AHIS3120 - The Julio-Claudians: The Emergence of Empire

Course Co-ordinator: Jane Bellemore
Room: MCLG24
Ph: 4921 5231
Fax: 4921 6933
Email: Jane.Bellemore@Newcastle.edu.au
Consultation hours: By appointment
Semester: Semester 2 - 2008
Unit Weighting: 10
Teaching Methods: Lecture, Tutorial

Brief Course Description
Studies aspects of the rule of the first Roman emperors. Emphasis falls on political change towards a court-based society, and the development of a dynastic system.

Contact Hours
Lecture for 2 Hours per Week for 13 Weeks
Tutorial for 1 Hour per Week for 12 Weeks; tutorials run weeks 2-13

Learning Materials/Texts
Suetonius, The Twelve Caesars, translated by R. Graves (Penguin)
Tacitus, The Annals of Imperial Rome, translated by M. Grant (Penguin)

Course Objectives
1. Isolating the most important sources on the Julio-Claudians and gaining an understanding of their coverage and limitations.
2. Developing of a critical approach to early imperial Rome.
3. Understanding the operation of imperial politics, and differences of emphasis from the Republican period.
4. Appreciation of the operation of court society and its impact on social structure.
5. Ability to express such appreciation and criticisms succinctly and accurately.

Course Content
The emergence of the imperial system
The Senate and the Emperor
Social Change in the Empire

Course Outline Issued and Correct as at: Week 1, Semester 2 - 2008

CTS Download Date: 14th July, 2008
Imperial Succession
Change in the age of the Julio-Claudians

Assessment Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Items</th>
<th>Commentary</th>
<th>Essay</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>Assessment is a combination of progressive coursework and a major essay. Two tutorial papers or equivalent task @ 25% (circa 1000 words each) = 50% - due early-middle and middle-late semester. These papers aim at training students in assessing the bias and content of major sources in relation to a specific historical problem.</td>
<td>One major essay or equivalent task = 50% (circa 2000 words) - due end semester. This is a major individual research and writing assignment selected from a choice of topics related to central themes of the course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>TOTAL: 4000 words</td>
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Assumed Knowledge
20 units at any level in Ancient History or History

Callaghan Campus Timetable
AHIS3120 THE JULIO-CLAUDIANS: THE EMERGENCE OF EMPIRE
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 2 - 2008
Lecture and Tutorial Tuesday 11:00 - 13:00 [V10] Commencing Week 2
or Tuesday 10:00 - 11:00 [GP2-16] Commencing Week 2

Plagiarism
University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. A student plagiarises if he or she presents the thoughts or works of another as one's own. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

- copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;
- using another's ideas without due acknowledgment;
- working with others without permission and presenting the resulting work as though it was completed independently.

Plagiarism is not only related to written works, but also to material such as data, images, music, formulae, websites and computer programs.

Aiding another student to plagiarise is also a violation of the Plagiarism Policy and may invoke a penalty.

For further information on the University policy on plagiarism, please refer to the Policy on Student Academic Integrity at the following link -


The University has established a software plagiarism detection system called Turnitin. When you submit assessment items please be aware that for the purpose of assessing any assessment item the University may -

- Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or
- Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking).
- Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking
**Written Assessment Items**

Students may be required to provide written assessment items in electronic form as well as hard copy.

**Marks and Grades Released During Term**

All marks and grades released during the term, are indicative only until formally approved by the Head of School on the recommendation of the School Assessment body.

**Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations**

Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date, as advised in the Course Outline, unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension of time for submission of the item. University policy is that an assessment item submitted after the due date, without an approved extension, will be penalised.

Any student:

1. who is applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or

2. whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment;

must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, to the appropriate officer following the instructions provided in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Procedure - Policy 000641.

Note: different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks.

Please go to the Policy at [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html) for further information, particularly for information on the options available to you.

Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:

- **Requests for Special Consideration** must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.

- **Requests for Extensions of Time on Assessment Items** must be lodged no later than the due date of the item.

- **Requests for Rescheduling Exams** must be received no later than ten working days prior the first date of the examination period

Your application may not be accepted if it is received after the deadline. In the first instance, students who are unable to meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak to their Program Officer or their Program Executive if studying in Singapore.

**Changing your Enrolment**

The census dates below are the last dates to withdraw without academic penalty. For onshore students, withdrawal on or before the census date means no financial penalty.

For semester 2 courses: 31 August 2008

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of semester. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of semester will result in a fail grade.

Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of semester/trimester, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of semester/trimester must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with staff in the Student Hubs or with your Program Executive at PSB if you are a Singapore student.

To check or change your enrolment online, please refer to myHub - Self Service for Students

[https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au](https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au)
Faculty Information

The Student Hubs are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students studying in Australia.

The four Student Hubs are located at:

Callaghan campus

• Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Union Building
• Hunter Hub: Student Services Centre, Hunter side of campus

City Precinct

• City Hub & Information Common: University House, ground floor in combination with an Information Common for the City Precinct

Ourimbah campus

• Ourimbah Hub: Administration Building

Faculty websites

Faculty of Education and Arts

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/

Contact details

Callaghan, City and Port Macquarie

Phone: 02 4921 5000

Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

Ourimbah

Phone: 02 4348 4030

Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

The Dean of Students

Resolution Precinct

Phone: 02 4921 5806
Fax: 02 4921 7151

Email: resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

Various services are offered by the University Student Support Unit:


Alteration of this Course Outline

No change to this course outline will be permitted after the end of the second week of the term except in exceptional circumstances and with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of any approved changes to this outline.

Web Address for Rules Governing Undergraduate Academic Awards


STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS

The University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness. If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies, please feel free to discuss your
support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator.

Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register please contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, or via email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au

As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester.

For more information related to confidentiality and documentation please visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website at: www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability

Online Tutorial Registration:

Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system. Refer - http://studinfo1.newcastle.edu.au/rego/stud_choose_login.cfm

NB: Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

Studentmail and Blackboard: Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

Important Additional Information

Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
- Online copy submission to Turnitin
- Penalties for Late Assignments
- Special Circumstances
- No Assignment Re-submission
- Re-marks & Moderations
- Return of Assignments
- Preferred Referencing Style
- Student Representatives
- Student Communication
- Essential Online Information for Students
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<th>Tutorial</th>
<th>lecturer</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>22nd July</td>
<td>The Empire in AD 14</td>
<td><strong>No tutorial</strong></td>
<td>HML</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><em>Sources for the Julio-Claudians</em></td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>29th July</td>
<td><em>Domus Augusta</em></td>
<td>1. ‘Serial Killer’</td>
<td>JB</td>
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<td>Accession of Tiberius</td>
<td><em>Stalks Rhodes</em></td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>5th August</td>
<td>Tiberius and Germanicus</td>
<td>2. <em>Livia: wife, mother,</em></td>
<td>HML</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trial of Piso</td>
<td><em>stepmother, part-time murderess</em></td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>12th August</td>
<td>Tiberius and the Senate</td>
<td>3. <em>The death of</em></td>
<td>HML</td>
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<td>Rise and Fall of Sejanus</td>
<td><em>Germanicus</em></td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>19th August</td>
<td>Treason Trials</td>
<td>4. <em>Drusus as son</em></td>
<td>JB</td>
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<td>Trial of Jesus</td>
<td><em>and heir</em></td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>26th August</td>
<td>‘I Claudius’ – video (Sejanus)</td>
<td><strong>No tutorial</strong></td>
<td>HML</td>
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<td>‘I Claudius’ – discussion</td>
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**First Take-home Commentary, due 26th August**

| 7.   | 2nd Sept. | Last years of Tiberius                                      | 5. *Conspiracy of*        | JB       |
|      |          | Reign of Gaius/Caligula                                      | *Sejanus*                 |          |
|      |          | *Claudius and the Senate*                                    |                           |          |
| 9.   | 16th Sept | Claudius’ court                                              | 7. *What was wrong*       | HML      |
|      |          | Emperor and Provinces                                        | *with Claudius?*           |          |
| 10.  | 23rd Sept | Death of Claudius                                            | 8. *Video discussion*     | JB       |
|      |          | *quinquennium Neronis*                                       | *Gaius/Caligula*           |          |

**Second Take-home Commentary, due 23rd September**

**SEMESTER BREAK** (Monday, 29th September – Friday, 10th October)
# Lecture and Tutorial List

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Lectures</th>
<th>Tutorial</th>
<th>lecturer</th>
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</table>
| 11.  | 14\(^{th}\) October | Advisers to Nero  
Nero as Emperor | 9. *The murder of Agrippina* | JB       |
| 12.  | 21\(^{st}\) October | Corbulo in the East  
Pisonian Conspiracy | 10. *Fire of Rome and the Christians* | HML      |
| 13.  | 28\(^{th}\) October | Nero’s Building programme  
Fall of the Julio-Claudians | *No tutorial* | HML      |

