

GAIUS SUETONIUS
TRANQUILLUS

The Twelve Caesars

Translated by ROBERT GRAVES

Revised with an Introduction and Notes by J. B. RIVES

PENGUIN BOOKS

PENGUIN CLASSICS

Published by the Penguin Group

Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA

Penguin Group (Canada), 90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4P 2Y3
(a division of Pearson Penguin Canada Inc.)

Penguin Ireland, 25 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland
(a division of Penguin Books Ltd)

Penguin Group (Australia), 250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, Victoria 3124, Australia
(a division of Pearson Australia Group Pty Ltd)

Penguin Books India Pvt Ltd, 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi - 110 017, India

Penguin Group (NZ), 67 Apollo Drive, Rosedale, North Shore 0632, New Zealand
(a division of Pearson New Zealand Ltd)

Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, 24 Sturdee Avenue, Rosebank, Johannesburg 2196, South Africa

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

www.penguin.com

This translation first published 1957

This revised edition published in Penguin Classics 2007

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Set in 10.25/12.25 pt PostScript Adobe Sabon

Typeset by Rowland Phototypesetting Ltd, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

Printed in England by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

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ISBN: 978-0-140-45516-8

Contents

Abbreviations	vii
Chronology	viii
Introduction	xvii
Analyses of the 'Lives'	xlii
Further Reading	liii
A Note on the Text	lviii
DIVUS JULIUS	i
DIVUS AUGUSTUS	43
TIBERIUS	104
GAIUS CALIGULA	145
DIVUS CLAUDIUS	178
NERO	207
GALBA	242
OTHO	255
VITELLIUS	263
DIVUS VESPASIAN	274
DIVUS TITUS	288
DOMITIAN	295
Glossary of Terms	311
Glossary of Place Names	
in Rome	319
Key to Maps	325
Maps	330

Family Trees	343
Notes	347
Index of Historical Persons	382

Abbreviations

SUETONIUS' LIVES

<i>Aug.</i>	Divus Augustus	<i>Nero</i>	Nero
<i>Calig.</i>	Gaius Caligula	<i>Otho</i>	Otho
<i>Claud.</i>	Divus Claudius	<i>Tib.</i>	Tiberius
<i>Dom.</i>	Domitian	<i>Tit.</i>	Divus Titus
<i>Galba</i>	Galba	<i>Vesp.</i>	Divus Vespasian
<i>Jul.</i>	Divus Julius	<i>Vit.</i>	Vitellius

ROMAN PRAENOMINA

A.	Aulus	Mam.	Mamercus
Ap.	Appius	P.	Publius
C.	Gaius	Q.	Quintus
Cn.	Gnaeus	Ser.	Servius
D.	Decimus	Sex.	Sextus
L.	Lucius	T.	Titus
M.	Marcus	Ti.	Tiberius
M'.	Manius		

ROMAN MAGISTRACIES

aed.	aedile	pr.	praetor
cos.	consul	q.	quaestor
cos. suff.	suffect consul	tr.	tribune

Chronology

BC

- 133 Tribune and death of Ti. Sempronius Gracchus.
122 Second tribunate of C. Sempronius Gracchus; opposition of M. Livius Drusus.
112-106 War with Jugurtha; C. Marius elected consul in 107 to take command of the war.
104-100 Marius consul five times in a row; defeats the invading Germanic tribes of the Teutones and Cimbri in 102 and 101.
100 Legislation and death of L. Appuleius Saturninus. Birth of Julius Caesar.
91 Assassination of the younger M. Livius Drusus.
91-87 Social (Marsic) War between Rome and its Italian allies.
88-85 First war with Mithridates under the command of L. Cornelius Sulla; in Rome, Marius and L. Cornelius Cinna take control and kill the supporters of Sulla.
84 Caesar marries Cornelia.
83-82 Sulla returns to Italy; civil war between partisans of Sulla and partisans of Cinna; Sulla's victory followed by proscriptions. In Asia, second war with Mithridates.
82-79 Sulla dictator; Q. Sertorius begins guerrilla war in Spain, which lasts until 72.
80 Caesar's military service in Asia and Bithynia.
78-77 Revolt of M. Aemilius Lepidus in Italy.
75 Caesar travels to Rhodes and is kidnapped by pirates.
74-66 Third war with Mithridates.
72 Caesar military tribune.

- 70 Cn. Pompeius (Pompey) and L. Licinius Crassus consuls for the first time.
- 69 Caesar quaestor in Rome and Further Spain; his wife Cornelia dies.
- 67 Caesar marries Pompeia.
- 65 Caesar aedile.
- 63 Caesar elected pontifex maximus; conspiracy of L. Sergius Catilina. Birth of C. Octavius, the future emperor Augustus (23 September).
- 62 Caesar praetor; divorces Pompeia.
- 61 Caesar governor of Further Spain.
- 60 Caesar stands for consulship; forms so-called 'First Triumvirate' with Pompey and Crassus.
- 59 Caesar consul; marries Calpurnia. Pompey marries Caesar's daughter Julia.
- 58-50 Caesar's command in Gaul.
- 56 Renewal of 'First Triumvirate' at Luca.
- 55 Pompey and Crassus consuls for the second time. Caesar crosses Rhine; invades Britain.
- 54 Caesar's second invasion of Britain. Death of Julia, daughter of Caesar and wife of Pompey.
- 52 P. Clodius killed by supporters of T. Annius Milo; Pompey sole consul; Caesar exempted from standing for consulship in person. Battle of Gergovia in Gaul. Parthians defeat Crassus at Carrhae.
- 49 Senate decrees that Caesar must dismiss his army and disallows the tribunes' veto; Caesar crosses the Rubicon; Pompey leaves Italy for Greece. Caesar besieges Massilia and defeats the Pompeian forces in Spain; returns to Rome.
- 48 Caesar crosses Adriatic; besieges Pompey at Dyrrhachium, then defeats him at Pharsalus. Pompey flees to Alexandria and is murdered; Caesar follows; war with Ptolemy.
- 47 Caesar defeats Ptolemy, has affair with Cleopatra; marches to Asia Minor and defeats Pharnaces; returns to Rome; sails to North Africa.
- 46 Caesar defeats Q. Caecilius Metellus Scipio and Juba in Africa; returns to Rome and reforms calendar; sails to Spain.

- 45 Caesar defeats the sons of Pompey at Munda in Spain; returns to Rome and receives exceptional honours.
- 44 Caesar made dictator for life; refuses crown at Lupercalia in February; assassinated (15 March). He posthumously adopts his grandnephew C. Octavius, who takes the name C. Julius Caesar Octavianus (Octavian, the future Augustus).
- 43 War of Mutina: Octavian and the Senate against M. Antonius (Mark Antony); Octavian's first consulship. Octavian, Antony and M. Aemilius Lepidus establish the triumvirate.
- 42 War of Philippi: Octavian and Antony against M. Junius Brutus and C. Cassius Longinus. Birth of Tiberius (16 November).
- 41-40 War of Perusia: Octavian against L. Antonius.
- 40 Execution of Q. Salvidienus Rufus. Antony marries Octavia.
- 38 Octavian marries Livia.
- 38-36 Naval war off Sicily: Octavian against Sextus Pompey.
- 36 Octavian defeats Sextus Pompey, strips Lepidus of power.
- 35-33 Octavian campaigns against the Dalmatae in Illyricum.
- 32 Octavian breaks with Antony.
- 31 Octavian's third consulship. Battle of Actium: Octavian against Antony and Cleopatra.
- 30 Octavian's fourth consulship; death of Antony and Cleopatra.
- 29 Octavian's fifth consulship; triple triumph.
- 28 Octavian's sixth consulship; first census and purge of the Senate.
- 27 Octavian's seventh consulship; adopts the name Augustus. Disgrace and suicide of C. Cornelius Gallus.
- 26-25 Augustus' eighth and ninth consulships; campaigns in Spain against the Cantabri.
- 23 Augustus' eleventh consulship. Augustus seriously ill, but recovers. Conspiracy of A. Terentius Varro Murena and Fannius Caepio. Augustus receives tribunician power for life; death of his nephew Marcellus.
- 21 M. Vipsanius Agrippa marries Julia the elder, Augustus' daughter.
- 20 Parthians return Roman standards; Tiberius installs Tigranes III as king of Armenia.

- 18 Second purge of the Senate; laws on adultery, marriage and luxury.
- 17 Augustus adopts his grandsons Gaius and Lucius; celebrates the Saecular Games.
- 16 Germans cross Rhine and defeat M. Lollius.
- 16-15 Tiberius and Drusus campaign in the Alps.
- 13 Tiberius' first consulship.
- 12 Augustus elected pontifex maximus. Death of Agrippa.
- 12-9 Campaigns of Tiberius in Pannonia and Drusus in Germany.
- 11 Tiberius marries Julia the elder.
- 10 Birth of Claudius (1 August).
- 9 Tiberius' first consulship; death of Drusus.
- 9-7 Campaigns of Tiberius in Germany.
- 8 Augustus' second census.
- 7 Tiberius' second consulship; given tribunician power for five years.
- 6 Tiberius retires to Rhodes.
- 5 Augustus' twelfth consulship; introduction of Gaius to public life.
- 3 Birth of Galba (24 December).
- 2 Augustus' thirteenth consulship; introduction of Lucius to public life. Augustus proclaimed 'Father of His Country'. Dedication of Temple of Mars Ultor. Exile of Julia the elder.
- 1 Gaius sent to the east as commander.

AD

- 2 Death of Lucius at Massilia; Tiberius returns to Rome.
- 4 Death of Gaius in Lycia. Augustus adopts Tiberius and Agrippa Postumus; Tiberius adopts Germanicus.
- 4-6 Campaigns of Tiberius in Germany.
- 6 Disinheritance of Agrippa Postumus.
- 6-9 Revolt in Illyricum; campaigns of Tiberius.
- 8 Exile of Julia the younger.

- 9 Revolt in Germany; massacre of Roman troops under P. Quinctilius Varus. Birth of Vespasian (17 November).
- 10-12 Campaigns of Tiberius in Germany.
- 12 Germanicus' first consulship; Tiberius' Illyrian triumph. Birth of Gaius (31 August). Birth of Vitellius (7 September?).
- 13-16 Campaigns of Germanicus in Germany.
- 14 Augustus' third census. Death of Augustus (19 August); Tiberius becomes emperor. Death of Agrippa Postumus. Mutinies in Pannonia and Germany. L. Aelius Sejanus made praetorian prefect.
- 16 Trial and suicide of M. Scribonius Libo Drusus.
- 17 Cn. Calpurnius Piso made governor of Syria. Germanicus' German triumph; sent to the east. Cappadocia made a Roman province.
- 18 Tiberius' third consulship, with Germanicus; Germanicus visits Egypt.
- 19 Expulsion of Jews from Rome. Death of Germanicus.
- 20 Trial and suicide of Cn. Calpurnius Piso.
- 21 Tiberius' fourth consulship, with his son Drusus.
- 23 Death of Tiberius' son Drusus.
- 27 Tiberius retires to Capreae.
- 29 Death of Livia; exile of Agrippina the elder.
- 31 Tiberius' fifth consulship, with Sejanus. Tiberius summons Gaius to Capreae. Death of Germanicus' son Nero (?). Fall and death of Sejanus.
- 32 Birth of Otho (28 April).
- 33 Deaths of Germanicus' son Drusus and Agrippina the elder. First consulship of Galba.
- 37 Death of Tiberius (16 March); Gaius becomes emperor. Gaius' first consulship, with Claudius. Death of the younger Antonia. Gaius seriously ill in the autumn. Death of Tiberius Gemellus. Birth of Nero (15 December).
- 38 Deaths of Q. Sutorius Macro and Gaius' sister Drusilla; Gaius visits Sicily.
- 39 Gaius' second consulship; birth of his daughter and marriage to Caesonia. Conspiracy of Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Gaetulicus; trial of M. Aemilius Lepidus and exile of Gaius' sisters Agrippina and Livilla. Birth of Titus (30 December).

