidence (*ILS* 978, for which see further *PIR*² I 435, Griffin 1976: 44 n.7) confirms that he was the quaestor-elect (*quaestor destinatus*) of 56; he disappears from the epigraphic record after this date. It is therefore entirely possible that he died while still a *laticlavus* in 56; whether he did so in the manner described by Tacitus (25.2), Suetonius (*Nero* 26.1–2) and Dio (61.9.3–4) will never be known.

25.1 Q. Volusio P. Scipione consulibus: the ablative absolute consisting of the ordinary consuls' names and predicative *consulibus* (K-S 2.779–80) is the formula conventionally used to denote the start of a calendar year in the *Annales*; cf. 11.1, 31.1, 1.55.1, 2.1.1, 4.1.1, 5.1.1, 6.15.1, 11.23.1, 12.5.1, 14.1.1, 15.23.1, 16.14.1. The usage derives from formulaic conventions of the traditional annalistic form; cf. Liv. 27.23.5 and see further Ginsburg 1981: 14–17, Woodman-Martin 1996: 277–8, Bartera 2011: 161–81. For Tacitean variations of the traditional formula, cf. 34.1, 3.31.1, 52.1, 6.1.1, 40.1, 15.48.1.

became a feature of imperial edicts and senatorial decrees under the Principate, as emperors strove to maintain order while nonetheless granting the *plebs urbana* their preferred entertainments together with a semblance of freedom from restriction: cf. 4.14.3 (Tiberius' expulsion of the actors in 23), 11.4.1, 36.2 (their re-instatement under Claudius), 14.21.4 (their expulsion under Nero in 60, at the time of the sacred contests), Plin. *Paneg.* 46.2 (their restoration under Trajan), Dio 59.2.5 (their restoration by Gaius) and see further Yavetz 1988: 34, Drinkwater 2019: 10–11.

⁴⁶³ On literary representations of Antony's alleged *saevitia*, see further Griffin 1977: 19–23, Stevenson 2009b: 174–86.

Both Q. Volusius Saturninus (*PIR*² V 980) and P. Cornelius Lentulus Scipio (*PIR*² C 1399) served from 1st January until 30th June (*CIL* 10.1401 [*SC Volusianum*], *AE* 1972: 175), before being replaced by L. Iunius Gallio Annaeanus (Seneca's elder brother) and the otherwise obscure T. Cutius Ciltus (*CIL* 6.3340). Volusius, consul aged 31 (Plin. *NH* 7.14), was to lose his 93-year-old father Lucius (cos. suff. 3; see *PIR* V 979) at the end of the year (30.2); his grandfather (*PIR* V 978), who died in 20, was also an Augustan consul (cos. suff. 12 BC; cf. 3.30.1 with Woodman-Martin 1996: 269). In 61 he performed a census in Gaul with Sextius Africanus (for whom see 19.2n.) and Trebellius Maximus (14.46.2). He was distantly related to his colleague Scipio, as his mother was a Cornelia of the Scipio family (Plin. *NH* 12.62). Our Scipio was the son of the suffect consul of 24 (*PIR*² C 1398).

otium foris, foeda domi lasciuiia: for the use of the contrastive adverbs *foris...domi* to mean 'outside Rome...at Rome', a formula particularly favoured by Livy, cf. Cic. *S. Rosc.* 136, Sall. *Cat.* 20.13, Liv. 2.43.1, 3.30.1 *cum foris otium esset, domi seditiones*, 3.31.1, 65.2, 4.7.12, 6.1.1, 7.27.1, Sen. *Ep.* 20.3.⁴⁶⁴ For *otium* meaning 'respite from war' see *TLL* 9.2.1179.22–3. The momentary lull in operations in Armenia (for which see 9.3) contrasts sharply with heightening concerns over the emperor's unseemly conduct at Rome (*OLD lasciuiia* 3), which become the focus of Tacitus' attention.⁴⁶⁵ The collocation *foeda lasciuiia* is unattested, but analogous to *indecora lasciuiia* at Plin. *NH* 18.364.