14. 4\(^{th}\) November  **No Classes - Major Essay Due (Friday, 7\(^{th}\) November)**

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### Assessment:

1. Sources assignment One  
   25% (Tues 26\(^{th}\) August)
2. Sources assignment Two  
   25% (Tues 23\(^{rd}\) September)
3. Major Essay  
   50% (Friday, 7\(^{th}\) November)

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Jane Bellemore, course co-ordinator, ph. 4921 5231, room MCLG 24

[Jane.Bellemore@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Jane.Bellemore@newcastle.edu.au)

Contact for Hugh Lindsay: 4921 5226 ([Hugh.Lindsay@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Hugh.Lindsay@newcastle.edu.au))
Notes on Bibliography

Ancient Sources for Julio-Claudians

Dio Cassius *Roman History*, vol 7 (books 56-60), translated by E. Cary (Loeb Classical Library)
Suetonius *The Twelve Caesars*, translated by R. Graves (Penguin)
Tacitus *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, translated by M. Grant (Penguin)
Velleius Paterculus *compendium of Roman History*, trans F.W. Shipley (Loeb, 1924)

Translations of these works and others are available on the internet, many from the useful site known as *Lacus Curtius*. The important ones are as follows:

Dio Cassius (complete works):

Suetonius (all the ‘Lives’):
http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Suetonius/12Caesars/home.html

Velleius Paterculus:
http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Velleius_Paterculus/home.html

Also Tacitus *Annals*:
http://classics.mit.edu/Tacitus/annals.html

Some important documentary sources for the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius have been translated by the Documentary Research Centre at Macquarie University:

http://www.anchist.mq.edu.au/doccentre/Aug&Tib.html

Modern References:

Levick, B. *Claudius*, New Haven, 1993
Seager, R. *Tiberius*, London, 2004

There are many reference books that you may consult for his course, most particularly, the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, edd S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (Oxford, 1996) available in the reference section of the library (R938.003 OXFO 1996).

An easy overall view of the period can be found in Th. Wiedemann, *The Julio-Claudians* (Bristol, 1989)

Apart from searching the net (Google, Google Scholar, Google Books), you might also see also these data-bases for further bibliography:
http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/cgi-bin/amphoras/tocfind


Also in the reference section of the library is the very useful collection of the details of all books and journals published on Classical topics each year: *L'Année philologique* (Paris, 1928-2000) S016.88 1. For this journal on-line, see:
http://www.annee-philologique.com/aph/

All books and articles cited as reading for the tutorials are available in the Short-Loans Section of the Auchmuty Library. They may, in addition, be available as 3-day loans or on the open shelves.

Since there are books on all of the major characters of the Julio-Claudian period, for example by A.A. Barrett, on Caligula, etc.; and on later characters by M.Griffin and others, I will assume that you will be using these to fill gaps in the reading for tutorials and lectures
Notes on Assessment

Commentaries

I have compiled an exemplar of a commentary-style exercise, which can be found in this booklet. This example is not meant to be prescriptive since each excerpt from the sources is different and must be treated individually, but the general format should be followed.

Essay

Precise topics for the essay will be handed out during the semester, but the general idea will be to examine the historical reliability of the sources as they portray some incident, theme or personality. All the work that we do during tutorials and for the commentary exercises will give you practice in the techniques required for the essay, and, on this basis, you will be in a good position to evaluate any material to be found in the ancient sources.
Tutorial 1: Week 2

'Serial Killer' Stalks Rhodes

The rationale behind this tutorial is a review of the major sources for the reign of Tiberius to determine the nature of their bias against him. In this series of readings, we will be considering some comments concerning Tiberius' self-imposed period of exile on the island of Rhodes during the period from 6 BC until AD 2.

In 6 BC, after having just been elevated to the position of second man in the empire behind the princeps Augustus, Tiberius effectively abdicated and left Rome for an unspecified period. In his absence, Augustus began to promote his adopted sons (in 6 B.C. Gaius Caesar turned 14 and Lucius Caesar, 11), but both these died young, Lucius in A.D. 2 and Gaius, two years later. In A.D. 4 Augustus adopted Tiberius, making him once again his heir-apparent, and Tiberius served Augustus obediently for ten years, and then succeeded him as emperor in A.D. 14.