- 39-40 Gaius campaigns in Gaul and Germany.
- 40 Gaius' third consulship; death of Ptolemy of Mauretania.
- 41 Gaius' fourth consulship. Assassination of Gaius (24 January); Claudius becomes emperor. Gaius' sisters Agrippina and Livilla brought back from exile; death of Livilla.
- 42 Claudius' second consulship. Death of C. Appius Junius Silanus; attempted coup of Furius Camillus Scribonianus.
- 43 Claudius' third consulship, with L. Vitellius. Invasion of Britain.
- 44 Claudius' triumph for the conquest of Britain.
- 47 Claudius' fourth consulship, with L. Vitellius; celebrates Saecular Games. Claudius' censorship, with L. Vitellius. Death of Cn. Pompeius Magnus.
- 48 'Marriage' of Messalina and C. Silius; execution of Messalina. Consulship of Vitellius.
- 49 Claudius marries Agrippina the younger. Death of L. Junius Silanus.
- 50 Claudius adopts Nero.
- 51 Claudius' fifth consulship, with Vespasian as suffect consul. Birth of Domitian (24 October).
- 52 Nero acts as prefect of the city during the Latin Festival.
- 53 Marriage of Nero and Octavia; trial and execution of Domitia Lepida.
- 54 Death of Claudius (13 October); Nero becomes emperor.
- 55 Nero's first consulship. Death of Britannicus.
- 57-8 Nero's second and third consulships.
- 59 The Great Games. Death of Agrippina. Otho becomes governor of Lusitania.
- 60 Nero's fourth consulship; first celebration of the Neronia. Galba becomes governor of Tarraconensian Spain.
- 60-61 Revolt in Britain.
- 62 Roman defeat in Armenia. Deaths of Octavia and Sex. Afranius Burrus. Nero marries Poppaea.
- 64 Nero's first stage appearance, in Neapolis; second celebration of the Neronia. Great fire in Rome; persecution of Christians; construction of the Golden House.
- 65 Discovery of the Pisonian conspiracy. Deaths of Poppaea, Claudius' daughter Antonia and Seneca.

- 66 Nero marries Statilia Messalina. Coronation of Tiridates in Rome. Beginning of the revolt in Judaea.
- 66–7 Nero tours Greece. Vespasian sent to command the Roman forces in Judaea.
- 68 C. Julius Vindex raises a revolt against Nero (March); Galba joins the revolt and is acclaimed emperor by his troops (April); Vindex defeated by L. Verginius Rufus (May); Galba is recognized as emperor by the Senate (8 June?); Nero commits suicide (9 or 11 June). Vitellius becomes governor of Lower Germany (December).
- 69 Galba's second consulship. Army in Upper Germany withholds allegiance from Galba (1 January); Vitellius acclaimed emperor by his troops (2 January); Galba adopts L. Calpurnius Piso (10 January). Otho's coup; death of Galba (15 January). Otho sets out to meet the army of Vitellius (mid-March). Battle of Betriacum between the armies of Otho and Vitellius (14 April); Otho commits suicide (16 April?); Vitellius recognized as emperor by the Senate (19 April). Vespasian proclaimed as emperor by the army in Egypt (1 July), followed by the armies in Judaea, Syria and Moesia (July–August). Burning of the Capitol (19 December); death of Vitellius (20 or 21 December); Vespasian recognized as emperor by the Senate.
- 69–70 Vespasian in Egypt.
- 70 Vespasian's second consulship, with Titus. Domitian marries Domitia Longina. Birth of Suetonius (?).
- 71 Vespasian's third consulship, with the future emperor Nerva. Judaeian triumph of Vespasian and Titus.
- 72–8 Vespasian's fourth to eighth consulships (72, 75–8) and censorship (73–4), all with Titus.
- 79 Vespasian's ninth consulship, with Titus. Death of Vespasian (23 June); Titus becomes emperor. Eruption of Mount Vesuvius.
- 80 Titus' eighth consulship, with Domitian. Dedication of the Flavian Amphitheatre.
- 81 Death of Titus (13 September); Domitian becomes emperor.
- 82–8 Domitian's eighth to fourteenth consulships.

- 83 Triumph over the Chatti; Domitian divorces and remarries Domitia.
- 86 Triumph over the Dacians. Celebration of Capitoline Games.
- 88 Celebration of the Saecular Games.
- 89 Attempted revolt by L. Antonius Saturninus. Double triumph over the Chatti and the Dacians.
- 90 Domitian's fifteenth consulship.
- 92 Domitian's sixteenth consulship; campaigns against the Sarmatians.
- 93 Expulsion of philosophers from Rome. Deaths of Q. Junius Arulenus Rusticus and the younger Helvidius.
- 95 Domitian's seventeenth consulship. Death of T. Flavius Clemens.
- 96 Assassination of Domitian (18 September); Nerva becomes emperor.
- 97 First mention of Suetonius in the letters of Pliny the Younger.
- 98 Death of Nerva (end of January); Trajan becomes emperor.
- 112 Death of Pliny the Younger (?).
- 117 Death of Trajan; Hadrian becomes emperor.
- 119 Hadrian appoints Suetonius' patron C. Septicius Clarus as praetorian prefect, and (?) Suetonius as imperial secretary in charge of correspondence; Suetonius at work on *The Twelve Caesars*.
- 122 Hadrian dismisses both Septicius Clarus and Suetonius (?).
- after 130 Death of Suetonius (?).

D. Death and aftermath (97-101)

1. Omens (97)
2. Death (98-9)
3. Burial, honours and will (100-101)

TIBERIUS

A. Background (1-25)

1. Ancestry (1-4)
2. Birth and life up to accession (5-25)
 - (a) Birth and childhood (5-6)
 - (b) Public life under Augustus (7-9)
 - (c) Retirement to Rhodes (10-13)
 - (d) Omens of his rule (14)
 - (e) Return to public life under Augustus (15-21)
 - (f) Accession (22-5)

B. Positive and neutral aspects of his reign (26-37)

1. Modesty and restraint (26-32)
2. Public policy (33-7)

C. Negative aspects of his reign (38-67)

1. Residence (38-41)
 - (a) Initial unwillingness to leave Rome (38)
 - (b) Withdrawal to Capreae (39-40)
 - (c) Subsequent neglect of public affairs (41)
2. Vices (42-67)
 - (a) Indulgence in food and drink (42)
 - (b) Sexual excess (43-5)
 - (c) Stinginess and greed (46-9)
 - (d) Hostility to family (50-54)
 - (e) Hostility to friends (55-6)
 - (f) Cruelty (57-65)
 - (g) Hatred of Tiberius and his own self-loathing (66-7)

D. Personal characteristics (68-71)

1. Appearance and health (68)
2. Attitude to religion (69)
3. Literary accomplishments (70-71)

E. Death and aftermath (72-6)

1. Last days and death (72-3)
2. Omens (74)
3. Funeral and will (75-6)

GAIUS CALIGULA

A. Background (1-14)

1. Biography of his father Germanicus (1-6)
2. Germanicus' other children (7)
3. Birth and life up to accession (8-12)
4. Accession and initial popularity (13-14)

B. Positive and neutral aspects of his reign (15-21)

1. Piety towards family members (15)
2. Public policy (15-16)
3. Public offices; largesse (17)
4. Games and spectacles (18-20)
5. Building projects (21)

C. Negative aspects of his reign (22-49)

1. Arrogance (22)
2. Lack of respect (23-6)
 - (a) For family (23-4)
 - (b) For wives (25)
 - (c) For friends, Senate, *equites* and people (26)
3. Cruelty (27-33)
4. Envy and spite (34-5)
5. Sexual excess (36)
6. Extravagance (37)
7. Greed (38-42)

TIBERIUS

1. The patrician branch of the Claudian family – there was a plebeian branch too, of equal influence and distinction – came to Rome, which had then been only recently founded, from the Sabine town of Regillae, bringing with them a large train of dependants. They did so at the instigation of either Titus Tatius, Romulus' co-ruler, or (according to the more widely held story) Atta Claudius, the head of the family, about six years after the expulsion of the kings.¹ The Claudii were enrolled among the patricians, and were also publicly decreed an estate beyond the Anio for their dependants to farm, and a family burial ground at the foot of the Capitoline Hill. In the course of time they amassed twenty-eight consulships, five dictatorships, seven censorships, six triumphs and two ovations. Many different prae-nomina and cognomina were used by members of the family, but they unanimously decided to ban the praenomen Lucius, because one Lucius Claudius had been convicted as a highwayman and another as a murderer, and added the cognomen Nero, which is Sabine for 'strong and energetic'.

2. History records many distinguished services and equally grave injuries done to the commonwealth by Claudii. Let me quote only a few instances. Appius Caecus prudently advised the Senate that an alliance with King Pyrrhus would not be in the national interest. Claudius Caudex was the first to take a fleet across the straits, and expelled the Carthaginians from Sicily. Tiberius Nero intercepted Hasdrubal as he arrived in Italy from Spain with powerful reinforcements for his brother Hannibal, and defeated him before a junction could be effected. On the debit side of the ledger must be set Claudius Regillianus'

attempt, while one of the ten commissioners for codifying the laws, to enslave and seduce a freeborn girl – a wicked act which made the plebeians desert Rome in a body for the second time, leaving the patricians to their own devices.² Then there was Claudius Russus, who set up a crowned image of himself at the town called Forum Appii and attempted to conquer Italy with the help of his armed dependants. And Claudius Pulcher, who, as consul, took the auspices before a naval battle off Sicily and, finding that the sacred chickens had refused their feed, cried, ‘If they will not eat, let them drink!’ He threw them into the sea, fought the battle in defiance of religious scruples, and lost it. When the Senate then ordered Claudius to appoint a dictator, he made a joke of the critical military situation by choosing one Glycias, his dispatch rider.

An equal disparity may be found between the records of the Claudian women. There was a Claudia who, when the ship that was bringing the sacred emblems of the Idaean Mother Goddess to Rome grounded on a Tiber mudbank, publicly prayed that she might be allowed to refloat it in proof of her perfect chastity, and did so.³ Against her achievement may be set that of Claudius Pulcher’s sister. She was riding through the crowded streets in a carriage, and making such slow progress that she shouted, ‘If only my brother were alive to lose another fleet! That would thin out the population a little.’ She was consequently tried for treason before the people, as had happened to no woman before her. It is well worth noting that all the Claudii were optimates and keen advocates of patrician powers and prerogatives, with the sole exception of Publius Clodius, who found he could best expel Cicero from Rome by becoming the adoptive son of a plebeian – as it happened, a man younger than himself. Moreover, they were so rude and violent in their attitude towards the plebeians that not even when tried on a capital charge would any of them condescend to wear suppliant dress or sue for mercy; and some, in their constant quarrels with the tribunes of the people, actually dared to strike them. Once, when a Claudius was about to celebrate a triumph without first obtaining the people’s consent, his sister, a Vestal Virgin, mounted the chariot and rode with him all the way to the

Capitol, thus making it sacrilege for the tribunes of the people to halt the procession.

3. Tiberius was doubly a Claudius, his father having been descended from the original Tiberius Nero and his mother from Appius Pulcher, both of them sons of Appius Caecus.⁴ His maternal grandfather had, however, been adopted into the Livian family. The Livii were originally plebeians, but had also achieved great distinction, winning eight consulships, two censorships, three triumphs, and the titles of dictator and master of the horse. Among the best known members of this family were Livius Salinator and the Drusi. Livius Salinator had been convicted of malpractices after his first consulship, yet was re-elected to a second term and even appointed censor – whereupon he set a mark of censure against the names of every single tribe, to register his disapproval of their fickleness. The first Drusus gained his cognomen by killing an enemy chieftain called Drausus in single combat, and it became hereditary. He is also said to have brought back from Gaul, where he was a governor of praetorian rank, the gold which his ancestors had paid to the Senones in ransom for captured Rome; this contradicts the tradition that the treasure had already been redeemed by the dictator Camillus.⁵ His great-great-grandson, known as ‘the Senate’s patron’ because of his stalwart opposition to the reforms of the Gracchi, left a son who was treacherously murdered by his opponents while pursuing a complex policy in similar circumstances.⁶

4. Tiberius’ father Nero as a quaestor commanded Julius Caesar’s fleet during the Alexandrian war and contributed a great deal to his eventual victory. Caesar showed his appreciation by making him a pontifex in place of Publius Scipio, and sent him to plant colonies in Gaul, including those of Narbo and Arelate. Yet at Caesar’s death, when, to prevent further rioting, all the other senators voted for an amnesty, Nero moved that rewards should be conferred on the assassins. Later he was elected praetor; but when towards the end of his term the triumvirs quarrelled among themselves, he retained the emblems of office longer than was his legal right and followed Mark Antony’s brother Lucius, then consul, to Perusia. When

Perusia fell, only Nero scorned to capitulate. He stood loyally by his convictions, and escaped to Praeneste, thence to Neapolis, and after a vain attempt at enlisting a force of slaves with a promise of freedom he took refuge in Sicily. There Sextus Pompey was slow to grant him an audience and refused to allow him the use of the fasces. Taking offence, Nero crossed over to Achaia, where he joined Mark Antony. On the conclusion of peace he presently returned in Antony's train to Rome, and with him came his wife Livia Drusilla, who had borne him one son and was pregnant with another. Yet when Augustus wanted to marry Livia, Nero surrendered her to him, and died soon afterwards. The elder son was named Tiberius Nero, the younger, Drusus.⁷

5. Some believe that Tiberius was born at Fundi, but their only evidence is that his maternal grandmother originated there, and that a statue of Prosperity has since been set up in the town by senatorial decree. The bulk of trustworthy opinion makes him born on the Palatine in the course of the civil war which was to be decided at Philippi, the date being given as 16 November, and the consuls as Marcus Aemilius Lepidus (his second term) and Lucius Munatius Plancus.⁸ This is what is reported in the calendar and the public records, yet some writers still insist that he was born in the previous year, during the consulship of Hirtius and Pansa, or in the following year, during that of Servilius Isauricus and Lucius Antonius.