itinerata urbis et lupanaria et deuerticula...pererrabat: the sense of *itinerata urbis* is 'passageways through the city'; cf. 3.4.1 *plena urbis itinera*, *Hist.* 1.81.2, Liv. 27.16.1, Suet. *Iul.* 84.1 and see further *TLL* 7.539.60–3. The genitive *urbis* is also governed by *lupanaria* and *deuerticula* according to the principle of *coniunctio* (for which see 19.3n. *coniugioque eius et imperio*). For *deuerticulum* denoting a tavern or inn, analogous to Suetonius' *popinas* in his version of the account (*Nero* 26.1), cf. Laber. *Mim.* p. 295.96, Liv. 1.51.8 and see further *OLD deuerticulum* 4, *TLL* 5.1.854.70–7. For transitive *pererrare* meaning 'to wander all over something', a largely poetic usage absent from Cicero, Caesar and Sallust, cf. 4.25.2 *praepeditis Numidarum equis aut diuersos pastus pererrantibus*, 12.13.3, *Germ.* 46.2, Hor. *Serm.* 1.6.113, Liv. 1.53.8, Ov. *Met.* 3.6, Sen. *Ben.* 6.32.1, Stat. *Theb.* 1.313 and see further *TLL* 10.1.1342.43–66.

ueste seruili: for *uestis seruilis*, 'servile dress', cf. *Hist.* 2.29.1, Sen. *Contr.* 9.2.17, Val. Max. 9.8.2 *maiestate sua seruili ueste occultata*. The theme of disguise has important implications for the wider notion of theatricality explored in this narrative—here, perhaps more so than anywhere else in the Neronian *Annales*, the blurring of the boundaries between role-play and reality is emphasised: Tacitus' readers, just like Nero's unsuspecting victims, are forced to question how they should react to these acts of violence, and whether they should see them as mere role-play or inherent within the emperor's character (Bartsch 1994: 20, Edwards 1994: 91–3).

in dissimulationem sui compositus: 'disguised so as to conceal his true identity': for *componere aliquem uel aliquid in aliquid* meaning 'to make someone or something assume the appearance of something', often with the implication of disguise, cf. 3.44.4 *tanto impensius in securitatem compositus*, *Hist.* 1.54.1, 2.9.2, Sen. *Nat. Quaest.* 1.pf.6 and see further *TLL* 3.2128.65–71, Woodman-Martin 1996: 343. For analogous *componere aliquem*

⁴⁶⁴ For the form of expression, perhaps cf. also 1.3.7 *domi res tranquillae*.

⁴⁶⁵ This contrast is further emphasised by the chiasmus *otium foris...domi lasciuiia*; the adjective *foeda* occupies an emphatic central position, separated from the noun (*lasciuiia*) which it qualifies.

uel aliquid ad aliquid, also used by Tacitus, cf. 3.1.3 *cunctis ad tristitiam compositis*, *Hist.* 1.71.1, *Cic. Leg.* 2.32, *Liv.* 36.28.1 and see further 20.1n. *compositus ad maestitiam*, *TLL* 3.2128.71–9. The construction is useful to Tacitus in describing political and social contexts in which the concealment of one’s genuine emotions is emphasised.

comitantibus qui raperent uenditioni exposita et obuiis uulnera inferrent: ‘he was accompanied by men who would steal goods that had been put up for sale and inflict injuries upon those whom they met.’⁴⁶⁶ *Venditioni exposita*, ‘goods put up for sale’,⁴⁶⁷ is a conjecture first found in the *editio princeps* and accepted by all modern editors except Wellesley; M’s *uenditionem exposita* affords no sense.⁴⁶⁸ The use of the dative in the phrase *ueno dare* as well as the analogous *ueno ponere* (for which cf. 14.15.2 *posita ueno inritamenta luxui*) supports the conjecture in the *editio princeps*.⁴⁶⁹ Tacitus’ variation of expressions meaning ‘to put up for sale’ conforms with his fondness for *uariatio*. For *uulnera inferre alicui*, ‘to inflict injuries on someone’, cf. *Caes. Civ.* 2.6.3, *Val. Max.* 1.8.ext.6.