Read the following material from the ancient sources:
- Tacitus Annals 6.20-2
- Suetonius Tiberius 10-14, esp. 14
- Dio Cassius 55.11.1-3 (A.D. 4)

Note differences between the accounts, and also consider illogical points, irregularities and even the impossibilities of the events described.

What is the evident thinking behind each of the sources?
What are their accounts really trying to say about Tiberius?

Modern Sources

Bellemore, J., ‘Tiberius and Rhodes’, Klio 89 (2997) 417-53

Tacitus
Martin, R. H., Tacitus (London, 1981) 3 Day Loan 878.6/20 B
Syme, R. Tacitus (Oxford, 1957) 937.06 TACI-2 SYME V.1, 2
Walker, B. The Annals of Tacitus. A Study in the Writing of History (Manchester, 1952) 937.07 TACI-2 WALK

Suetonius
Baldwin, B. Suetonius (Amsterdam, 1983) 937.07092 SUET-2 BALD
Hurley, D.W. An historical and historiographical commentary on Suetonius' Life of C. Caligula (Atlanta, c1993) 937.07092 SUET-2 HURL
Lindsay, H.M. Caligula /Suetonius (London, 1993) 878.01 SUET-1 CALI 1993
Lounsbury, R.C The arts of Suetonius: an introduction (New York, c1987) 937.07092 SUET-2 LOUN

Dio Cassius
Tutorial 2: Week 3

Livia: wife, mother, stepmother and part-time murderer

Read the sources for comments concerning Livia:

1. Role in the promotion of Tiberius: Tacitus Annals 1.3-4, 10, 13-4, cf. 2.42; Suetonius Tiberius 12, 14, 21, 26, cf. 50-1; Dio 56.31, 57.3, 12, cf. 58.2 (excerpt from Dio’s Roman History)
2. Role in the death of Augustus: Tacitus Annals 1.5 (See Goodyear’s commentary); Dio Cassius 56.30.1-2; cf. Suetonius Augustus 98-9, Tiberius 21; Dio 56.30
3. Role in the death of Agrippa Postumus: Tacitus Annals 1.6, Suetonius Tiberius 2; Dio 57.3, cf. 55.32.1-2
4. Hatred of Germanicus/Agrippina: Tacitus Annals 1.33, 2.43, cf. 5.2; Dio 57.18 (excerpts)
5. Livia’s obituary: Tacitus Annals 5.1; Dio 58.2; cf. Velleius Paterculus 2.130

How can such criticism of Livia be rated? Is any of it true? Was it contemporary gossip or did it ‘come to light’ only after the downfall of the Julio-Claudians? Are charges being levelled at Livia alone, or are their other target; for example, Tiberius or even the principate itself?

In the case of the Annals, much of the criticism of Livia appears in the Book One. How would such material influence the reader?

What can we tell about the other sources through their criticism of Livia?

Modern Sources (read only a selection)

Barrett, A.A. Livia: first lady of Imperial Rome (New Haven, c2002) 937.07092 LIVI-2 BARR
Bartman, E. Portraits of Livia: imaging the imperial woman in Augustan Rome (Cambridge, 1999) Q733.5 BART
Vidén, G., Women in Roman literature: attitudes of authors under the early empire (Göteborg, c1993) 870.9 VIDE
Watson, P.A. Ancient stepmothers: myth, misogyny and reality (Leiden, 1995) 880.09 WATS
Tutorial 3: Week 4

The Death of Germanicus

In AD 19 Germanicus, the adopted, elder son of Tiberius and heir-apparent to the principate, died near Antioch in Syria. In the following year, the ex-governor of Syria, Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso was arraigned on a number of charges, including the murder of Germanicus. The charges were examined in the senate, with Tiberius presiding. In Book Two of the Annals Tacitus gives us an account both of Germanicus’ and Piso’s movements leading up to Germanicus’ death, and of the subsequent proceedings in the senate, but we also possess an inscription transcribing a record of the relevant senatorial meetings concerning the treason charges laid against Piso (SCPP). This decree of the senate has been validated by the hand of Tiberius himself, and, in effect, is the ‘official’ version of events. This gives us a unique opportunity to compare and contrast what the imperial house claimed as the true record of the events of AD 19 and how Tacitus covered these same happenings.

There are naturally some major differences between the accounts, the first being that the ambit of Tacitus’ version is much broader than that detailed by the Senatus Consultum, and, the second, that the official account accepts that Piso did not murder Germanicus, whereas Tacitus does not. In fact, Tacitus continues to see Piso not just as the murderer of Germanicus but even as the ‘secret’ agent of Tiberius and Livia, entrusted by them to eliminate Germanicus. There are a number of other points of disagreement between the two versions of events.