6. His childhood and youth were beset with hardships and difficulties, since his parents took him wherever they went in their flight. When the enemy broke into the city of Neapolis and the couple secretly slipped down to the port, their companions tried to assist them by snatching little Tiberius first from his nurse's breast and then from Livia's arms – but he bawled out so loud that he nearly betrayed the whole party. He was next hurried all over Sicily, where Sextus Pompey's sister Pompeia gave him a cloak, a brooch and some gold charms; these are still on show at Baiae. His parents finally fled to Achaia, and entrusted him to the public care of the Spartans, who happened to be under the patronage of the Claudii. He then had a narrow escape: while the party were departing from

Sparta by night, they ran into a sudden forest fire which so surrounded them that it scorched Livia's hair and part of her robe. On their return to Rome, a senator named Marcus Gallius made a will adopting Tiberius; he accepted the inheritance, but soon dropped the name, Gallius having been one of Augustus' political opponents.⁹

At the age of nine Tiberius mounted on the Rostra to deliver his father's funeral eulogy, and four or five years later he took part in Augustus' triumph after Actium, mounted on the left trace horse of his chariot, while Marcellus, Octavia's son, rode the right. He also presided at the city games and led the detachment of older boys in the Troy Game at the Circus.

7. The principal events between Tiberius' coming of age and his accession to the throne may be summarized as follows. He staged a gladiatorial contest in memory of his father, and another in memory of his grandfather Drusus. The first took place in the Forum, the second in the amphitheatre, and he persuaded some retired gladiators to appear with the rest, by paying them 100,000 sesterces each. There were theatrical performances too, but Tiberius did not attend them; Livia and Augustus financed these lavish entertainments.

Tiberius married Vipsania Agrippina, daughter of Marcus Agrippa and granddaughter of Caecilius Atticus,¹⁰ the Roman *eques* to whom Cicero addressed many of his letters. It proved a happy marriage; but when Vipsania had already borne him a son, Drusus, and was pregnant again, he was required to divorce her and hurriedly marry Augustus' daughter Julia. Tiberius took this very ill. He loved Vipsania and strongly disapproved of Julia, realizing like everyone else that she had felt a passion for him while still married to her previous husband. Tiberius continued to regret the divorce so heartily that, when he one day accidentally caught sight of Vipsania and followed her with tears in his eyes and intense unhappiness written on his face, precautions were taken against his ever seeing her again. At first he lived on good terms with Julia and dutifully reciprocated her love, but gradually he conceived such a loathing for her that, after their child had died in infancy at Aquileia, he broke off marital relations. On the death in Germany of his brother

Drusus, Tiberius brought the body back to Rome, walking in front of the coffin all the way.

8. Tiberius' civil career began with his defence, against various charges, of King Archelaus, the Trallians and the Thessalians, at a court presided over by Augustus. Next he appeared before the Senate as advocate of the Laodiceans, Thyatirans and Chians who had appealed for relief because of losses incurred in an earthquake. When Fannius Caepio plotted against Augustus with Varro Murena, Tiberius acted as prosecutor and secured their condemnation on a charge of treason. Meanwhile he had undertaken two special commissions: to reorganize the defective grain supply and to inquire into the state of slave barracks throughout Italy – the owners having made a bad name for themselves by confining lawful travellers in them, and by harbouring men who would rather pass as slaves than be drafted for military service.

9. He first saw military service in the Cantabrian campaign, as a military tribune; next he took an army to the east, where he restored the kingdom of Armenia to Tigranes, personally crowning him in front of his tribunal; then he proceeded to collect the standards which the Parthians had captured from Marcus Crassus.¹¹ After this Tiberius governed Transalpine Gaul, where barbarian raids and feuds between the chieftains had caused considerable unrest. After that he fought consecutively in the Alps, Pannonia and Germany. The first of these campaigns brought about the subjugation of the Raeti and Vindelici; the second that of the Breuci and Dalmatæ; and in the third he took some 40,000 German prisoners, whom he brought across the Rhine and settled in new homes on the Gallic bank. Tiberius' exploits were rewarded with an ovation, followed by a regular triumph, and it seems that what was then a novel honour had previously been conferred on him, namely triumphal decorations. He became in turn quaestor, praetor and consul, and always before he was old enough to qualify officially as a candidate. A few years later he held another consulship, and was given the tribunician power for a five-year period.

10. Yet, though in the prime of life, in excellent health, and

at the height of his career, Tiberius suddenly decided to retire as completely as possible from public affairs. His motive may have been an inveterate dislike of Julia, whom he dared not charge with adultery or divorce but could no longer endure, or it may have been a decision not to bore his fellow countrymen by remaining too long in the public eye – perhaps he even hoped to increase his reputation by a prolonged absence, so that the need of his services might at some point be felt. Another view is that, since Augustus' children Gaius and Lucius had recently come of age, Tiberius voluntarily resigned his established position as second man in the empire and left the political field open for them; Marcus Agrippa had done much the same when Marcellus began his official career – retiring to Mytilene so as not to overshadow Marcellus by his great reputation or be mistaken for a rival. This was, in fact, the reason which Tiberius afterwards gave. At the time, however, he applied for leave of absence merely on the ground that he was weary of office and needed a rest; nor would he consider either Livia's express pleas for him to stay or Augustus' open complaints in the Senate that this was an act of desertion. On the contrary, he defeated their vigorous efforts to blunt his resolution by a four days' hunger strike. In the end he sailed off; leaving his wife and son behind at Rome, he hurried down to Ostia without saying a word to any of the friends who came to say goodbye, and kissing only very few of them before he went aboard his ship.

11. As Tiberius coasted past Campania, news reached him that Augustus was ill; so he cast anchor for a while. But when tongues began to wag, accusing him of standing by in the hope of seizing power, he at once made the best of his way to Rhodes, though the wind was almost dead against him; he had cherished pleasant memories of that beautiful and healthy island since touching there during his return voyage from Armenia. Contenting himself with a modest town house and a nearby country villa, which was not on a grand scale either, he behaved most unassumingly: after dismissing his lictors and runners he would often stroll about the gymnasium, where he greeted and chatted with ordinary Greeks almost as if they were his social equals.

It happened once that, in arranging the next day's pro-

gramme, he had expressed a wish to visit the local sick. His staff misunderstood him. Orders went out that all the patients in town should be carried to a public colonnade and there arranged in separate groups according to their ailments. Tiberius was shocked; for a while he stood at a loss, but at last he went to see the poor fellows, apologizing even to the humblest and least important for the inconvenience he had caused them. He exercised his tribunician power on a single recorded occasion only. It should be explained that he constantly attended the schools and halls where professors lectured, and listened to the ensuing discussions. Once, when two sophists had started a violent argument, an impudent member of the audience dared abuse him for joining in and appearing to support one sophist at the expense of the other. Tiberius slowly retired to his house, from which he all at once reappeared with a group of lictors; then, instructing a herald to summon the scurrilous wretch before his tribunal, he ordered him off to jail.

Soon afterwards, Tiberius learned that Julia had been banished for immoral and adulterous behaviour, and that his name had been used by Augustus on the bill of divorce sent her. The news delighted him, but he felt obliged to send a stream of letters urging a reconciliation between Augustus and her, and, though well aware that Julia deserved all she got, he allowed her to keep whatever presents she had at any time received from him. When the term of his tribunician power expired he asked Augustus' leave to return and visit his family, whom he greatly missed, and confessed at last that he had settled in Rhodes only because he wished to avoid the suspicion of rivalry with Gaius and Lucius. Now that both were fully grown and the acknowledged heirs, he explained, his reasons for keeping away from Rome were no longer valid. Augustus, however, turned down the plea, telling him to abandon all concern for his family, whom he had been so eager to desert.

12. Thus Tiberius remained, most unwillingly, in Rhodes, and could hardly persuade Livia to wheedle him the title of legate from Augustus, as an official cloak for his disfavour. His days were now clouded with anxiety. Although he lived a quiet private life in the country, avoiding contact with all important

men who landed, unwelcome attentions continued to be paid him, because no general or magistrate sailing anywhere in the vicinity ever failed to break his journey at Rhodes. The anxiety was well founded. When Tiberius had visited Samos to greet his stepson Gaius, commander of the east, the slanders spread by Marcus Lollius, Gaius' guardian, ensured him a chilly welcome. Again, some centurions of Tiberius' creation, who had returned to camp from leave, were said to have circulated mysterious messages, apparently incitements to treason, emanating from him. When Augustus informed Tiberius of this suspicion, he answered with reiterated demands that some responsible person, of whatever rank, should be detailed to visit Rhodes and there keep unceasing watch on what he did and said.

13. Tiberius discontinued his usual exercise on horseback and with weapons, wore a Greek cloak and slippers instead of the Roman dress suitable to a man of his standing, and for two years or longer grew daily more despised and shunned – until the people of Nemausus were encouraged to overturn his statues and busts. One day, at a private dinner party attended by Gaius, Tiberius' name cropped up, and a guest rose to say that if Gaius gave the order he would sail straight to Rhodes and 'fetch back the Exile's head' – for he had come to be known simply as 'the Exile'. This incident brought home to Tiberius the extreme danger of his situation, and he pleaded most urgently for a recall to Rome; Livia supported him with equal warmth, and Augustus at last gave way. But this was partly due to a fortunate chance: Augustus had left the final decision on Tiberius' case to Gaius, who happened at the time to be on rather bad terms with Lollius and was therefore amenable to his stepfather's pleas. With Gaius' permission, then, Tiberius was recalled, although on condition that he take no part and renounce all interest in public affairs.

14. So Tiberius returned to Rome after an absence of more than seven years, with a great unshaken belief in a glorious future that certain presages and prophecies had fixed in his mind since early childhood. Just before his birth, for instance, Livia had tried various means of foretelling whether her child would be male or female; one was to take an egg from under-

neath a brooding hen and warm it alternately in her own hands and in those of her women – and she successfully hatched a cock chick which already had a fine comb. Also, while Tiberius was a mere infant, Scribonius the astrologer prophesied for him an illustrious career and a crownless kingship – though, of course, nobody in those days knew that the Caesars would soon become kings in all but name. Again, when he first commanded an army and was marching through Macedonia into Syria, the altars consecrated by the victorious legions at Philippi were suddenly crowned with spontaneous fires. Later, on his way to Illyricum, he stopped near Patavium to visit Geryon's oracle; there he drew a lot which advised him to throw golden dice into the fountain of Aponus, if he wished his enquiries to be answered. He did so, and made the highest possible cast; one can still see the same dice shining through the water. Finally, a few days before the letter arrived recalling him from Rhodes, an eagle – a bird never previously seen in the island – perched upon the roof of his house, and on the very eve of this welcome news the tunic into which he was changing seemed to be ablaze. When the ship hove in sight, Tiberius happened to be strolling along the cliffs with Thrasyllus the astrologer, whom he had made a member of his household on account of his learning. 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.

15. On his return to Rome, Tiberius introduced his son Drusus to public life, but immediately afterwards moved from Pompey's house in the Carinae to another residence in the Gardens of Maecenas, also on the Esquiline Hill, where he lived in strict retirement, attending only to his private affairs and taking no part in public life. Before three years had passed, however, Gaius and Lucius were both dead; Augustus then adopted Tiberius as a son, along with Agrippa Postumus, their only surviving brother; and Tiberius was himself obliged to

adopt his nephew Germanicus. He thereupon ceased to act as the head of a household, surrendering all the privileges which this position entailed; he made no more gifts, freed no more slaves, and even refunded all inheritances and legacies which could not be entered in his *peculium*.¹² From that time on Augustus did everything possible to advance Tiberius' reputation, especially after having to disown Agrippa Postumus, for that made it pretty clear who his heir must be.