aduersus ignaros adeo, ut ipse quoque exciperet ictus et ore praeferret: ‘[sc. and they did this] against those who were ignorant [sc. of the charade], to the extent that Nero himself also sustained blows and showed them on his face’. In order to construe the elliptical *aduersus ignaros adeo*, one should understand it as modifying a suppressed *idque agerent* (whose subject is those *comitantes*). In order to give an impression of a role-play in which the emperor’s victims are goaded by the emperor to take part, but misunderstand their role with disastrous consequences, Tacitus appears to exploit a quasi-tragic paradigm (for which cf. *Arist. Poet.* 11.2 and see further Edwards 1994: 93, Santoro L’hoir 2006: 83, Freudenburg 2017: 118–19) whereby the knowledge of the perpetrator is contrasted with the ignorance of the victims (the *ignaros*), thereby encouraging audiences to feel a degree of pathos (even in a narrative which it is at times bathetic) for the unsuspecting victims of Nero’s charade. Although Nero’s victims are themselves guilty of assailing the emperor, *ignaros* shows that they (understandably) fall for his disguise, assuming him to be a low-class criminal, and therefore act in (what they believe to be) justifiable self-defence.

For *ictus excipere*, ‘to suffer a blow, sustain injury’, cf. *Lucr.* 6.313, *Hor. Carm.* 4.9.22–3, *Liv.* 36.23.2, *Sen. Cons. Helv.* 5.3, *Plin. NH* 8.88; for *aliquid ore praeferre*, ‘to bear the mark of something on one’s face’, cf. 16.32.3 *auctoritatem Stoicae sectae praeferbat habitu et ore ad exprimendam imaginem honesti exercitus*.

25.2 deinde ubi Caesarem esse qui grassaretur pernotuit: the rare compound *pernotescere*, ‘to become widely known’ (*TLL* 10.1.1599.43–9), is attested only in Tacitus (here, 1.23.2, 12.67.1, 14.8.1) and at ps.-Quint. *Decl. Mai.* 3.1. Here it is used impersonally (*TLL* 10.1.1599.47–9), governing an indirect statement to mean ‘it became widely known

⁴⁶⁶ *Comitantibus* is an ablative absolute with its grammatical subject suppressed (but defined by the relative clause which follows), for which see K–S 2.773. The relative clause’s chiasmic imperfect subjunctives *raperent...inferrent* imply purpose.

⁴⁶⁷ One should perhaps conceive of these goods as being stolen from behind the closed doors of *tabernae*, shops selling a wide variety of clothes, ointments and foodstuffs which could be accessed directly from the street (Holleran 2012: 113–18).

⁴⁶⁸ A later hand in M conjectured *ad uenditionem exposita*, accepted by Wellesley, but the use of the prepositional phrase *ad uenditionem* modifying a verb of giving or placing to mean ‘to put up for sale’ is unparalleled (and no analogous phrases in which *ad* governs a noun denoting a sale can be found).

⁴⁶⁹ The two most common Latin expressions meaning ‘to put something up for sale’ are *aliquid uenundare* and *aliquid ueno dare*, both fossilised archaisms (OLD [*uenus*] 1b), for which cf. 39.4 *imbelle uulgus sub corona uenundatum*, 4.1.2 *Apicio diuiti et prodigo stuprum ueno dedisse*.

that...’, as at 1.23.2, 14.8.1 *ubi incolumem* [sc. *Agrippinam*] *esse pernotuit*.⁴⁷⁰ *Pernotuit* could be seen as part of the lexical field of knowledge and ignorance (Santoro L’hoir 2006: 83) which pervades both this narrative and the other descriptions of Nero’s innocent victims in *Annales* 13–16. For absolute *grassari* predicated of a person meaning ‘to run riot, act without restraint’, cf. Manil. 2.599, Suet. *Cal.* 56.1, Flor. *Epit.* 2.7.12 and see further *OLD grassari* 4, *TLL* 6.2.2201.59–67. More commonly, *grassari* is modified by an instrumental ablative when used in this sense; cf. *Hist.* 1.37.5 and see further *OLD grassari* 3, *TLL* 6.2.2200.61, Damon 2003: 178–9.

augebanturque iniuriae aduersus uiros feminasque insignes: Tacitus takes care to distinguish the aspects of the two chiasmically arranged verbs in the *ubi*-clause: perfect *pernotuit* denotes a punctual occurrence, namely that Nero was found to be engaging in night-time brawls, whereas imperfect *augebantur* implies an occurrence that occurred gradually over a period of time, namely the increase in instances of violence against leading citizens. For *iniuria aduersus aliquem*, ‘an injury against someone’, cf. Gaius *Dig.* 5.2.4 *qui* [sc. *parentes*] *iniuriam aduersus liberos suos testamento inducunt* and see further *TLL* 7.1.1673.58. For analogous (and more common) *iniuria in aliquem*, cf. Cic. *Fam.* 1.9.20, Liv. 31.31.2, 44.1.10 and see further *TLL* 7.1.1677.10–15.