1. We will consider first whether Piso murdered or could have murdered Germanicus.

Read the relevant sections of the Senatus Consultum Concerning Gnaeus Piso the Elder, to be found in Latin with facing English at the following site (American Journal of Philology 120 (1999), translated by Cynthia Damon):

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american%5Fjournal%5FPhilology/toc/ajp120.1.html

A translation of and commentary on the inscription have also been prepared by M. Griffin, ‘The Senate’s Story’, Journal of Roman Studies 87 (1997) 249-63.


2. What can we deduce about the relatives strengths and weaknesses of both versions of these two affairs?

3. Can we say whether or not Tacitus used the Senatus Consultum as a main source, or was his debt indirect?

Modern Sources

There are many articles concerning the inscription to be found at the site:

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american%5Fjournal%5FPhilology/toc/ajp120.1.html#articles1


Otherwise, consult the JRS article by Griffin, and the commentary on Book Three of the Annals by A.J. Woodman and Martin (Cambridge, 1996).

See also:

Tutorial 4: Week 5

Drusus as son and heir

After the death of Germanicus, Drusus Caesar became heir to Tiberius. Drusus is a minor, yet important character in this period of history.

What role did Drusus occupy after AD 14 and prior to the death of Germanicus in 19? Was he being trained as a potential successor by Tiberius? On Drusus’ command for 18, see Tac. Ann. 2.43-4, 62-4

What is the evidence for Drusus’ status immediately after the death of Germanicus? See, for example, Tac. Ann. 2.64, 84, 3.8, 11, 19, 22; SCPP lines 126-30,132-6 (December 20).

Consider AD 21, the year of Drusus’ second consulship. Did he perform creditably as consul? (Tac. Ann. 3.31-8)?

What was the significance of Drusus’ gaining tribunician power in 22 (Tac. Ann. 3.56, 59)? Was his treatment at this point by Tiberius different from that he was accorded while Germanicus was still alive?

Modern Sources

Rogers, R.S. ‘Drusus Caesar’s Tibunician Power’, AJPh 61 (1940) 457-9
Rogers, R.S. Studies in the reign of Tiberius (Baltimore, 1943)
Sinclair, P. Tacitus the Sententious Historian (Pennsylvania, 1995)
Commentary Exercise 1 due 23rd September
Worth 25%

Comment on TWO of the following four passages, one taken from each of the first four tutorials. Do not link the passages you have chosen for your commentary.

1. Tacitus Suetonius 14
When the ship hove into sight Tiberius happened to be strolling along the cliffs with Thrasyllus the learned astrologer, whom he had made a member of his household. Now, Tiberius was losing faith in Thrasyllus’ powers of divination, and regretted having rashly confided secrets to him; for, despite his rosy predictions, everything seemed to be going wrong. Thrasyllus was, indeed, in immediate danger of being pushed over the cliff when he pointed out to sea and announced that the distant ship brought good news; a lucky stroke which persuaded Tiberius of his trustworthiness.

2. Tacitus Annals 1.33
Yet Germanicus suffered from the fact that his grandmother and uncle hated him, for reasons which were unfair but all the more potent. For Nero Drusus still lived on in Roman memories. It was believed that if he had obtained control of the empire he would have brought back the free Republic. The hopes and goodwill thus engendered passed to his son, Germanicus. For this young man’s unassuming personality and popular manner were very different from the haughty, ambiguous looks and works of Tiberius. Ill-feeling among the women made things worse. The Augusta had a step-mother’s aversion to Agrippina.

3. Tacitus Annals 2.71
‘Even if I were dying a natural death’, he said, ‘I should have a legitimate grudge against the gods for prematurely parting me, at this young age, from my parents, children, and country. But it is the wickedness of Piso and Plancina that have cut me off. I ask you to take my last requests to your heart. Tell my father and brother of the harrowing afflictions and ruinous conspiracies which have brought my wretched life to this miserable close. My relatives, those who shared my prospects, even those who envied me in my life, will lament that the once flourishing survivor of many campaigns has fallen to a woman’s treachery!’

