

**The Mirror of Tacitus? Selves and Others in the
Tiberian Books of the *Annals***

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
University of Oxford

Trinity term, 2013

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Abstract

This thesis considers the geographical and chronological forms of ‘mirroring’ that offer a way of reading *Annals* 1-6. It looks at how Tacitus’ depictions of non-Romans reflect back on Rome, and at the echoes of Rome’s past and future that can be discerned within his description of Tiberius’ principate.

After an introduction that discusses key thematic and methodological questions, Chapter 1 shows that Tiberius’ accession and the Pannonian and German mutinies described in *Annals* 1 echo Tacitus’ account in *Histories* 1 of events of AD 69. Moreover, when the Romans attempt to conquer Germany, the Germans’ resistance to this and to other efforts to rule them shows up Roman responses to civil war and autocracy.

Chapter 2 begins by examining potential similarities between Roman and both Parthian and Armenian history, and then focuses on Germanicus’ voyage in the east, recounted in *Annals* 2. His actions associate him with many late republican and early imperial Roman figures, which suggests that there are continuities between those two eras. Chapter 3 extends this theme by discussing the echoes of Sallust and Caesar in the central books of the Tiberian hexad. Intertexts with Sallust’s *Bellum Catilinae* especially hint that earlier civil conflicts are about to be replayed in some form, as the appearance of Sejanus, the ‘new Catiline’, confirms.

Chapter 4 further considers Tacitus’ inferences about the overlap between republican and imperial history, and then examines anti-Roman revolts in *Annals* 2, 3 and 4. Foreign rebels’ relative success in attempting to reclaim their freedom correlates with their distance from Rome, and this has clear implications for the status of Roman *libertas* under Tiberius. Finally, the outbreak of ‘civil war within the principate’, and indeed within the imperial house, is analysed. Chapter 5 traces the continuation of this ‘civil war’, and proposes that the last book of the Tiberian hexad again looks directly to 69, as well as to the excesses of other Julio-Claudians. It also considers Tacitus’ account of Roman intervention in Parthia: this episode confirms imperial Rome’s propensity for autocracy and civil war.

There follows a short conclusion in which some speculation is offered about how some of the themes discussed in this thesis with reference to the Tiberian hexad may have been represented in the lost central books of the *Annals*.

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Introduction

a. The Mirror of Tacitus?

A reference to a mirror in the title of any study of a classical text will immediately evoke one name: that of François Hartog, and his seminal work *The Mirror of Herodotus*. That study focuses on Herodotus' depictions of non-Greek peoples in the *Histories*, and in particular the Scythians, against whom the Persian king Darius leads an unsuccessful military expedition that is described in Book 4 of the *Histories*. Through this analysis of the representation of the Scythians and their interaction with foreigners, as well as several other groups such as the Egyptians and the Amazons, Hartog considers the implications of the historian's portrayal of non-Greeks for his narrative of Greek history, and notably the Persian expedition against Greece that fills Books 7, 8 and 9.

The broad thesis of *The Mirror of Herodotus* is that 'to tell of "others" is clearly a way of speaking of "us", since the narrative is unable to escape from the them/us polarity which constitutes its indestructible framework',¹ but Hartog does not take the one-dimensional approach of arguing that Herodotus' presentation of non-Greeks is merely an oblique way of talking about the Greeks themselves.² His work analyses numerous aspects of Herodotus' characterisation of the Scythians and other 'barbarians', and in the introduction he stresses the possibility that the Herodotean mirror can assume multiple forms:

The *Histories* are a mirror into which the historian never ceased to peer as he pondered his own identity: he was the looker looked at, the questioner questioned, who always ended up by declaring his own status and credentials. ...

¹ Hartog (1988) 368.

² See Pelling (1997/2011) 52-3.

...if the 'elsewhere' is a mirror image in the *logoi* devoted to non-Greeks, Herodotus's mirror is also held up to the Greeks themselves. ...