16. Tiberius was given another five years of tribunician power, with the task of pacifying Germany, and the Parthian envoys who visited Augustus at Rome with messages from their king were instructed to present themselves before Tiberius too, in Germany. There followed the Illyrian revolt, which he was sent to suppress, and which proved to be the most bitterly fought of all foreign wars since Rome had defeated Carthage. Tiberius conducted it for three years at the head of fifteen regular legions and a correspondingly large force of auxiliaries. Supplies were always short, and conditions arduous, but, though often called back to Rome, he never allowed the powerful and active enemy forces to assume the offensive. Tiberius was well paid for his stubbornness by finally reducing the whole of Illyricum – an enormous stretch of country enclosed by Italy, Noricum, the Danube, Thrace, Macedonia and the Adriatic Sea – to complete submission.

17. This feat appeared in a still more glorious light when Quinctilius Varus fell in Germany with his three legions: but for the timely conquest of Illyricum, most people realized, the victorious Germans would have made common cause with the Pannonians. Tiberius was therefore voted a triumph and many other distinctions. Proposals were made for decreeing him the cognomen Pannonicus or Invictus or Pius, but Augustus vetoed all these in turn, promising on each occasion that Tiberius would be satisfied with the one he would acquire after he himself had died.¹³ Tiberius himself postponed his triumph because of the public mourning for Varus, but nevertheless entered Rome dressed in a senatorial toga and wreathed with laurel. A tribunal had been built in the Saeptra; on it were four curule chairs, behind which the Senate stood, ranged in a

semicircle. Tiberius mounted the steps and took his seat at Augustus' side, the two outer chairs being occupied by the consuls. From this place of honour he acknowledged the popular cheers, and was then escorted around the appropriate temples.

18. In the following year Tiberius visited Germany and, finding that the disaster there had been due to Varus' rashness and neglect of precautions against surprise, refrained from taking any strategic decisions without the assent of his general staff. This was a notable departure from habit; hitherto he had always had complete confidence in his own judgement, but he was now relying on a large military council. His attention to detail increased. At every crossing of the Rhine he strictly limited the amount of permissible baggage, and would not signal the advance unless he had first inspected every transport wagon, to make sure that none carried anything but necessities. Once across the river, he made it his practice to eat on the bare turf, to sleep in the open as often as not, and always to commit his daily and emergency orders to writing. Moreover, any officer who did not understand his instructions was required to consult him personally at any hour of the day or night.

19. Tiberius imposed the severest discipline on his men, reviving obsolete methods of punishment or branding them with ignominy for misbehaviour. He even officially censured a legionary commander because he had sent a few soldiers across the river as escort for one of his freedmen who was hunting there. Although leaving so little to chance, Tiberius would enter a battle with far greater confidence if, on the previous night, the lamp by which he was working went out inexplicably all of a sudden: he used to say that he and his ancestors had always found this a reliable omen of good luck while on campaign. At the conclusion of this campaign a Bructeran assassin gained admittance to headquarters, disguised as an attendant, but betrayed himself by nervousness and confessed under torture.

20. Two years after going to Germany, Tiberius returned and celebrated the postponed Illyrian triumph; with him went those generals whom he had recommended for triumphal decorations. Before proceeding up the Capitoline Hill, he descended

from his chariot and knelt at the feet of his adoptive father, who was presiding over the ceremonies. Tiberius showed gratitude to the Pannonian leader Bato, who had allowed the Roman army to escape when trapped in a gorge, by giving him rich presents and a home at Ravenna. Then he provided a thousand-table public banquet and gave 300 sesterces to every male guest. The money fetched by the sale of his spoils went to restore the Temple of Concord and that of Castor and Pollux, both buildings being rededicated in his own name and that of his dead brother Drusus.

21. Soon afterwards the consuls introduced a measure which gave Tiberius joint control of the provinces with Augustus and the task of assisting him to carry out the next five-year census. When the usual purificatory sacrifices had completed the census, Tiberius set off for Illyricum, but was immediately recalled by Augustus, whom he found in the throes of his last illness. They spent a whole day together in confidential talk. I am well aware of the story that, when Tiberius finally took his departure, Augustus gasped to his attendants, 'Poor Rome, doomed to be ground by those slow-moving jaws!' I am also aware that, according to some writers, he so frankly disliked Tiberius' dour manner as to interrupt his own careless chatter whenever he entered; and that, when begged by Livia to adopt her son, he is suspected of having agreed the more readily because he foresaw that, with a successor like Tiberius, his death would be increasingly regretted as the years went by. Yet how could so prudent and far-sighted a leader have acted as blindly as this in a matter of such importance? My belief is that Augustus weighed Tiberius' good qualities against the bad, and decided that the good tipped the scale; he had, after all, publicly sworn that his adoption of Tiberius was in the public interest, and had often referred to him as an outstanding general and the only one capable of defending Rome against her enemies. In support of my contention let me quote the following passages from Augustus' correspondence:

Goodbye, my very dear Tiberius, and the best of luck go with you in your battles on my behalf – and the Muses! Goodbye,

dearest and bravest of men and the most conscientious general alive! If anything goes wrong with you, I shall never smile again!

Your summer campaigns, dear Tiberius, deserve my heartiest praise; I am sure that no other man alive could have conducted them more capably than yourself in the face of so many difficulties and the war-weariness of the troops. All those who served with you agree with me that the well-known line should be amended in your favour, from 'Alone he saved us by his cautious ways'¹⁴ to 'Alone he saved us by his watchful eye.'

If any business comes up that demands unusually careful thought, or that annoys me, I swear by the God of Truth that I miss my dear Tiberius more than I can say. And the Homeric verses run in my head: 'If he came with me, such his wisdom is, we should escape the fury of the fire.'¹⁵

When I hear or read that constant campaigning is wearing you out, damnation take me if I don't get gooseflesh in sympathy! I beg you to take things easy, because if you were to fall ill the news would kill your mother and me, and the whole empire of the Roman people would be in jeopardy.

My state of health is of little importance compared with yours. I pray that the gods will always keep you safe and sound for us, if they have not taken an utter aversion to the Roman people.

22. Tiberius revealed Augustus' death only after young Agrippa Postumus had been put to death. The military tribune appointed as his guard killed him, after receiving a written order to that effect. So much is known, but some doubt remains whether this order was left by Augustus at his death, in order to eliminate any pretext for a civil war, or whether Livia wrote it in his name, or, if so, whether Tiberius knew anything of the matter. At all events, when the tribune arrived to report that he had done his duty, Tiberius replied that he had given no such order and that the man would have to account for his actions to the Senate. He was, it seems, trying to avoid

immediate unpopularity, for he soon allowed the incident to be forgotten.

23. Tiberius used his tribunician power to convene the Senate and break the news of Augustus' death. After reading a few words of a prepared speech, he suddenly groaned aloud and, protesting that grief had robbed him of his voice and that he wished his life would also be taken, handed the scroll to his son Drusus, who finished the task. A freedman then read Augustus' will aloud, all senators present who had witnessed the document being first called upon to acknowledge their seals – witnesses of lower rank would do the same outside the Senate House. The preamble to the will ran as follows: 'Since fate has cruelly carried off my sons Gaius and Lucius, Tiberius Caesar is to inherit two-thirds of my property.' This wording strengthened the suspicion that Augustus had nominated Tiberius as his successor only for want of any better choice.

24. Tiberius did not hesitate to exercise power immediately by calling on the praetorians to provide him with a bodyguard, which was to rule in fact and in appearance. Yet a long time elapsed before he assumed the position of *princeps*. When his friends urged him to accept it, he went through the farce of scolding them for the suggestion, saying that they did not realize what a monstrous beast power was, and he kept the Senate guessing by his carefully evasive answers and hesitations, even when they threw themselves at his feet imploring him to change his mind. This made some of them lose patience, and in the confusion a voice was heard shouting, 'Oh, let him either take it or leave it.' And another senator openly taunted him with 'Some people are slow to do what they promise; you are slow to promise what you have already done.' Finally, with a great show of reluctance, and complaints that they were forcing him to become a miserable and overworked slave, Tiberius accepted the principate; but even then he hinted that he might later resign it. His actual words were 'until I grow so old that you may be good enough to grant me a respite'.

25. His hesitation was caused by threats of danger from many quarters, so that he often said, 'I'm holding a wolf by the ears.' A slave of Agrippa Postumus named Clemens had recruited a

fairly large force of his fellows, sworn to avenge their dead master; Lucius Scribonius Libo, a nobleman, was secretly planning a revolt; and camp mutinies now broke out in Illyricum and Germany.¹⁶ Both bodies of mutineers demanded very large concessions, particularly that they should be paid at the same rate as the praetorians. The army in Germany also refused to acknowledge a *princeps* whom they had not chosen themselves, and did all they could to make their commander Germanicus seize power, despite his flat refusal. A fear that they might succeed was the main reason for Tiberius' plea to the Senate: 'Pray assign me any part in the government you please; but remember that no single man can bear the whole burden of empire – I need a colleague, or perhaps several colleagues.' He then gave out that he was dangerously ill, so that Germanicus would be more patient, expecting to succeed him shortly or at least be given a share in the rule. However, both mutinies were suppressed; Tiberius tricked Clemens into surrender, and in the following year he convicted Libo before the Senate – though hitherto he had merely kept on his guard, not feeling powerful enough to take active measures against him. Thus, when Libo took part in a pontifical sacrifice, Tiberius, who was with him, had substituted a leaden knife for the sharp double-bladed steel one which Libo would use, and he later refused his plea for a private audience unless Drusus were present, and even then pretended to need the support of Libo's arm as they walked up and down together, and clung tightly to it.

26. These immediate anxieties past, Tiberius at first behaved with great discretion and almost as modestly as if he had never held public office. Of the many high honours voted him, he accepted none but a few unimportant ones, and could hardly be persuaded to let his birthday, which fell on a day of the Plebeian Games,¹⁷ be honoured by the addition of a two-horse chariot race to those held in the Circus. He vetoed all bills for the dedication of temples and priests to his divinity, and reserved the right to sanction even the setting up of his statues and busts – which were not to be placed among the images of the gods, but only amid the temple decor. Proposals that all citizens should swear to approve his past and future actions,

and that the months of September and October should be renamed respectively Tiberius and Livius (after his mother), met with his veto. He also declined to use *Imperator* as a praenomen or *Father of His Country* as a title, or to let the civic crown be fixed in his entry hall; and he even refrained from using the name *Augustus*, though his by right of inheritance, in any letters except those addressed to foreign monarchs. While *princeps*, he held no more than three consulships:¹⁸ one for a few days, the next for three months, and the third – during his absence – until 15 May.

27. Such was his hatred of flatterers that he refused to let senators approach his litter, whether in greeting or on business; and one day, when a man of consular rank came to apologize for some fault and tried to embrace his knees in suppliant fashion, Tiberius retreated so hurriedly that he tumbled over backwards. And if anyone, either in conversation or in a speech, spoke of him in too fulsome terms, Tiberius would interrupt and sternly correct the phrase. Once, when addressed as ‘My Lord’, he gave warning that no such insult must ever again be thrown at him. Another man referred to ‘your sacred occupations’, and a third said that he had ‘approached the Senate on Tiberius’ authority’; Tiberius made them change these words to ‘your laborious occupations’ and ‘on Tiberius’ recommendation’.

28. He was, moreover, quite unperturbed by abuse, slander, or lampoons on himself and his family, and would often say that liberty to speak and think as one pleases is the test of a free country. When the Senate asked that those who had offended in this way should be brought to book, he replied, ‘We cannot spare the time to undertake any such new enterprise. Open that window, and you will let in such a rush of denunciations as to waste your whole working day; everyone will take this opportunity of airing some private feud.’ A remarkably modest statement of his is recorded in the *Proceedings of the Senate*: ‘If so-and-so challenges me, I shall lay before you a careful account of what I have said and done; if that does not satisfy him, I shall reciprocate his dislike of me.’