4. Senatus consultum de Cn Pisone Patre 126-30 (trans M Griffin)
… it [the senate] makes a strong plea and request that he [Tiberius] devote all the care that he previously divided between his two sons to the one whom he still has, and the senate hopes that the immortal gods will devote all the more care to one who remains, the more they realise that the benefit of the commonwealth rests for the future on one man alone...
Commentary Exercise - Exemplar

How to deal with a source-examination exercise

The following is an exemplar to help you deal with commentary-style answers. For example, you might be provided with the following extract by Suetonius and asked to comment upon it:

Such virtuous conduct brought Germanicus rich rewards. He was so deeply respected and loved by all his acquaintances that Augustus – I need hardly mention his other relatives – wondered for a long time whether to make him his successor, but at last ordered Tiberius to adopt him.

[Suetonius Life of Gaius 4]

1) Set the piece of evidence given within a context, both the immediate and the broader context. Often this will include a specific reference to the episode and general story-line of a particular work, or to the thematic imperatives. Where possible you should date and locate the material. Consider my 'comments' on the above passage:

Suetonius is drawing a contrast between the beloved Germanicus and his ‘monster’ son Gaius. The life of the former was one of virtue and his death was regretted, whereas Gaius’ life was abhorrent and his death a source of rejoicing. After three chapters describing Germanicus in the period after AD 7, mainly during his eastern command of AD 18-19, Suetonius then claims that Germanicus’s virtues were so apparent that Augustus considered making him his outright successor in AD 4. Suetonius adds to this claim by referring to Germanicus’ triumphal return to Rome from Germany in AD 16/17 (after the death of Augustus).

2) Discuss the problems or issues raised by the extract, citing where possible other evidence to substantiate or contradict the extract:

Although Suetonius’ claim is matched by Tacitus Annals 4.57, it is anachronistic. In AD 4 Tiberius at 46 was an experienced general and politician. Germanicus was about 18 and untried, and he obtained only the lowly rank of quaestor in AD 7. Suetonius omits (cf. Suet. Tib. 15; also Vell. Pat. 2.103-4) that in AD 4 Augustus adopted his grandson, Agrippa Postumus. While Augustus wanted Tiberius as his immediate successor, he clearly wanted Agrippa to succeed him eventually. The sources fail to consider the lowly position of Germanicus and ignore Agrippa altogether. Had Augustus wanted Germanicus as his successor, he could have promoted him quickly, as he did his grandsons Gaius and Lucius (consuls at age 19), or he could have made his will, written in AD 13 (Suet. Aug. 101), favour Germanicus, consul in AD12 and then holding an important command in Germany; yet he did not do this.

3) Resolve the problem/s.

Suetonius was no doubt thinking of the period around death of Augustus in AD 14 (also Tacitus Annals 1.3), as his context reveals, when Agrippa had been disowned (Velleius Paterculus 2.112.7; Tacitus Annals 1.3, Dio Cassius 55.13.1a-2 ignore the adoption of Agrippa (cf. 55.32.1-2)) and Germanicus was a viable successor. Suetonius elsewhere mentions Augustus’ doubts about Tiberius’ succession in the context of AD 14 (Tiberius 21) but dismisses these, and he notes that Tiberius easily brushed aside rivals (Tiberius 22, 25). Suetonius condemns himself by his inconsistency.

All sources suggest that Tiberius was not the rightful heir, and Suetonius and Tacitus agree that Germanicus was preferred. Tacitus claims that Livia dissuaded Augustus from promoting Germanicus, and Dio 57.3. 3 has Livia actually change Augustus’ will, omitting either Germanicus or Agrippa. They are all following the same tradition, but Suetonius ignores Livia and attempts to validate his case by embedding Augustus’ preference for Germanicus in a pile of pro-Germanicus material, dated mainly after AD 14.

That Augustus preferred Germanicus appears implausible on chronological grounds in AD 4 and is denied later by his will. In any case he could not have known Augustus’ unfulfilled intentions. The story probably dates to AD 41, when Claudius was seeking legitimacy for his principate. In addition, Suetonius may have included this suspect material to heighten the contrast between Gaius and his father.
Tutorial 5: Week 7

Conspiracy of Sejanus

The ‘conspiracy’ of Sejanus needs to be examined in two parts: his alleged role in Drusus’ death in September AD 23, which was revealed only after Sejanus’ execution eight years later; and the reason for his execution in AD 31. The events are inextricably linked, however, and you may need to consider the two episodes together.

1. Consider Tacitus’ description of Drusus death (Annals 4.1-3, 7-12). What problems are apparent in his account? Note also Suet. Tib. 52, Claud. 57 and Dio 57.22. Velleius Paterculus 2.127-8, however, knows nothing of suspicions against Sejanus.