The mirror of Herodotus is also the eye of the *histor* who, as he traveled the world and told of it, set it in order within the context of Greek knowledge and, in so doing, constructed for the Greeks a representation of their own recent past; the *histor* became both rhapsode and surveyor. But beyond himself, he is also the mirror through which others, who came later, tended to see the world.³

For Hartog, the mirror focuses attention on both the 'other' and the Greek 'self', as well as on Herodotus the historian, and in the course of his study he sets out further complications in the mirroring that he explores. The self/other polarity is clear when Herodotus is considering one non-Greek people, such as the Scythians, who are implicitly set against the Greeks. But when such a people comes into contact with other non-Greeks, as when the Persians invade Scythia, Hartog detects a 'double mirror': one group begins to look like the Greeks themselves in certain respects, in order to 'bring out the otherness' of their counterparts, for an arrangement more complex than this binary seems not to feature in the text.⁴ In such cases, those who are otherwise portrayed as distinctively different are temporarily assimilated to the Greeks.

Hartog also considers how the interplay between the Scythian and other foreign *logoi* in the *Histories* and the work's historical narrative, which culminates with Xerxes' expedition against the Greeks, is to be interpreted. In his view, the 'ethnographic' and 'historical' strands should not be seen as separate, compartmentalised elements but as integral components of Herodotus' project as a whole:

...his way of setting about his task is the same throughout: when Herodotus makes his enquiry into the Persian Wars, he elaborates for the Greeks a representation of their recent past and, similarly, when he makes his enquiry into the margins of the world and foreign peoples, he constructs a representation of the world. In the two cases, the discourse produces analogous effects.⁵

³ Hartog (1988) xxiii-xxiv.

⁴ Hartog (1988) 259 on Amazons and Scythians; see also 49-57 and 367-8 on Scythians and Persians. As Hartog seems to imply (49), the people with norms closer to those of the Greeks tend to become 'Greek'.

⁵ Hartog (1988) 313; cf. xx-xxii and 311-22.

So Herodotus' representations of what has changed over historical time and what changes across geographical space both contribute to his representation of the Greek world in the fifth century BC. Furthermore, Hartog discusses one important instance of suggestive similarity and repetition over time in the *Histories*: the fact that Darius' Scythian expedition serves to prefigure his successor Xerxes' invasion of Greece.⁶ He does not term this a form of mirroring, but the continuities between the two episodes nevertheless mean that they illuminate each other in a manner that is reminiscent of the relationship between Herodotus' representations of Greeks and non-Greeks.

The approach pursued by Hartog in *The Mirror of Herodotus* can usefully be applied to Tacitus. That is not to say that Hartog claims his model can be transferred wholesale to the study of another historian; in any case, Herodotus and Tacitus are writing in their own eras, with dissimilar subject-matter and different preoccupations. Nevertheless, there happen to be a number of broad points of contact between the two ancient authors. Herodotus embeds episodes that portray foreigners and their interactions with others in the wider narrative of the *Histories*,⁷ and in the chapters to come it is argued that Tacitus' work displays analogous features and can be read in a way that is inspired by *The Mirror of Herodotus*. Moreover, Herodotus describes the recent past and implies the existence of parallels between different phases of that past, without explicitly taking contemporary events into account, just as Tacitus does: although 'chronological'

⁶ Hartog (1988) 35-40.

⁷ These similarities are certainly not exclusive to Herodotus and Tacitus, but note Hartog (1988) 313, where he stresses that Herodotus' narrative offers interpretative options that the work of Thucydides, with its narrower focus on the Peloponnesian War and contemporary events, does not. The possibility that at one point in the *Annals* Tacitus adopts a Thucydidean mode will be considered at pp. 253-4 below, but from this wider angle he seems to have more in common with Herodotus.

mirroring does not constitute a major theme in Hartog's study, other Herodotean scholars have examined this element in the *Histories*.⁸

In *Annals* 1-6 Tacitus describes events in Rome itself and within the Roman sphere of influence during the reign of the emperor Tiberius (AD 14-37). To view the text as a site of multiple mirrors, however, means that the narrative acquires a much wider frame of reference. Tacitus' presentation of non-Romans and their relations with the Romans – which are generally antagonistic, like those between the Scythians and others in Herodotus – is a central component of this. To recount Rome's involvement with the Germans and Parthians (as well as the Gauls and other non-Romans within the empire) is of course to perform the traditional Roman historiographical task of reporting *res externae* as well as *res internae*,⁹ but these sections of the *Annals* also offer reflections of Rome's past, present and future: non-Romans provide numerous mirrored perspectives on Rome itself.¹⁰