permissa semel licentia: for *licentiam permittere*, ‘to grant a licence [sc. to do something]’, cf. 14.20.4, Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.29, 106, Calp. *Decl.* p. 12.1.

sub nomine Neronis: ‘on the authority of Nero’; for *nomen* governing a defining genitive in this sense, see *OLD nomen* 14a. Perhaps, given 15.38.7 *esse sibi auctorem uociferabantur*, this remark foreshadows Nero’s alleged involvement in the Great Fire of Rome in 64.

propriis cum globis: those who sought to emulate Nero were perhaps the subversive *pantomimi* (cf. Suet. *Nero* 16.2) with their own bands of unruly supporters, as is suggested by *propriis cum globis* (*OLD globus* 4b, *TLL* 6.2.2055.15–34) here.

in modum captiuitatis nox agebatur: ‘the night was spent as if the city were being captured’: *in modum* is Gronovius’ (1672: ad loc.) conjecture (accepted by all modern editors) for M’s unintelligible *.T. modum*.⁴⁷¹ The image is one of Nero’s followers treating Rome as if it were the captured city of a foreign enemy, plundering, looting and attacking innocent citizens with impunity. For *in modum* + gen., ‘in the manner of,’ see *OLD modus* 11c. For *noctem agere*, ‘to spend the night’, in which *agere* has the temporal sense ‘to spend a certain amount of time’, cf. *Hist.* 2.49.2 *noctem quietam...non insomnem egit*, Verg. *Aen.* 6.513–14, Liv. 21.34.8, Curt. 4.3.14, and see further *TLL* 1.1401.22–7. Abstract *captiuitas* here denotes a city’s state of being captured by an enemy (*OLD* 1b); cf. 16.16.2, *Hist.* 3.70.2, 83.2, Plin. *Paneg.* 55.7 and see further *TLL* 3.368.20–7, Malloch 2013: 350.

Iuliusque Montanus senatorii ordinis, sed qui nondum honorem capessisset: for the senator C. Iulius Montanus (*PIR*² I 435), Nero’s unfortunate victim in one such brawl, cf. *ILS* 978 (from Capena in southern Etruria), which records his *praenomen* Gaius (not recorded by Tacitus) and his status as quaestor-elect (*quaestor destinatus*), about to embark upon the first

⁴⁷⁰ At 12.67.1 and ps.-Quint. *Decl. Mai.* 3.1, it is predicated intransitively of a subject (*cuncta* and *noua culpa* respectively) meaning ‘to become known’. The only attested forms of the compound are the 3rd person singular perfect active indicative (here, 14.8.1, ps.-Quint. loc. cit.), 3rd person plural perfect active indicative (12.67.1) and 3rd person singular pluperfect active subjunctive (1.23.2).

⁴⁷¹ This puzzling reading is interpreted as *et in modum* by the *editio princeps*, but the sense does not require *et*.

stage of the *cursus honorum*, thereby confirming Tacitus' *senatorii ordinis...qui nondum honorem capessisset*.⁴⁷² His *cognomen* is revealed only here in extant literature; Dio (61.9.3) calls him Ἰούλιος...τις. Suetonius (*Nero* 26.2) does not name the senator who fought with Nero, but is in agreement with Tacitus as to his rank by describing him as *quidam laticlavius*—a man who had recently received the *latus clavius* (the broad purple stripe worn on the toga, indicating membership of the Senate).⁴⁷³ Nothing is known of Montanus' family; it is therefore uncertain whether his father was also a senator, and he had inherited his rank from him, or whether he was a *nouus homo* who had been granted the *latus clavius* by Claudius or Nero on satisfying the minimum property requirement (*census*) of one million sesterces, for which see Talbert 1984: 11–12.

Tacitus' sentence structure exhibits *uariatio*; Montanus is described by first a genitive of description (*senatorii ordinis*), then a relative clause (*qui...capessisset*); cf. 1.12.3 *Tiberiumque ipsum uictoriarum suarum quaeque in toga per tot annos egregie fecisset admonuit* and see further Sörbom 1935: 119. The generic subjunctive in the relative clause perhaps conveys the nuance of meaning 'a senator, at a stage in his career when he had not yet taken up public office' (cf. Cic. *Off.* 3.114 and see further Woodcock 1959: 115), whereas the indicative would state the bare fact 'a senator who had not yet taken up public office'.