29. Tiberius showed an almost excessive courtesy when addressing both individual senators and the Senate as a whole.

Once, on the floor of the Senate House, he found himself disagreeing with Quintus Haterius, and said, 'You will, I hope, forgive me if I trespass on my rights as a senator by speaking rather more plainly than I should.' Then he turned to the House, saying, 'Let me repeat, gentlemen of the Senate, that a right-minded and true-hearted *princeps*, who has had as much power placed in his hands as you have placed in mine, should regard himself as the servant of the Senate, and often of the people as a whole, and sometimes even of private citizens. I do not regret this view, because I have always found you to be generous, just and indulgent masters.'

30. He even gave the appearance of restoring popular liberties by seeing that the Senate and magistrates enjoyed their former dignity and authority. He referred all public business, however important or unimportant, to the senators, asking for advice in every matter that concerned the national revenue, the allocation of monopolies, and the construction or repair of public buildings; he even consulted them about the drafting or disbanding of troops, the stationing of legions and auxiliaries, the extension of military commands, the choice of generals to conduct particular campaigns, and how to answer letters from foreign rulers. When a cavalry commander was accused of robbery with violence, Tiberius ordered him to plead his case before the Senate. He always entered the Senate House unattended, except for one day when he was sick and carried in on a litter – and even then he dismissed his bearers immediately.

31. If decrees were passed in defiance of his wishes, he abstained from complaint – for example, when he had insisted that magistrates-elect should stay at home and attend to business, but the Senate allowed a praetor-elect to travel overseas with free use of official transport and lodging. And on expressing the opinion that a road could rightfully be made at Trebiae with a legacy bequeathed to the city for the building of a new theatre, he was overruled and the testator's intentions were respected. Once it happened that the Senate put a motion to the vote; Tiberius sided with the minority, and not a soul followed him. He left a great deal of public business to the magistrates and the ordinary processes of law; the consuls grew

so important again that an African embassy came before them, complaining that they could make no headway with Caesar, to whom they had been sent. Nor was this at all remarkable; everyone knew that he even stood up when the consuls appeared, and made way on meeting them in the streets.

32. Some generals of consular rank earned a rebuff by addressing their dispatches to Tiberius rather than the Senate and asking him to approve awards of military honours, as though they were not entitled to give these at their own discretion. He also congratulated a praetor who, when he assumed office, revived the ancient custom of publicly eulogizing his own ancestors, and he attended the funerals of important citizens to the extent of witnessing their cremation. Tiberius displayed a like moderation in dealing with men of lesser rank. He summoned to Rome the Rhodian magistrates who had sent him a public report without adding the usual complimentary formula of prayers for his health, yet did not reprimand them when they appeared; he merely instructed them to repair the omission and sent them home again. During his stay at Rhodes a *grammaticus* named Diogenes used to lecture every sabbath, and when Tiberius wanted to hear him some other day of the week he sent a slave out to say, 'Come back on the seventh day.' Diogenes now turned up at Rome and waited at his door to pay Tiberius his respects; Tiberius' only revenge was a mild message: 'Come back in the seventh year.' He answered some governors, who had written to recommend an increase in the burden of provincial taxation, with 'A good shepherd shears his flock; he does not flay them.'

33. Very gradually Tiberius showed that he was indeed *princeps*, and though at first his policy was not always consistent, he nevertheless took considerable pains to further the national interest. At first, too, he intervened only when things were not done properly, revoking certain orders published by the Senate, and sometimes offering to sit on the tribunal beside the magistrates, or at one end of the curved dais, in an advisory capacity. And if it came to his ears that influence was being used to acquit a criminal in some court or other, he would suddenly appear and address the jury either from the floor or

from the tribunal, asking them to remember the sanctity of the law and their oath to uphold it, and the serious nature of the crime on which their verdict was required. He also undertook to arrest any decline in public morality due to negligence or licence.

34. Tiberius cut down the expenses of public entertainments by lowering the pay of actors and setting a limit to the number of gladiatorial combats on any given occasion. Once he protested violently against an absurd rise in the cost of Corinthian vases and high-quality fish – three mullets had been offered for sale at 10,000 sesterces each! His proposal was that a ceiling should be imposed on the prices of household furnishings, and that market values should be annually regulated by the Senate. At the same time the aediles were to restrict the amount of food offered for sale in cookshops and eating houses, even banning bakery items. And, to set an example in his campaign against waste, he often served at formal dinner parties half-eaten dishes left over from the day before, or only one side of a wild boar – which, he said, contained everything that the other side did.

He issued an edict against promiscuous kissing, and likewise against the giving of good-luck gifts after the Kalends of January. On the receipt of such a gift he had formerly always returned one four times as valuable, and presented it personally; but he discontinued this practice when he found the whole of January becoming spoilt by a stream of gift-givers who had not been able to get an audience on the actual Kalends.

35. An ancient Roman custom revived by Tiberius was the punishment of married women guilty of improprieties by the decision of a family council, in cases when no one had brought a public prosecution. When a Roman *equus* had sworn that he would never divorce his wife whatever she did, but then found her in bed with their son-in-law, Tiberius absolved him from his oath. Married women of good family but bad reputation were beginning to declare themselves professional prostitutes, and so escape punishment for their adulteries by renouncing the privileges of their rank, and wastrels of both the senatorial and equestrian orders purposely got themselves reduced in status so as to evade the law forbidding their appearance on

the stage or in the arena. All such offenders were now exiled, which discouraged any similar sheltering behind the letter of the law. Tiberius demoted a senator on hearing that he had moved to his country estate right before the Kalends of July in order to rent a house in the city more cheaply later on. He cancelled the quaestorship of another man who had married a woman the day before he cast lots for a province, but divorced her the next day.

36. He abolished foreign cults at Rome, particularly the Egyptian and Jewish, forcing all those who had embraced these superstitions to burn their religious vestments and other accessories. Jews of military age were removed to unhealthy regions on the pretext of drafting them into the army; those too old or too young to serve – including non-Jews who had adopted similar practices – were expelled from the city and threatened with slavery if they defied the order. Tiberius also banished all astrologers except such as asked for his forgiveness and undertook to abandon that art.

37. Tiberius safeguarded the country against banditry and local revolts by decreasing the distance between military posts, and at Rome he provided the praetorian guards, who had hitherto been billeted in scattered lodging houses, with regular barracks and a fortified camp. He also discountenanced city riots, and if any broke out, he crushed them without mercy. The theatre audience had formed factions in support of rival actors, and once when their quarrels ended in bloodshed Tiberius exiled not only the faction leaders but the actors who had been the occasion of the riot; nor would he ever give way to popular entreaties by recalling them. Trouble occurred in Pollentia, where the townsfolk would not let the corpse of a leading centurion be removed from the marketplace until they had extorted money from his heirs for a gladiatorial show. Tiberius detached one cohort from Rome and another from the Cottian Alps to converge on Pollentia, after disguising their destination. They had orders to enter the town simultaneously by opposite gates, suddenly display their weapons, blow trumpets, and arrest most of the people and the magistrates – whom he then sentenced to life imprisonment.

He also abolished the right of sanctuary in temples and holy places, which criminals enjoyed throughout the empire, and punished the people of Cyzicus for their outrageous treatment of certain Roman citizens by withdrawing the right to self-governance conferred on them as a reward for services in the Mithridatic war. Immediately after his accession he delegated the task of dealing with frontier incidents to his legates, but sanctioned aggressive action only if it seemed unavoidable. He disciplined foreign kings suspected of ill will towards Rome by threats and reprimands rather than punitive expeditions, and decoyed some of them with glowing promises to Rome – where they were detained at his pleasure. Among them were Maroboduus the German, Rhascuporis the Thracian and Archelaus the Cappadocian, whose kingdom he reduced to provincial status.

38. In the first two years of his reign Tiberius did not once set foot outside the gates of Rome; after that he went only to nearby towns, no further than Antium, and even that very occasionally and for just a few days. Yet he often announced that he would make a tour of the provinces and inspect the troops there, and almost every year he made preparations for his departure, chartering transport and arranging for provisions in the towns and colonies. At last he even allowed people to make vows for his safe return from the promised tour, which earned him the nickname of ‘Callipides’ – from the character in the Greek proverb who keeps running without advancing a single foot.

39. After the loss of his son Drusus at Rome and his adopted son Germanicus in Syria, Tiberius retired to Campania – from which almost everyone swore he would not return, but would soon die there. This prediction was not far out, because Rome had in fact seen the last of him, and he narrowly escaped death a few days later. He was dining at a country house called The Cavern, near Tarracina, when some huge rocks fell from the roof and killed several guests and attendants close to him; he miraculously survived.

40. His pretext for the progress through Campania was that he must dedicate a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus at Capua and

a temple to Augustus at Nola. But, these tasks done, he crossed over to the isle of Capreae, which fascinated him by having only one small landing beach – the remainder of its coast consisted of sheer cliffs surrounded by deep water. However, a catastrophe at Fidenae recalled him to the mainland almost at once: the amphitheatre had collapsed during a gladiatorial show, and more than 20,000 people lay dead in the ruins. Tiberius now gave audiences to everyone who demanded them, and was the readier to be gracious because he had given orders on leaving the city some days previously that he must not be disturbed throughout his journey.

41. On his return to Capreae he let all affairs of state slide, neither filling vacancies that occurred in the equestrian order, nor appointing new military tribunes and cavalry officers, nor sending out new provincial governors; Spain and Syria were left without legates of consular rank for several years. He allowed the Parthians to overrun Armenia, the Dacians and Sarmatians to ravage Moesia, and the Germans to invade Gaul – a negligence as dangerous to the empire as it was dishonourable.

42. But having found seclusion at last, and no longer feeling himself under public scrutiny, he rapidly succumbed to all the vicious passions which he had for a long time tried, not very successfully, to disguise. I shall give a faithful account of these from the start. Even as a young officer he was such a hard drinker that his name, Tiberius Claudius Nero, was displaced by the nickname ‘Biberius Caldus Mero’.¹⁹ When already *princeps* and busily engaged on the reform of public morals, he spent two whole days and the intervening night in an orgy of food and drink with Pomponius Flaccus and Lucius Piso – at the conclusion of which he made Flaccus the governor of Syria and Piso the prefect of the city – actually eulogizing them in their commissions as ‘excellent fellows at all hours of the day or night’. Being invited to dinner by Cestius Gallus, a lecherous old spendthrift whom Augustus had ignominiously removed from the Senate and whom he had himself reprimanded for his ill living only a few days previously, Tiberius accepted on condition that the dinner should follow Gallus’ usual routine, and that the serving girls should be naked. At another banquet

a very obscure candidate for the quaestorship drained an amphora of wine at Tiberius' challenge, whereupon he was preferred to rival candidates from the noblest families. Tiberius also paid Asellius Sabinus 200,000 sesterces to show his appreciation of a dialogue in which a mushroom, a fig-pecker, an oyster and a thrush competed for a culinary prize; and he established a new office, Comptroller of Pleasures, first held by an *eques* named Titus Caesonius Priscus.

43. On retiring to Capreae he made himself a private play-house, where sexual extravagances were practised for his secret pleasure. Bevies of girls and toy boys, whom he had collected from all over as adepts in unnatural practices and who were known as *spintriae*, would perform before him in groups of three to excite his waning passions. A number of small rooms were furnished with the most indecent pictures and statuary obtainable, as well as the erotic manuals of Elephantis; the inmates of the establishment would know from these exactly what was expected of them. He furthermore devised little nooks of lechery in the woods and glades of the island, and had boys and girls dressed up as Pans and nymphs posted in front of caverns or grottoes, so that the island was now openly and generally called 'Caprineum'.²⁰

44. Some aspects of his criminal obscenity are almost too vile to discuss, much less believe. Imagine training little boys, whom he called his 'minnows', to chase him while he went swimming and get between his legs to lick and nibble him. Or letting babies not yet weaned from their mother's breast suck at his groin instead – such a filthy old man he had become! Then there was a painting by Parrhasius, which had been bequeathed him on condition that, if he did not like the subject, he could have 1 million sesterces instead. Tiberius not only preferred to keep the picture but hung it in his bedroom; it showed Atalanta satisfying Meleager²¹ with her mouth. The story goes that once, while sacrificing, he took an erotic fancy to the attendant who carried the incense casket, and could hardly wait for the ceremony to end before hurrying away him and his brother, the pipe player, and raping them both. When they protested at this dastardly crime he had their legs broken.

45. What nasty tricks he used to play on women, even those of high rank, is clearly seen in the case of a certain Mallonia whom he summoned to his bed. She showed such an invincible repugnance to complying with his aged lusts that he set informers on her track and during her very trial continued to shout, 'Are you sorry?' Finally she left the court and went home; there she stabbed herself to death after a violent tirade against 'that filthy-mouthed, hairy, stinking old beast'. So a joke at his expense, slipped into the next Atellan farce, won a loud laugh and went the rounds at once:

The old goat goes
For the does
With his tongue.