The themes of autocracy, freedom, peace and war that are found in the main narrative of affairs in Rome recur when the historian turns to consider what is happening on the empire's edges, and the foreigners whose actions he describes look suggestively like or suggestively unlike Romans. Just as Herodotus' text uses a Greek framework through which to view the rest of the world, the *Annals* presents others in what are implicitly Roman terms, but in doing so Tacitus makes more specific points about early imperial Rome than Herodotus does about Greece.¹¹ Moreover, in the *Annals* Hartog's

⁸ Although see Hartog (1988) 202-4. Moles (1996) discusses contemporary allusions in the text and their significance for Athens of the 420s; cf. also Pelling (2006) 87-92 and 98-103 on echoes of the Trojan War in the *Histories*.

⁹ See Ginsburg (1981) 53-4, and for more detailed discussion Rich (1997/2011) 3-31.

¹⁰ There is no space here to consider in detail how mirrors could be perceived as both revelatory and deceptive in the ancient world, but see Zadorojnyi (2010) 173-83 for an introduction to this question. In what follows the idea of the mirror will be used as an interpretative tool; as is the case with *The Mirror of Herodotus*, it will not be suggested that Tacitus includes images of mirroring in the *Annals* itself.

¹¹ This should not be surprising, given the many specific differences between the two authors and their works: in this respect Tacitus' 'early imperial Rome' is an entity much more easily defined than Herodotus' 'Greece'. For the notion of a framework in Herodotus' text, see Hartog (1988) 319-20.

Herodotean double mirror, through which non-Greeks pitted against other non-Greeks take on Greek attributes, becomes a single mirror that works in both directions: foreigners who are opposed to Rome turn out to display some aspects of Roman identity, and on occasion Romans start resembling those foreigners as well. Indeed, Tacitus' portrayals of events abroad reflect the state of Rome under Tiberius, and at times the mirror-image and the original that it reflects converge, as both Romans and non-Romans are ruled by the same *princeps*. The resultant asymmetrical responses to this form of government, and each side's different relationship to freedom, are also highly significant. But there is a chronological as well as a geographical aspect to the mirroring in *Annals* 1-6. As in Herodotus' case, Tacitus' descriptions of foreign peoples and lands and his main 'political' narrative are both integral parts of his work and complement each other.

First, the foreigners in Tacitus' text often offer an image of Rome's past: events abroad mirror Roman historical development, reflecting both what happened and what did not happen in Rome, and suggesting how contemporary Rome has evolved into what it is. Moreover, just like the invasions of Scythia and Greece in the *Histories*, events that in the Tiberian books as a whole occur both in Rome and elsewhere also mirror the Roman past and future in more general terms, with particular reference to civil war. This form of conflict is found amongst Romans and amongst non-Romans: the nuances of its portrayal abroad may serve to explain its role in Roman history, but the *Annals* also demonstrates how civil strife is a recurring phenomenon in Rome, and previous and forthcoming manifestations of it are reflected in the narrative. Tacitus' evocation of Tiberian Rome recalls both the wars of the late republic and the turmoil of the year of the four emperors, respectively replaying and 'preplaying' them, and Tiberius' reign itself is eventually confirmed to be the scene of civil conflict.

Finally, there is the possibility that the *Annals* may reflect Tacitus himself, rather as Hartog suggests that the *Histories* holds up a mirror to Herodotus the historian.¹² Some attempts have been made to reconstruct the relationship between Tacitus' life and work,¹³ but the discussion to come notes how difficult it is in most respects to see the *Annals* as a guide to its author himself. Nevertheless, at times events of Tiberius' principate seem to evoke faint and not necessarily positive images of the Trajanic present, the milieu in which Tacitus wrote, and there may be one fleeting glimpse of the historian and his conception of his own work.

b. Selves and Others in the Tiberian Books

It should already be clear that the discussion to come is not only about the portrayal of Romans and non-Romans in the *Annals*. Nevertheless, the realisation that comparatively little attention has been paid to those sections of the Tiberian books that depict the activities of foreigners and their relations with Rome has been an important factor in shaping this thesis:¹⁴ in the chapters below the point is made that, far from being unimportant in comparison with the main narrative, the foreign sections in *Annals* 1-6 recurrently complement and reinforce Tacitus' depiction of Rome under Tiberius in many different ways.¹⁵ Remarks in commentaries aside, however, very few articles or chapters of full-length works have been devoted to any of these passages. Although there are some

¹² See Hartog (1988) 371-81 for some – rather general – conclusions.