For *honorem capessere* meaning 'to take up public office' (for *capessere* in this sense see G-G 149–50, *OLD capessere* 8, *TLL* 3.331.31–47), cf. 3.30.2 *quamquam prompto ad capessendos honores aditu*, 14.40.2, Sen. *Tranq.* 1.10, Gell. 2.7.18, Apul. *Plat.* 2.28. Cf. also 45.1 *Ollium honoribus nondum functum*.

congressus forte per tenebras cum principe, quia ui attemptantem acriter reppulerat: for Tacitus' use of *per tenebras* (meaning 'in the darkness'), cf. 14.20.5 *quod perditissimus quisque per diem concupiuerit, per tenebras audeat*, *Hist.* 1.26.1, 54.2, 81.2, 3.19.2, 21.2, 4.29.1, 36.2 and see further G–G 1091–2. The usage is otherwise largely poetic (with one instance in Plautus, four in Ovid and one each in Lucan and Silius), but acquires some currency in prose from the Augustan period onwards; cf. Vitruvius 8.2.3, Sen. *Ep.* 93.6, Gell. 14.1.33 and see further *TLL* 10.1.1131.51–60.

M's *congressi* does not agree with its singular head noun *Montanus*; Vat. Lat. 1958 restores the required *congressus*. Transmitted *quia uia temptantem acriter reppulerat* is also meaningless: 'because he had fiercely repulsed him, while he was making an attempt on the road'. Good sense is restored by Leiden BPL 16B, which posits *ui attemptantem* (a fifteenth-century spelling of *ui attemptantem*), 'while he forcibly assailed him'. The expression *aliquem ui attemptare* is unparalleled, but the analogous phrases *aliquem bello attemptare* (*Stat. Theb.* 4.71–2), *aliquid ui temptare* (*Liv.* 5.24.2, 44.13.8) and *aliquid per uim temptare* (*Sall. Iug.* 23.1) may support the conjecture; transitive *attemptare* and *temptare* (its analogous simplex form) commonly mean 'to assail someone or something by force' (*OLD attemptare* 1, *temptare* 9, *TLL* 2.1118.30–1119.24). The conjecture is economical, positing merely a false word division, and restores the balanced structure adverb–present participle–adverb–

⁴⁷² Cf. Tacitus' description (14.40.2) of the newly-appointed senator Valerius Fabianus as *capessendis honoribus destinatus* and the elder Seneca's description of his two eldest sons as newly-appointed senators (*Contr.* 2.pf.4 *foroque se et honoribus parant*).

⁴⁷³ M's original reading *Iulius quē Montanus* afforded no sense; the original scribe corrected this to *Iuliusque* by deletion of the macron. The conjecture *Iulius quidam Montanus* in Leiden BPL 16B, perhaps inspired by Suetonius' and Dio's descriptions of the man, is ingenious but probably unnecessary.

finite verb, which conveys well the impression of reciprocal violence between Nero and Montanus; it is accepted by Fisher, Goelzer and Koestermann.⁴⁷⁴

For *aliquem acriter repellere*, ‘to repulse someone fiercely’, cf. Caes. *Gall.* 5.17.3. Suetonius (*Nero* 26.2) and Dio (61.9.3) render Tacitus’ more dignified *acriter reppulerat* an understatement; Suetonius records that the emperor was *prope ad necem caesus*, while Dio observes that Montanus had given Nero black eyes and inflicted upon him so many wounds that he was compelled to remain in concealment for several days.

Tacitus neglects to record that Nero had sexually assaulted Montanus’ wife (Suet. *Nero* 26.2 *cuius uxorem adtrecauit*, Dio 61.9.3 ἀγανακτήσας ὑπὲρ τῆς γυναικός), either because he used a different source or (more probably) because his readers’ desired impression of Montanus as an innocent victim of gratuitous violence would be severely impaired if he gave any suggestion that Montanus acted out of revenge, or knew the identity of his assailant before the fighting started (Bartsch 1994: 17–19).⁴⁷⁵

deinde adgnitum orauerat, quasi exprobrasset, mori adactus est: M’s *adagnitum*, a *vox nihili*, was emended to *adgnitum* by the *editio princeps*. The implication of *adgnitum* is that Montanus did not initially recognise Nero, and therefore had no fear of acting in self-defence. Dio (61.9.3) suggests that Montanus had recognised Nero from the start, and wished to punish him for the sexual assault of his wife. Tacitus’ neglect of the suggestion of sexual assault allows him to highlight how Montanus’ misfortune was brought about by his failure to read Nero’s intentions: the emperor sought to remain anonymous, and to maintain the illusion that no-one had recognised him (Plass 1985: 206, Bartsch 1994: 18).