46. Tiberius was close-fisted to the point of miserliness, never paying his staff a salary when on a foreign mission, but merely providing their keep. On the sole occasion that he behaved liberally to these friends of his, Augustus bore the expense. Tiberius then arranged them in three categories according to their rank; the first were given 600,000 sesterces, the second 400,000 sesterces, and the third, whom he described not as 'friends' but as 'Greeks', 200,000.

47. As *princeps*, he was responsible for no magnificent public works: his only two undertakings, the erection of Augustus' Temple and the restoration of Pompey's Theatre, still remained uncompleted at the end of all those years. He gave no public shows at all, and hardly ever attended those given by others, because he did not want to be asked for anything – especially after the crowd forced him, on one of his rare visits to the theatre, to buy the freedom of a slave comedian named Actius. Though relieving the financial distress of a few senators, he avoided having to repeat this generous act by announcing that in future imperial assistance would be restricted to such persons as could prove to the satisfaction of the Senate that they were not responsible for their financial embarrassment. Shame and pride then prevented many impoverished senators from making an application; among these was Hortalus, grandson of the

orator Quintus Hortensius, whose income was very moderate indeed but whom Augustus' pleas had encouraged to beget four children.

48. Tiberius showed large-scale generosity no more than twice. On the first occasion he offered a public loan of 100 million sesterces, free of interest, for three years, because a decree which he had persuaded the Senate to pass – ordering all moneylenders to invest two-thirds of their capital in agricultural land, provided that their debtors at once disbursed in cash two-thirds of what they owed – failed to relieve the acute economic crisis. On the second occasion, he paid for the rebuilding of certain blocks of houses on the Caelian Hill which had been destroyed in a fire. This too was an emergency measure during bad times, yet he made such a parade of his openhandedness as to rename the whole hill the 'Augustan'. After doubling the legacies bequeathed by Augustus to the army, Tiberius never gave them anything beyond their pay, except for the 1,000 denarii a head which the praetorian guard won for not aligning themselves with Sejanus and some gifts awarded the legions in Syria for being the only ones not to have set consecrated statues of Sejanus among their regimental standards. He granted few veterans their discharge, reckoning that if they died while serving he would be spared the expense of the discharge bounty. The only free money grant any province got from him was when an earthquake destroyed some cities in Asia.

49. As the years went by, this stinginess turned to rapacity. It is notorious that he forced the fabulously wealthy Gnaeus Lentulus Augur to name him as his sole heir and then to commit suicide, by playing on his nervous apprehensions; and that he gratified Quirinius, an extremely rich and childless former consul, by executing the noble Aemilia Lepida – he had divorced her after twenty years of marriage and accused her of having once attempted to poison him. Tiberius also confiscated the property of leading Spanish, Gallic, Syrian and Greek provincials on trivial and absurd charges, such as keeping too much of their wealth in ready cash. He made many states and individuals forfeit their ancient immunities and mineral rights, and the privilege of collecting taxes. As for Vonones, the king of Parthia,

whom his subjects had dethroned but who, under the impression that he was confiding himself to Roman protection, escaped to Antioch with a huge treasure, Tiberius treacherously robbed and killed him.

50. Tiberius' first hostile action against his own family was when his brother Drusus wrote to him privately suggesting that they should jointly compel Augustus to restore the republican constitution; Tiberius placed the letter in Augustus' hands. This set the pattern for later behaviour. He showed so little pity for his exiled wife Julia that he did not have the decency to confirm Augustus' decree which merely confined her to a single town, but restricted her to a single house where visitors were forbidden. He even deprived her of the annual sums hitherto paid her by Augustus, on the pretext that no mention of these had appeared in his will and that consequently under common law she was no longer entitled to draw them. Tiberius complained that his mother Livia vexed him by wanting to be his co-ruler; he avoided frequent meetings or long private talks with her so that he would not appear to be directed by her advice, which all the same he occasionally both needed and followed. A senatorial proposal adding 'Son of Livia' as well as 'Son of Augustus' to his honorifics so deeply offended him that he vetoed proposals to confer on her the title Mother of Her Country or any notable public honour. What is more, he often warned Livia to remember that she was a woman and must not interfere in affairs of state. He became especially insistent on this point when a fire broke out near the Temple of Vesta and news reached him that Livia was directing the civilian and military firefighters in person, as she had frequently done when Augustus was still alive, and urging them to redouble their efforts.

51. Afterwards Tiberius quarrelled openly with his mother. The story goes that she repeatedly urged him to enrol in the jurors' list the name of a man who had been granted citizenship. Tiberius agreed to do so on one condition – that the entry should be marked 'forced upon him by his mother'. Livia lost her temper and produced from a strongbox some of Augustus' old letters to her commenting on Tiberius' sour and stubborn character. Annoyance with her for hoarding these documents

so long and then spitefully confronting him with them is said by some to have been his main reason for retirement to Capreae. At all events he visited her exactly once in the last three years of her life, and only for an hour or two at that, and when she eventually fell sick he made no effort to repeat the visit. Livia then died, and he spoke of attending her funeral, but did not come. After several days her corpse grew so corrupt and noisome that he sent to have it buried, but vetoed her deification on the pretext that she had herself forbidden this. He also annulled her will, and began taking his revenge on all her friends and confidants – even those whom, as she died, she had appointed to take charge of her funeral rites – and went so far as to condemn one of them, an *eques*, to the treadmill.

52. Tiberius had no paternal feelings either for his natural son Drusus, whose vicious and dissolute habits offended him, or for his adopted son Germanicus. When Drusus died, Tiberius appeared to be perfectly unconcerned, and went back to his usual business almost as soon as the funeral ended, cutting short the period of official mourning; in fact when a Trojan delegation arrived with condolences, a month or two later, Tiberius grinned, having apparently got over his loss, and replied, 'May I condole with you, in return, on the death of your eminent fellow citizen Hector?'²² He described Germanicus' glorious victories as wholly ineffective and even harmful for the commonwealth, so little affection did he feel for him. He actually sent the Senate a letter of complaint when Germanicus, without consulting him, hurried to Alexandria on account of a sudden disastrous famine.²³ It is even believed that he arranged for Gnaeus Piso, the governor of Syria, to poison Germanicus, and that Piso, when tried on this charge, would have produced his instructions had they not been taken from him. This is why 'Give us back Germanicus!' was written on the walls throughout Rome and shouted all night. Tiberius later strengthened popular suspicion by his cruel treatment of Germanicus' wife Agrippina and her children.

53. When Agrippina, after her husband's death, protested a little too boldly, Tiberius took her by the hand, quoting the Greek line 'And if you are not queen, my dear, have I then

done you wrong?'; and this was the last time that he ever condescended to address her. Indeed, since she seemed scared of tasting an apple which he handed her at dinner, the invitation to his table was never repeated; he said that she had charged him with attempted poisoning. Yet the whole scene had been carefully stage-managed: he would offer the apple as a test of her feelings for him, and she would suspect that it carried sudden death and refuse it. At last he falsely accused her of planning to take sanctuary beside the image of her grandfather Augustus or with the army abroad, and exiled her to Pandataria. In punishment for her violent protests he ordered a centurion to give her a good flogging, in the course of which she lost an eye. Then she decided to starve herself to death and, though he had her jaws prised open for forcible feeding, eventually succeeded. So he wickedly slandered her memory, persuading the Senate to decree her birthday a day of ill omen, and boasting of his clemency in not having her strangled and thrown out on the Gemonian Stairs. He even allowed a decree to be passed congratulating him on this pious attitude and voting a golden commemorative gift to Jupiter Capitolinus.

54. Through Germanicus, Tiberius had three adoptive grandsons named Nero, Drusus and Gaius, and through Drusus a natural grandson named Tiberius. After the deaths of Germanicus and Drusus, he recommended Nero and Drusus, the eldest of these, to the Senate, and celebrated their coming-of-age ceremonies by giving the people largesse. But when he found that, at the celebrations for the new year, prayers for their safety were being added to his own, he asked the Senate to decide whether this was a proper procedure, suggesting that such honours should be conferred only on men who had served their country long and meritoriously. His dislike for the young pair having thus been revealed, he rendered them liable to all sorts of accusations: people manipulated them into making abusive complaints and then reported their behaviour in detail. This gave him grounds for writing the Senate so harsh a letter of complaint that both were declared public enemies and put to death – Nero on the island of Pontia, Drusus in a cellar of the Palatine. It is believed that Nero was forced to commit suicide when an executioner,

announcing that he had come with the Senate's warrant, displayed the noose for hanging him and the hooks for dragging his corpse to the Tiber. Drusus, they say, was deprived of food, and was so starved that he tried to eat the stuffing from his mattress; the bodies of both were chopped into so many pieces that they could hardly be collected for burial.

55. To serve as advisers on public issues, in addition to his old friends and associates, Tiberius had asked the Senate to choose twenty of their most prominent members. Of these, barely two or three survived unscathed. All the rest he killed, one way or another, including Aelius Sejanus, who dragged many others to ruin with him. Tiberius felt no affection for Sejanus, but had given him plenary powers as being efficient and cunning enough to do what was required of him – namely to make away with Germanicus' children and ensure that Tiberius' own grandson through Drusus should succeed him in the empire.

56. He acted no less cruelly towards his Greek companions, with whom he most preferred to relax. One day he asked a man named Zeno, who had been discoursing in a rather affected style, 'What damned dialect may that be?' 'It is Doric,' replied Zeno. Tiberius mistook this for a taunting reference to his exile at Rhodes, where Doric is spoken, and banished Zeno to Artichoke Island. At the dinner table he used to pose questions arising from his daily study. The *grammaticus* Seleucus had been finding out from the imperial servants what books he was reading, and was coming prepared with all the answers; hearing of this, Tiberius dismissed him from his company, and later forced him to commit suicide.

57. Some signs of Tiberius' savage and dour character could be distinguished even in his boyhood. Theodorus of Gadara, who taught him rhetoric, seems to have been the first to do so, since, on having occasion to reprove Tiberius, he would call him 'mud, kneaded with blood'. But after he became *princeps*, even when he was still gaining popular favour by a pretence of moderation, there could be no doubt that Theodorus had been right. Once, as a funeral procession was passing, a wit hailed the corpse and asked him to tell Augustus' ghost that his bequests to the people had not yet been duly paid. Tiberius ordered the

man to be arrested and brought before him. 'I will give you your due at once', he said, and ordered his execution, saying, 'Why not go to my father yourself and tell him the truth about those legacies?' Soon afterwards a Roman *equus* named Pompey appeared in the Senate to lodge a strong protest. Tiberius threatened imprisonment, shouting 'You're Pompey, aren't you? I'll make you a Pompeian!' – a harsh pun on the man's name and the fate of Pompey the Great's supporters.

58. About this time a praetor asked Tiberius whether, in his opinion, courts should be convened to try cases of *maiestas*. Tiberius replied that the law must be enforced; and enforce it he did – most savagely too. One man was accused of decapitating an image of Augustus with a view to substituting another head; his case was tried before the Senate and, finding a conflict of evidence, Tiberius had the witnesses examined under torture. The offender was sentenced to death, which provided a precedent for increasingly far-fetched accusations: people could now be executed for beating a slave or changing their clothes close to a statue of Augustus, or for carrying a ring or coin bearing Augustus' image into a privy or a brothel, or for criticizing anything Augustus had ever said or done. The climax came when a man died merely for letting an honour be voted him by his town council on the same day that honours had once been voted to Augustus.

59. Tiberius did so many other wicked deeds under the pretext of reforming public morals – but in reality to gratify his lust for seeing people suffer – that many satires were written against the evils of the day, and expressing gloomy fears about the future:

You cruel monster! I'll be damned, I will,
If even your own mother loves you still.

*

You are no knight – Caesar's adopted son
May own no cash to qualify as one;
And banishment in Rhodes cancelled your right
To be a citizen – far less a knight.

*

Saturn's golden age has passed,²⁴
 Saturn's age could never last;
 Now while Caesar holds the stage
 This must be an iron age.

*

He is not thirsty for neat wine
 As he was thirsty then,
 But warms him up a tastier cup,
 The blood of murdered men.