What problems are apparent in these accounts? Can we really determine whether Sejanus poisoned Drusus? If not, why was this charge made against him?

Unfortunately, the sections of the Annals covering the years from 29-31 are missing, and we need to guess how Tacitus depicted Sejanus’ exposure as Drusus’ murderer. See Tacitus Annals 4.11, cf. 5.6-9, 6.2, 3 (with Suetonius Tiberius 61), 7-10, 14, 19. On the other hand, both Suetonius (Tiberius 62, cf. 55, 61, 65) and Dio (58.11) refer to a connection between Sejanus and Drusus, but we may doubt their accounts (Dio exists only in excerpted fragments at this point).

If there are problems establishing a firm connection between Sejanus and the death of Drusus, are there sufficient grounds for us to question the assertion that Sejanus and Livi(ll)a killed Drusus?

2. Secondly, consider the accusation of conspiracy made against Sejanus in October 31. Try to reconstruct the events after May AD 31. What precise form did Sejanus’ conspiracy allegedly take?

For this, read relevant sections of Dio Book 58. See also Suet. Tib. 48, 55, 61, 65; Gaius/Cal. 12, 30; Claud. 6, cf. 27. See also the material inscribed on the Fasti Ostienses for AD 31 (Braud 98, but note that the name ‘Apicata’ has been restored by modern editors and one may question this name, and I suggest that Livi(ll)a is the restoration of Sejanus’ wife in October 31).

Modern Sources

Boddington, A. ‘Sejanus, whose conspiracy?’, AJPh 84 (1963) 1-16
Sinclair, P. ‘Tacitus’ presentation of Livia Julia wife of Tiberius’ son Drusus’, AJPh 111 (1990) 238-56
Tutorial 6: Week 8

Gaius in the North

Discuss the chronology of Gaius’ northern campaigns? Did Gaius want military glory, or did he have other concerns? Why did the emperor return to Rome in AD 40?

Ancient Sources:

Tacitus Agricola 13; Suetonius Caligula 43-49; also Caligula 24, Galba 6, Vespasian 2; see Dio Cassius 59.21ff.

See also the following extract by Orosius Against the Pagans 7.5.5:

'It is true that Gaius set out fully equipped to find the enemy, while their forces were inactive, rushing across Germany and Gaul, and he set up camp on the shore of Ocean within sight of Britannia. When he had received there the surrender of Minocynobelinus, son of the king, who, expelled by his father, was wandering about with a few men, he returned to Rome, leaving behind his apparatus of war.'

Modern Sources

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Lindsay, H. Suetonius: Caligula (London, 1993)
Tutorial 7: Week 9

What was wrong with Claudius?

In a contemporary satire about the death of Claudius (attributed to Seneca), the physical, mental and personal traits of Claudius are mocked mercilessly. Read this work, the *Apocolocyntosis* and comment upon its content and reliability. See:

http://www.forumromanum.org/literature/apocolocyntosis.html

Suetonius also characterises Claudius as deficient in many attributes (e.g. *Claud. 2*-5, 6, 29, 30, 33-40). He, like Seneca, records instances when Claudius was treated with contumely by people of all stations (*Cal. 23, Claud. 8*-9, 15, 18, 21, 28). In contrast, however, note the honours given to Claudius during the reign of Gaius (*Suet. Cal. 15, Claud. 5*-7).

Tacitus and Suetonius differ in the way that they present Claudius. Tacitus (*Annals* 11 and 12; cf. his bemusement at Claudius’ accession in *Annals* 3.18) portrays Claudius as the passive recipient of the actions of his wives and freedmen, whereas Suetonius attributes to Claudius a more positive, if highly unattractive persona. Dio reports that Claudius suffered a number of physical infirmities and that he was timid, especially with respect to his wives and freedmen (60.2), but otherwise his portrait of Claudius appears quite neutral (60.3 ff.)

Lastly, Josephus gives no hint of any infirmities and even praises Claudius (e.g. *Jewish Wars* 2.205 ff. *Antiquities* 19.212 ff.)

What is the significance of these differing perspectives of Claudius?

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Carney T.F. ‘The changing picture of Claudius’, *AClass* 3 (1960) 99-104


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Vessey, D.W.T.C. ‘Thoughts on Tacitus’ portrayal of Claudius’, *AJPh* 92 (1971) 385-409
Tutorial 8: Week 10

Video excerpts
and discussion

In this tutorial, we shall examine the basis of the characterisation of Gaius/Caligula, as given by Robert Graves and the TV adaptation of his book, *I, Claudius*. This episode will also throw light on the interpretation of Claudius’ character.