For *aliquem orare*, ‘to beg someone for mercy’,⁴⁷⁶ characteristic of compressed diction, cf. Plaut. *Epid.* 728, *Mil.* 574, Paul. *Fest.* p. 353.9 and see further *TLL* 9.2.1043.42–56. The sense of *quasi exprobrasset* is ‘as if he had implied a reproach against him’; for absolute *exprobrare* meaning ‘to imply a reproach’, see 21.6n.

Montanus’ apology angers Nero on two counts: first, it reveals to the emperor that Montanus, knew the identity of the man with whom he was fighting (cf. Dio 61.9.4 οὐκοῦν ἦδει Νέρωνα τύπτων), disarming the fiction whereby Nero was merely an anonymous criminal and highlighting Montanus’ dangerous refusal to uphold the fictional narrative (comparable with that of Agrippina at 16.4). Second, it implies reproach against Nero for his violent conduct; for his sensitivity to reproach, cf. 13.1, 21.6, 14.62.2, 16.10.1, 22.2. For *aliquem mori adigere*, ‘to force someone to commit suicide’, cf. 15.35.1 *Torquatus Silanus mori adigitur*.

⁴⁷⁴ Prof. Woodman (*per litteras*) objects to the conjecture on the ground that Tacitus nowhere else uses compound *attemptare* in this sense (G-G 111), always using simplex *temptare* (cf. 4.48.3 and see further G-G 1636 Ba). Given Tacitus’ well-attested fondness for variation of simplex and compound forms, this objection may not be decisive, but one could equally read *ui temptantem*, positing a simple *Perseverationsfehler* and bringing the expression closer to those of Sallust and Livy cited. Puteolanus (1476) conjectured *uim temptantem*, ‘while he was making an attempt to use force’ (*OLD temptare* 7), accepted by Heubner; while this too is economical (*uim* could be corrupted to *uia* by perseveration after *quia*) and paralleled at ps.-Quint. *Decl. Mai.* 3.17, it coheres less well with *quia...acriter reppulerat* than *ui attemptantem*, and does not convey as neatly the desired impression of reciprocal violence. Prof. Woodman (*per litteras*) also suggests the possibility of deleting *uia* (on the ground that it arose through dittography after *quia*); this would leave *quia temptantem acriter reppulerat*, with *temptantem* to be understood as meaning ‘his assailant’ (*OLD temptare* 9), thereby preserving the desired context of reciprocal assaults.

⁴⁷⁵ It is not desirable, therefore, to follow Ritter (1863: 115) in emending transmitted *uia* to *uim* and positing a lacuna before *temptantem* (to be filled with <*aduersus uxorem eius*>).

⁴⁷⁶ Cf. Dio 61.9.4 συγγνώμην αἰτούμενος.

For *adigere* governing an accusative of the person forced and an infinitive, analogous to *cogere*, see G-G 38β, H-S 530, *TLL* 1.678.59–71. The construction is largely restricted to verse before Tacitus' *Annales*. In his earlier works, Tacitus favoured the construction with *cogere* which was standard in prose; cf. *Hist.* 2.41.2, Sen. *Tranq.* 16.1 *ubi Socrates cogitur in carcere mori* (in a comparable context of compelling someone to die).