*

Here is a Sulla, men of Rome, surnamed
 Sulla the Fortunate – to your misfortune;
 Here is a Marius come back at last
 To capture Rome; here is an Antony
 Uncivily provoking civil strife,
 His hands thrice dyed in costly Roman blood.
 Confess: 'Rome is no more!'. All who return
 To reign, from banishment, reign bloodily.

At first Tiberius dismissed these verses as the work of bilious malcontents who were impatient with his reforms and did not really mean what they said. He would remark, 'Let them hate me, so long as they approve!'²⁵ But, as time went on, his conduct justified every line they had written.

60. A few days after he came to Capreae a fisherman suddenly intruded on his solitude by presenting him with an enormous mullet. Tiberius was so terrified that he had managed to clamber up the trackless cliffs at the rear of the island that he ordered his guards to rub the fisherman's face with it. The scales skinned it raw, and the poor fellow shouted in his agony, 'Thank heaven I did not also bring Caesar that huge crab I caught!' Tiberius sent for the crab and had it used in the same way. A praetorian guard once stole a peacock from his garden and was sentenced to death. On another occasion, during a country jaunt, the bearers of Tiberius' litter were held up by a bramble thicket; he had the guards' centurion, whose task it was to choose the right path, stretched on the ground and flogged until he nearly died.

61. Soon Tiberius broke out in every sort of cruelty, and never lacked for victims: these were the friends and even acquaintances first of his mother, then of Agrippina, Nero and Drusus, and finally of Sejanus. With Sejanus out of the way his savageries increased, which proved that Sejanus had not, as some thought, been inciting him to commit them, but had merely been providing the opportunities that he demanded. Nevertheless, in Tiberius' dry, brief autobiography we find him daring to assert that Sejanus had been killed for persecuting Nero and Drusus; the fact was that he had himself put Nero to death when Sejanus was already an object of suspicion, and Drusus after he had fallen from power.

A detailed list of Tiberius' barbarities would take a long time to compile; I shall content myself with sketching out the chief categories. Not a day, however holy, passed without an execution; he even desecrated the beginning of the new year. Many men were accused and condemned with their children – some actually by their children – and the relatives forbidden to go into mourning. Special awards were voted to the informers who had denounced them, and in certain circumstances to the witnesses too. An informer's word was always believed. Every crime became a capital one, even the utterance of a few careless words. A poet found himself accused of slander – he had written a tragedy which presented Agamemnon in a bad light – and a historian had made the mistake of describing Brutus and Cassius as 'the last of the Romans'.²⁶ Both these authors were executed without delay, and their works – though once publicly read before Augustus and accorded general praise – were called in and destroyed. Tiberius denied those who escaped with a prison sentence not only the solace of reading books, but the privilege of talking to their fellow prisoners. Some of the accused, on being warned to appear in court, felt sure that the verdict would be 'guilty', and to avoid the humiliation of a trial stayed at home and severed an artery; yet Tiberius' men bandaged their wounds and hurried them, half-dead, to prison. Others obeyed their summons and then drank poison in full view of the Senate. The bodies of all executed persons were flung on the Gemonian Stairs and dragged to the Tiber with

hooks – as many as twenty a day, including women and children. Tradition forbade the strangling of virgins, so when little girls had been condemned to die in this way, the executioner began by violating them.²⁷ Tiberius used to punish with life those who wished to die. He regarded death as a comparatively light affliction, and, on hearing that a man named Carnalus had forestalled his execution by suicide, exclaimed, ‘Carnalus has got away!’ Once, during a jail inspection, a prisoner begged to be put out of his misery; Tiberius replied, ‘No; we are not yet friends again.’ A man of consular rank has recorded in his memoirs that he attended a banquet at which Tiberius was suddenly asked by a loud-voiced dwarf, standing among a group of jesters near the table, ‘What of Paconius? Why is he still alive after being charged with *maiestas*?’ Tiberius told him to hold his impudent tongue, but a few days later requested the Senate to make a quick decision about Paconius’ execution.

62. On eventually discovering that his son Drusus had died, not as the result of illness and overindulgence, as he had thought, but from poison administered by his wife Livilla in partnership with Sejanus, Tiberius grew enraged and redoubled his cruelties until nobody was safe from torture and death. He spent whole days investigating the Drusus affair, which obsessed him to such a degree that when a man whose guest he had been at Rhodes arrived in response to his own friendly invitation, he mistook him for an important witness in the case and had him put to the torture at once. When the truth came out, he actually executed the man to avoid publicizing the scandal.

In Capreae they still show the place at the clifftop where Tiberius used to watch his victims being thrown into the sea after prolonged and exquisite tortures. A party of marines was stationed below, and when the bodies came hurtling down they whacked at them with oars and boathooks, to make sure that they were completely dead. An ingenious torture of Tiberius’ devising was to trick men into drinking huge draughts of wine, and then suddenly to knot a cord tightly around their genitals, which not only cut into the flesh but prevented them from urinating. He would have killed even more people, it is thought,

if he himself had not died first, and if Thrasyllus had not cleverly persuaded him to postpone his designs by an assurance that he still had many years of life in hand. These victims would have included his own grandsons Gaius, of whom he was already harbouring suspicions, and Tiberius, whom he hated as having been born from adultery. The story is credible, because he sometimes used to envy Priam for having outlived his entire family.²⁸

63. Much evidence is extant, not only of the hatred that Tiberius earned but of the state of terror in which he himself lived and of the insults heaped upon him. He forbade anyone to consult haruspices, except openly and with witnesses present. He even attempted to suppress all oracles in the neighbourhood of Rome, but desisted for fear of the miraculous power shown by the Praenestine lots:²⁹ although he brought them to Rome in a sealed chest, they vanished and did not become visible again until returned to the temple. Tiberius had assigned provinces to certain men of consular rank, but, not daring to send them out, detained them in Rome for several years until their successors had been appointed. Meanwhile they relayed his frequent instructions to their legates and agents in the provinces which they officially governed yet were unable to visit.

64. After exiling Agrippina and her two sons, he always moved them from one place of confinement to another in closed litters, with their wrists and ankles fettered and a military escort to prevent all persons met on the road from even stopping to watch the litter go by, let alone glance inside.

65. Becoming aware that Sejanus was plotting a usurpation, Tiberius found some difficulty in getting rid of him, even though his birthday was being publicly celebrated and golden statues had been raised to him everywhere, and he did so at last by subterfuge rather than by the exercise of imperial authority. First of all, to detach Sejanus from his own immediate entourage while pretending to honour him, Tiberius appointed him his colleague in a fifth consulship, which he assumed solely for this purpose a long time after the fourth; but he did not visit Rome for his inauguration. Next he made Sejanus believe that he would soon marry into the imperial family and be awarded

tribunician power; and then, taking him off his guard, he sent a shamefully abject message to the Senate begging, among other things, that one of the consuls should fetch him – a poor lonely old man – into their presence under military escort. He also took precautions against the revolt which he feared might yet break out by ordering that his grandson Drusus, who was still in prison at Rome, should be released if necessary and appointed commander. He thought, indeed, of taking refuge with some provincial army and had a naval flotilla standing by to carry him off the island, where he waited on a cliff-top for the distant signal (announcing all possible eventualities) which he had ordered to be made in case his couriers might be delayed. Even when Sejanus' conspiracy had been suffocated, Tiberius did not show the least sign of increased confidence, but remained in the so-called Villa Io for the next nine months.

66. His uneasiness of mind was aggravated by a perpetual stream of reproaches from all sides, and every one of his condemned victims either cursed him to his face or arranged for a defamatory notice to be posted in the theatre seats occupied by senators. His attitude to these reproaches varied markedly: sometimes shame made him want nobody to hear about the incident, sometimes he laughed and deliberately publicized it. He even had a scathing letter from Artabanus, king of Parthia, in which he was accused of murdering his family, slaughtering innocent people, neglecting his duties and indulging his lusts, and was urged to satisfy the intense and pardonable loathing of his people by committing suicide as soon as convenient.

67. At last, growing thoroughly disgusted with himself, he as good as confessed his misery. A letter to the Senate began in this strain: 'If I know what to tell you, gentlemen of the Senate, or how to tell it, or what to leave altogether untold for the present, may all the gods and goddesses in heaven bring me to an even worse damnation than I now daily suffer.' According to one body of opinion, his skill in divination allowed him to foresee these things and to know how much hatred and ill repute lay in store for him; this made him refuse, point blank, the title Father of His Country offered by the Senate and also forbid them to swear an oath approving in advance and in

retrospect of whatever he said or did, for fear that his shame would be intensified when he turned out to be unworthy of such honours. This conclusion may, in fact, be deduced from his formal reply to the two proposals: 'So long as my wits do not fail me, you can count on the consistency of my behaviour; but I should not like you to set the precedent of binding yourselves to approve a man's every action, for what if something happened to alter that man's character?' And again: 'If you ever feel any doubts about my character or my devotion to you – but may I die before that happens! – the title Father of His Country will not recompense me for the loss of your regard, and you will be ashamed either of having given me the title without sufficient deliberation, or of having shown fickleness by changing your opinion of me.'

68. Tiberius was strongly and heavily built, and above average height. His shoulders and chest were broad, and his body perfectly proportioned from top to toe. His left hand was more agile than the right, and so strong that he could poke a hole in a sound, newly plucked apple or wound the skull of a boy or young man with a flick of his finger. He had a handsome, fresh-complexioned face, though subject to occasional rashes of pimples. Letting his back hair grow down over the nape seems to have been a family habit of the Claudii. Tiberius' eyes were remarkably large and possessed the unusual power of seeing in the dark, when he first opened them after sleep, although this phenomenon disappeared after a minute or two. His gait was a stiff stride, with the neck poked forward, and if ever he broke his usual stern silence to address those walking with him he spoke with great deliberation and eloquent movements of the fingers. Augustus disliked these mannerisms and put them down to pride, but frequently assured both the Senate and the people that they were physical, not moral, defects. Tiberius enjoyed excellent health almost to the end of his reign, although after the age of thirty he never called in a doctor or asked one to send him medicine.

69. He lacked any deep regard for the gods or religious scruples, his belief in astrology having persuaded him that the world was wholly ruled by fate. Yet thunder had a most fright-

ening effect on Tiberius: whenever the sky wore an ugly look he would put on a laurel wreath, which he supposed would make him lightning-proof.

70. Tiberius was deeply devoted to Greek and Latin literature and, while still a young man, modelled his Latin oratorical style on that of old Messala Corvinus; but he ruined it with so many affectations and pedantries that his extempore speeches were considered far better than the prepared ones. He also wrote a lyric poem entitled *Lament on the Death of Lucius Caesar*, and Greek verses in the manner of his favourites Euphoriion, Rhianus and Parthenius, whose writings and busts he placed in the public libraries among those of the classics – thus prompting several scholars to publish rival commentaries on these poets and dedicate them to him. However, he had a particular bent for mythology and carried his researches in it to such a ridiculous point that he would test *grammatici* – whose society, as I have already mentioned, he cultivated above all others’ – by asking them questions like ‘Who was Hecuba’s mother?’, ‘What name did Achilles assume when he was in the girls’ quarters?’, ‘What song did the Sirens sing?’³⁰ Furthermore, on his first entrance into the Senate after the death of Augustus he showed equal respect for the gods and for his adoptive father’s memory by reviving the example set long ago by Minos at the death of his son: he performed a sacrifice with wine and incense as usual, but dispensed with the customary pipe players.³¹

71. Tiberius spoke Greek fluently, but there were occasions when he stuck to Latin, especially in the Senate: indeed, he once apologized, before saying ‘monopoly’, for having to use a foreign word. And he objected to the Greek word ‘emblems’ when it appeared in a decree: if a one-word Latin equivalent could not be found, he said, a periphrasis of several words must serve. At another time he gave orders that a soldier who had been asked in Greek to give evidence on oath must answer either in Latin or not at all.

72. During the entire period of Tiberius’ retirement from Rome he only twice attempted to return. On the first occasion he sailed up the Tiber in a trireme as far as the gardens near Julius Caesar’s artificial lake, having posted troops along both

banks to order away anyone who came to meet him; but after a distant view of the city walls he sailed back, it is not known why. On the second occasion he rode up the Via Appia as far as the seventh milestone, but then retreated because of a frightening portent. This was the death of a pet snake which he used to feed with his own hands. When about to do so as usual, he found it half-eaten by a swarm of ants, and a soothsayer warned him, 'Beware the power of the mob.' He hurried back to Campania, fell ill at Astura, yet felt strong enough to continue with his journey. At Circeii he disguised his ill health by attending the garrison games, and even threw javelins from his president's box at a wild boar let loose in the arena. He twisted the muscles of his side by this effort, and then aggravated his condition by sitting in a draught while overheated. Nevertheless, he resolutely went on to Misenum without any change in daily routine, continuing to enjoy banquets and other diversions – partly because he now never practised self-denial, partly because he wanted nobody to realize how ill he was. Indeed, when the physician Charicles, on leaving the dining table, kissed his hand in farewell, Tiberius suspected a covert attempt to feel his pulse and begged Charicles to sit down again. Then he kept the party going until very late, and when it ended, followed his nightly habit of standing in the middle of the banqueting hall, with a licitor beside him, for a personal goodnight to each of the departing guests.