You will need a good working knowledge of Suetonius’ *Life of Gaius* and of *Claudius*.

For this tutorial, also read the following from Graves’ book: on the divinity of Gaius, see chapter 29

Was Gaius mad?

Modern Sources

Adams, G.W. *The Roman emperor Gaius ‘Caligula’ and his Hellenistic aspirations* (Florida, 2007)
Massaro, V. and Montgomery, I., ‘Gaius — Mad, Bad, Ill, or all Three?’, *Latomus* 37 (1978) 894-909
Yavetz, Z. ‘Caligula, Imperial Madness and Modern Historiography’, *Klio* 78 (1996) 105-29
Commentary Exercise 2

Comment on TWO of the following four passages, one taken from each of the four tutorials from the second part of the course. Do not link the passages you have chosen for your commentary.

1. Tacitus Annals 4.12

For when Sejanus saw that Drusus’ death brought no retribution upon the murderers and no national grief, his criminal audacity grew. The succession of the children of Germanicus was now certain. So he considered how they could be removed. To poison all three was impracticable, since their attendants were loyal – and the virtue of their mother Agrippina unassailable.’

2. Velleius Paterculus 2.127.3

With these examples before him, Tiberius Caesar has had and still has as his incomparable associate in all the burdens of the principate Sejanus Aelius, son of a father who was among the foremost in the equestrian order, but connected, on his mother’s side, with old and illustrious families and families distinguished by public honours, while he had brothers, cousins, and an uncle who had reached the consulship. He himself combined with loyalty to his master great capacity for labour, and possessed a well-knit body to match the energy of his mind; 4 stern but yet gay, cheerful but yet strict; busy, yet always seeming to be at leisure. He is one who claims no honours for himself and so acquires all honours, whose estimate of himself is always below the estimate of others, calm in expression and in his life, though his mind is sleeplessly alert.

3. Suetonius Gaius 43

Gaius had only a single taste of warfare, and even that was unpremeditated. At Mevania, where he went to visit the river Clitumnus and its sacred grove, someone reminded him that he needed Batavians recruits for his bodyguard; which suggested the idea of a German expedition. He wasted no time in summoning regular legions and auxiliaries from all directions, levied troops everywhere with the utmost strictness, and collected military supplies of all kinds on an unprecedented scale.

4. Tacitus Annals 3.18

The former of these proposals had added that Tiberius, the Augusta, Antonia, Agrippina, and Drusus should be thanked for avenging Germanicus. Claudius was left out; and it was only when Lucius Nonius Asprenus publicly asked whether the omission was deliberate that his name was included. The more I think about history, ancient or modern, the more ironical all human affairs seem. In public opinion, expectation, and esteem no one appeared a less likely candidate for the throne than the man for whom destiny was secretly reserving it.
Examine the Tacitean version of the murder of Agrippina.
Are there any notable inconsistencies in terms of overall plot and characterisation?
Identify any signs that Tacitus has shaped the narrative for literary effect. What purpose has Tacitus attempted to achieve?
Assess the reliability of the narrative.

**Ancient Sources:**
- Tacitus *Annals* 13.12-22, 58; 14.1.13
- Suetonius *Nero* 9, 28, 34
- Dio Cassius Epitome of Book 62.11-17 (from A.D. 58-9)

**Biographies of Nero:**
- Warmington, B.H. *Nero, Reality and Legend* (London, 1969) especially Ch. 5

**On the murder:**
- Dawson, A. ‘Whatever happened to Lady Agrippina?’, *CJ* 64 (1969) 253-67
- Katzoff, R. ‘Where Was Agrippina Murdered?’, *Historia* 22 (1973) 72-8

**On Nero's helpers:**
- Mc Dermott, W.C. ‘Sextus Afranius Burrus’, *Latomus* 8 (1949) 229-54

**On methodology:**
Tutorial 10: Week 12

Nero, the fire and the Christians

Who was responsible for the fire of AD 64? Why did Nero burn to death those whom he held to be responsible for the fire?

What can we determine about Roman attitudes to Christians in the time of Nero and into the early second century?

Ancient Sources:

Tacitus Annals 15.38-44.1-8; Dio 62.16-18 (Loeb Vol.8 pp.110-117); Suetonius Nero 16, 38-39

Modern Sources:

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