25.3 Nero autem: M reads *Nero tū* (intelligible only as *tum*); this makes sense but alongside *in posterum, tum* ('thereafter'; see *OLD tum* 8) seems redundant and lacks rhetorical point, nor does it provide any connection with the previous sentence; a connecting particle, such as Petersen's (1835: 5) *tamen* or Andresen's (1913: ad loc.) *autem* is required.⁴⁷⁷ The latter, accepted by most modern editors, is perhaps preferable, as *tamen* has an adversative force which seems too strong for the context, and is slightly further from the paradox.⁴⁷⁸

metuentior: the recondite comparative *metuentior*, 'more afraid' (*TLL* 8.906.5–6), is otherwise only attested in poetry, at Ov. *Ep.* 19.83, *Fast.* 6.259, *Met.* 1.323, Sil. 8.501. The form perhaps arose in republican times along with other comparatives derived from present participles, such as *pudentior*, *egentior* and *amantior*, all of which are found in Cicero (*Verr.* 2.3.160, *Flacc.* 53, *Cluent.* 12). Comparatives derived from present participles, however recondite, could have had a prosaic, Ciceronian flavour; it is therefore uncertain as to whether Tacitus saw *metuentior* as a conscious poeticism.⁴⁷⁹

milites sibi et plerosque gladiatores circumdedit: for *plerique* meaning *permulti*, cf. 3.1.2, Cic. *Inv.* 1.39, Sall. *Cat.* 51.9, Gell. 17.3.4 and see further G-G 1123B, *TLL* 10.1.2428.69–2429.2. Suetonius (*Nero* 26.2) suggests that a guard formed of praetorian tribunes followed *procul et occulte*, in contrast with Tacitus' version, which implies that Nero was closely surrounded by them, as if they were his bodyguard. Tacitus' version of the story perhaps renders Nero's disguise less effective, as it would become apparent to potential opponents that the person in slave's clothing was of sufficient status to warrant protection, thereby discouraging potential opponents from retaliating. Tacitus' Nero, however, would be able to inflict greater injury upon innocent citizens without risk to his own safety; this might increase his readers' sense of injustice at unavenged *saevitia*.

qui rixarum initia modica et quasi priuata sinerent: 'who would allow [*OLD sinere* 4] the initial stages of brawls to take place, as long as they were restrained, as if the fighting were among private citizens.'⁴⁸⁰ The praetorians are complicit in Nero's *licentia*: they allow the emperor to engage in brawls, and therefore remain comparatively discreet as long as his opponents do not threaten his safety.

si a laesis ualidius ageretur, arma inferebant: 'if he [sc. Nero] were put under too much pressure by those injured [*OLD agere* 5], they [sc. the soldiers] would bring in their weapons.' In this conditional sequence, the use of the imperfect subjunctive in the protasis

⁴⁷⁷ Halm (1856: ad loc.) conjectured *iam*, which has point but does not achieve the required connection.

⁴⁷⁸ Nipperdey's (1852) objection to *autem* on the ground that Tacitus uses it only in *oratio recta*, never in narrative seems groundless; *autem* is securely attested in narrative at *Germ.* 13.1, 16.3.

⁴⁷⁹ Emendations of the comparative, such as Heinsius' *metu cautior* (an expression for which there are no parallels) and Koestermann's (1967: 282) *me<tu int>entior* (on the basis of 16.8.1) are superfluous, and may even eliminate a choice usage; *metuentior* is a securely attested form of recognisable derivation which fits the sense well. Since Tacitus uses the analogous *amantius* at 1.43.1, the use of such forms is hardly alien to his style.

⁴⁸⁰ The relative clause *qui...sinerent* is epexegetic of *milites...plerosque gladiatores*; the relative clause's verb is therefore in the generic subjunctive (Woodcock 1959: 115–17).

combined with that of the imperfect indicative in the apodosis is suggestive of an iterative condition in which *si* almost has the sense ‘whenever’; cf. Caes. *Civ.* 3.110.4 *quorum siquis a domino prehenderetur consensu militum eripiebatur* and see further Pinkster 2015: 659–60.

25.4 ludicram quoque licentiam et fautores histrionum uelut in proelia conuertit: for **ludicer* meaning ‘theatrical, histrionic’ (analogous to *histrionalis*), cf. 14.14.1 *ludicrum in modum*, 16.1 *ludicrae... imperatoris artes*, 16.4.1, *Dial.* 10.5 and see further G–G 786, *OLD ludi(cer)* 2, *TLL* 7.1761.65–84. *Ludicram* here forms part of the semantic field of theatricality, perhaps anticipating the two cited passages in *Annales* 14 which describe Nero’s penchant for public spectacle (Bartsch 1994: 8). Since both Suetonius (*Nero* 26.2) and Dio (61.8.1) record that the actors themselves rioted, as well as their supporters, it may be possible to interpret *ludicram... licentiam et fautores histrionum* as a brachylogy (with a somewhat surreal quality) for *ludicram... licentiam et licentiam fautorum histrionum*, ‘the licence of actors, and that of actors’ supporters.’ For the unruliness among actors and their supporters which Nero promoted, see 24.1n. For the constructional *uariatio*, whereby *licentiam* is qualified by an adjective but *fautores* by an objective genitive, cf. 12.51.2 *fugam ob metum hostilem et mariti caritatem tolerauit*, *Hist.* 3.43.1, *Dial.* 29.3 and see further Sörbom 1935: 88.