73. Meanwhile he read in the *Proceedings of the Senate* a paragraph to the effect that some persons whom he had sent for trial merely as 'named by an informer' had been discharged without a hearing. 'This is contempt!' he shouted furiously, and decided to make his way back to Capreae, the only place where he felt safe when issuing a stern order. But bad weather and increasing sickness delayed his voyage, and he died soon afterwards in a country house which had once belonged to Lucullus. He was then seventy-seven years old and had reigned for nearly twenty-three years. It was 16 March, and the consuls of the year were Gnaeus Acerronius Proculus and Gaius Pontius Nigrinus.³²

Some believe that he had been given a slow, wasting poison by

Gaius; others that, when convalescent after fever, he demanded food but was refused it. According to one account, his seal ring was taken from him when he seemed about to die, and when he revived and demanded it back he was smothered with a pillow. Seneca writes that Tiberius, realizing how near his end was, removed the ring himself, as if as a present for someone, but then clung to it a while before replacing it on his finger; that he afterwards lay quiet for some little time with the fist clenched, until summoning his servants; and that, when no one answered, he got out of bed, collapsed, and died.

74. On his last birthday Tiberius dreamed that the enormous, beautiful statue of Apollo Temenites,³³ which he had brought from Syracuse to erect in the library of Augustus' Temple, came in to announce 'Tiberius will never dedicate me!' A few days before his death the lighthouse on Capreae was wrecked by an earthquake. At Misenum the dead embers of the fire which had been put into a brazier to warm his dining room suddenly blazed up again, early in the evening, and continued to glow until late that night.

75. The first news of his death caused such joy at Rome that some people ran about yelling 'To the Tiber with Tiberius!' and others offered prayers to Mother Earth and the Di Manes³⁴ to give him no home below except among the impious. There were also loud threats to drag his body off with a hook and fling it on the Gemonian Stairs, for popular resentment against his savage behaviour was now increased by a fresh outrage. It so happened that the Senate had decreed a ten days' stay of execution in the case of all persons sentenced to death, and Tiberius died the very day on which the period of grace expired for some of them. The unfortunate creatures threw themselves on the mercy of the public, but since Gaius was not yet at hand there was no one to whom an appeal could be made, and the jailers, afraid of acting illegally, carried out the sentence of strangling them and throwing their bodies on the Gemonian Stairs. Thus the hatred of Tiberius grew hotter than ever – his cruelty, it was said, continued even after his death – and when the funeral procession left Misenum, the cry went up, 'Take him to Atella! Give him a half-burning in an amphitheatre!'³⁵

However, the soldiers carried the corpse on to Rome, where it was cremated with due ceremony.

76. Two years before his death Tiberius had drawn up a will in his own handwriting; an identical copy was also found in the handwriting of a freedman. Both these documents had been signed and sealed by witnesses of the very lowest class. In them, Gaius son of Germanicus and Tiberius son of Drusus were named as Tiberius' co-heirs, and if either should die the survivor was to be the sole heir. Tiberius left legacies to several other persons, including the Vestal Virgins, with a bounty for every serving soldier in the army and every member of the Roman people, and separate bequests to the city wardmasters.

TIBERIUS

1. *the expulsion of the kings*: Rome was originally a monarchy; according to tradition, the last king was driven out in 510 BC and the republic was then established.
2. *Claudius Regillianus . . . devices*: His name is usually given as Ap. Claudius Crassus Inregillensis Sabinus; for a full version of the story, see Livy 3.33–58.
3. *Mother Goddess . . . did so*: The goddess Cybele, whose cult was officially introduced into Rome from Asia Minor in 204 BC; for a more detailed version of this story, see Ovid, *Fasti* 4.291–328.
4. *sons of Appius Caecus*: The founders of the two main branches of the Claudian family in the later republican period; Claudius Pulcher, whose praenomen was in fact Publius and not Appius, was the consul who threw the sacred chickens into the sea; nothing more is known of Tiberius Claudius Nero.
5. *paid to the Senones . . . Camillus*: According to Roman tradition, in 390 BC Rome was sacked by a band of Gauls; the Romans agreed to pay a ransom of gold for their city, but at the last moment the hero Camillus appeared on the scene and forbade it to be handed over; for a full account, see Livy 5.33–55. These Gauls were later identified with the Senones, who settled in northern Italy and were wiped out by the Romans in 283 BC; the Gaul of which the first Drusus was governor is clearly meant to be Cisalpine Gaul, but he is not otherwise attested.
6. *'the Senate's patron' . . . similar circumstances*: The elder Drusus, as tribune in 122 BC, was a staunch opponent of the reformer C. Sempronius Gracchus; his son, as tribune in 91 BC, put together a package of reforms meant to diffuse unrest, but was opposed by a range of interests and finally assassinated.
7. *The elder son . . . Drusus*: Tiberius' full name was originally Ti. Claudius Nero, like that of his father; on his adoption by Augustus in AD 4, he became Ti. Julius Caesar; on the death of Augustus in AD 14 he acquired the name Augustus (see *Aug.* 101 and section 17 below); his formal name as emperor was Tiberius Caesar Augustus. The full name of his younger brother was Nero Claudius Drusus, with the cognomen of his mother's family and his father's cognomen as his praenomen; he was posthumously given the additional cognomen Germanicus in honour of his military exploits (see *Claud.* 1).

8. *the consuls as Marcus Aemilius Lepidus . . . Lucius Munatius Plancus*: In 42 BC.
9. *one of Augustus' political opponents*: M. Gallius was the brother of Q. Gallius, who had been executed by Augustus (see *Aug.* 27).
10. *Caecilius Atticus*: His original name was T. Pomponius Atticus, and it is under this name that he is usually known; he was later adopted by his uncle Q. Caecilius, and as a result the name of his daughter, Agrippa's wife, was Caecilia Attica.
11. *captured from Marcus Crassus*: At the battle of Carrhae in 52 BC; see further *Aug.* 21 with the note.
12. *ceased to act as the head of a household . . . peculium*: According to the letter of Roman law, sons remained under paternal authority as long as their fathers lived, and could not, among other things, legally possess property of their own; the father could, however, allot them the use of a certain amount of property, which was called *peculium*. Tiberius had been the head of his own household since the death of his father in 38 BC, but on adoption by Augustus he reverted back to the status of a dependant.
13. *the one he would acquire after he himself had died*: That is, 'Augustus'. *Invictus* means 'unconquered'; *pious*, 'pious', especially towards one's parents.
14. *'Alone he saved his by his cautious ways'*: A quotation from the now-lost *Annals* of Q. Ennius, referring to the tactics of Q. Fabius Maximus, a Roman general who in the early stages of the Second Punic War avoided pitched battles with the invading Carthaginian general Hannibal and instead pursued a successful policy of attrition.
15. *'If he came . . . fire'*: A quotation from the *Iliad*, 10.246-7, in which Diomedes chooses Odysseus as his companion for a nocturnal sortie.
16. *Lucius Scribonius Libo . . . Germany*: Libo's praenomen was in fact Marcus; Suetonius has mistakenly assigned him the praenomen held by his older brother, father and grandfather. For a more detailed account of this episode, see Tacitus, *Annals* 2.27-32; for Clemens, *ibid.* 2.39-40; for the mutinies, *ibid.* 1.16-49.
17. *the Plebeian Games*: A festival in honour of Jupiter; at their height they lasted from 4 to 17 November, with chariot races held on the last three days (including Tiberius' birthday on 16 November).
18. *three consulships*: In AD 18, 21 and 31; at the time of the last,

- he had already retired to Capreae. He had previously been consul twice, in 9 and 7 BC.
19. *Biberius Caldius Mero*: Biberius is a play on the verb *bibere*, 'to drink'; Caldius on the adjective *calidus* or *caldus*, 'hot' (wine was sometimes mixed with hot water); Mero on the noun *merum*, 'unmixed' in the sense of 'straight, neat' (wine was normally mixed with water).
 20. '*Caprineum*': A play on the name of the island and the Latin adjective *caprinus*, 'goatish'; goats were proverbial for their sexual appetite.
 21. *Atalanta . . . Meleager*: Figures from Greek myth. Atalanta was a virgin huntress who refused to marry unless a man could defeat her in a foot-race; Meleager was the hero of one of the great mythic exploits, the Calydonian boar hunt, in which Atalanta took part.
 22. *Hector*: The great hero on the Trojan side of the Trojan War, killed by Achilles.
 23. *a letter of complaint . . . famine*: Because of its strategic importance as the chief source of grain for Rome, Egypt was administered as an imperial possession; no senator was allowed to visit it without explicit imperial permission, which Germanicus had not obtained.
 24. *Saturn's golden age*: According to Roman myth, the god Saturn ruled over Italy during the golden age, when nature provided for all human needs and people did not have to work to feed, clothe or house themselves.
 25. '*Let them hate me, so long as they approve*': An adaptation of a famous line from a tragedy by the Roman playwright Accius (170–c.86 BC), 'Let them hate me, so long as they fear me'; Suetonius elsewhere reports that Gaius quoted it in its original form (*Calig.* 30).
 26. *A poet . . . the Romans*: Agamemnon was the mythical king of Mycenae and the leader of the Greek forces in the Trojan War; criticism of him in a tragedy could be taken as indirect criticism of the emperor, but nothing more is known of this particular case. The name of the historian was A. Cremutius Cordus, and his trial took place in AD 25; for a more detailed account, see Tacitus, *Annals* 4.34–5.
 27. *little girls . . . violating them*: Suetonius is here probably generalizing from a single known instance, the execution of Sejanus' young daughter in AD 31: see Tacitus, *Annals* 5.9.
 28. *Priam . . . family*: Priam, the mythical king of Troy, was killed only after all his sons had died fighting the Greeks.

29. *the Praenestine lots*: The Temple of Fortuna Primigenia, the chief deity of the town of Praeneste, was the site of an ancient and well-known oracle that people consulted by means of lots.
30. *Who was Hecuba's mother? . . . Sirens sing*: These are the sort of *recherché* questions in which *grammatici* specialized. Hecuba was the queen of Troy during the Trojan War, the mother of Hector and Paris; Achilles' mother, aware that he was fated to die if he joined the Greek expedition to Troy, disguised him as a girl and hid him on the island of Scyros; the Sirens' song lured sailors to their destruction.
31. *Minos . . . pipe players*: According to Greek myth, Minos was king of Crete, and his son was killed in Attica. In the Roman tradition, sacrifice always involved an offering of wine and incense, while an assistant played the pipes to mask any inauspicious sounds.
32. *the consuls of the year . . . Gaius Pontius Nigrinus*: In AD 37.
33. *statue of Apollo Temenites*: This was a famous statue of Apollo erected in the *temenos*, or sacred precinct, of the goddesses Demeter and Kore at Syracuse.
34. *Di Manes*: Gods of the underworld, identified with the spirits of the dead.
35. *'Take him to Atella! Give him a half-burning in an amphitheatre!'*: The point here is not entirely clear: Atella gave its name to Atellan farces, and a partial cremation was presumably an insult, but more than that cannot be said.

GAIUS CALIGULA

1. *Germanicus . . . paternal uncle*: Germanicus' name derived from the honorific cognomen awarded posthumously to his father (see *Claud.* 1); his original name was Nero Claudius Drusus Germanicus. Tiberius adopted him at the same time that he himself was adopted by Augustus (see *Aug.* 65, *Tib.* 15), whereupon Germanicus became Germanicus Julius Caesar.
2. *Piso . . . lynching*: Tacitus provides a full account of Germanicus and Piso (*Annals* 2.43, 53–61 and 69–83, 3.8–18); in the late 1980s an inscription was discovered that provides the full text of the Senate's decree in the case of Piso: see the Further Reading section.
3. *the consulship shared by his father with Gaius Fonteius Capito*: In AD 12. Gaius' full name was originally C. Julius Caesar