Velut (‘as it were’) introduces a tension between literal and figurative, which underlines the blurring of theatricality and reality characterising both this section of the narrative and the account of Montanus. Just as the performers stage mock battles in Neronian theatres (cf. Dio 61.9.5), so too do the spectators, turning themselves into the spectacle. For the conception of the Neronian theatre as a place to be observed to perform a specific social role as much as a place to observe a spectacle, see further Freudenburg 2017: 118–19, Leigh 2017: 26–7. Suetonius (*Nero* 26.2) conceives of the disturbances in the theatres as a reciprocal role-play between the emperor, the rest of the audience and the actors, in which the rival actors and their supporting factions threw stones and broken benches at each other; Nero responded in turn by hurling missiles at the actors and their supporters.

impunitate et praemiis: ‘by [sc. granting] impunity and rewards’; the two ablatives are instrumental. For the collocation *impunitas et praemia* which juxtaposes abstract and concrete, cf. *Hist.* 4.7.3 *frueretur praemiis et impunitate*, Liv. 39.19.7. For similar collocations of abstract and concrete, cf. 1.55.2 *tempus... quo crimina et innoxios discerneret*, *Hist.* 4.64.2 *haud facile libertas et domini miscentur* and see further Draeger 1882: 101, Sörbom 1935: 75.

ipse occultus et plerumque coram prospectans: ‘himself a spectator, concealed but usually visible [*OLD coram* 2].’ For the *uariatio* of adjective and adverb, often used to emphasise antithetical properties which show a dichotomy between appearance and reality, cf. *Hist.* 2.23.5 *modo palam turbidis uocibus, modo occultis ad Othonem litteris*, 98.1 and see further Sörbom 1935: 96, Ash 2007: 142. For absolute *prospectare* meaning ‘to watch, be a viewer’, cf. *Hist.* 3.68.2 *prospectantibus etiam feminis*, Catull. 64.52, Liv. 29.26.8, Curt. 10.5.15 and see further *TLL* 10.2.2204.2–19. Suetonius suggests that Nero was more clearly visible to the spectators, but nonetheless took the same pleasure in watching the rioting and encouraging it (*Nero* 26.2 *e parte proscaeni superiore signifer simul et spectator aderat*). Dio (61.8.2), like Tacitus, focuses more on Nero’s secrecy, suggesting that he was secretly (λάθρᾱ) brought into the theatre on a sedan chair so that he could discreetly watch and take pleasure in the rioting.

discordi populo et grauioris motus terrore: ‘since the people were in a state of discord and since there was a threat of a more serious disturbance’; the causal ablative absolute is used predicatively (K-S 2.779). *Variatio* is achieved between the concrete *discordi populo* and the abstract *terrore*; for a similar variation of abstract and concrete, cf. Agr. 45.4 *adsidere ualetudini, fouere deficientem* and see further Sörbom 1935: 75.

non aliud remedium repertum est quam ut histriones Italia pellerentur: ‘no other solution was found than to expel the actors from Italy.’ For the correlatives *non aliud* (either substantivised or qualifying an abstract noun)...*quam ut* (introducing a clause which is epexegetic of the substantive), meaning ‘no alternative...than to take a given course of action’, cf. 1.9.4 *non aliud discordantis patriae remedium fuisse quam <ut> ab uno regetur*, Liv. 7.17.12, Curt. 7.3.14, Traian. Plin. *Ep.* 10.55 and see further *TLL* 1.1634.21–9. For the periodic expulsion of actors by emperors as a means of quelling civil unrest, see 24.1n.

milesque theatro rursus adsideret: Nero’s experiment in removing praetorian and urban cohorts from theatres in order to give the spectators a greater impression of *libertas* (and to ensure that the praetorians were not induced to participate in popular rioting) ended in failure barely a year after it began; the cohorts were restored permanently at this point (24.1n.).

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