¹³ See pp. 31-3 below.

¹⁴ 1.50-71, 2.6.2-26 (Germanicus' German campaigns); 2.1-4, 6.31-37, 41-44 (events in and around Parthia and Armenia); 2.52, 3.20-1, 3.73-4, 4.23-6 (fighting against Tacfarinas in north Africa); 2.64.2-67, 3.38.3-39, 4.46-51 (events in Thrace, including two revolts against Rome); 3.40-7 (the Gallic revolt); 4.72-3 (the Frisian revolt).

¹⁵ Clark (2011) 208 and Lavan (2013) 127 and 154-5 eloquently stress the benefits of such an approach.

notable exceptions, most of them focus on the Germans and Parthians.¹⁶ This is understandable, as those two peoples play a prominent role in the hexad that is further explored in due course here, but it does not remedy the lack of coverage of other parts of the narrative that describe events abroad.

So it may not be surprising that even in quite recent scholarship on the *Annals* in general a rather incurious attitude to the foreign passages can be discerned. For example, in the course of her otherwise pioneering study on the annalistic structure of the Tiberian books, Ginsburg affirms that the narratives of events outside Rome ‘are but interludes in Tacitus’ narrative of internal affairs’. When introducing the first north African episode at 2.52, Goodyear cites approvingly Syme’s view that this narrative strand provided Tacitus with ‘welcome relief from political history’ and was therefore given extended treatment. No other explanation is advanced. Martin and Woodman go on to suggest that the account of the Thracian revolt at 4.46-51 was included as a ‘set-piece *descriptio pugnae*’ and, once again, make no further comment.¹⁷ Indeed, this fairly rapid treatment is characteristic of how the foreign episodes in the Tiberian books tend to be treated in commentaries, even if it would perhaps be unreasonable to expect a special focus on events abroad at the expense of the Rome-based Tiberian narrative in general works on the text. Commentators generally consider the details of these passages, the allusions to other authors found within them and their place in the immediately surrounding narrative, and such discussion is valuable, but they seem not to pose more general questions about the relationship of these *res externae* to the *res internae* in the text.¹⁸

¹⁶ Exceptions include McCulloch (1984), Gowing (1990), Pelling (1993) 79-81, Sinclair (1995) 17-31, Ash (1999) and Tylawsky (2002). See also Woolf (2011b), esp. 33-7.

¹⁷ Ginsburg (1981) 85; Goodyear (1981) 348 *ad* 2.52, citing Syme (1979b) (which does discuss Tacfarinas, but not from a historiographical perspective); Martin and Woodman (1989) 207 *ad* 4.46-51.

¹⁸ See Martin and Woodman (1989) 18 and Woodman and Martin (1996) 7-8: each introduction mentions foreign affairs in a suggestive but rather cursory manner. cf. Lavan (2011) 294 nn. 2-3 on how readings of the *Agricola* often focus on the British aspect of the narrative at the expense of the Roman, or vice versa.

By contrast, the later books of the *Annals* have fared somewhat better than the Tiberian hexad: there have been several wide-ranging analyses of the treatment of the Parthians in particular in the Claudian and Neronian narrative. Other studies, a number of which are discussed below, have also made important points about the foreigners who appear in Tacitus' other works and the implications for Rome of their portrayal,¹⁹ and it is not clear why Books 1-6 of the *Annals* have been treated differently. Perhaps the enduring influence of Syme is significant: his monumental 1958 work focuses more on the Parthians than any other foreigners, not least because of his interest in the contemporary context of the *Annals* and Trajan's wars (see for now p. 33 below). It is only at the end of the Tiberian narrative, however, that Tacitus devotes significant space to events in Parthia. Furthermore, in the later books the Roman general Corbulo is a key character, whose part in hostilities against the Parthians especially gives shape and coherence to the narrative.²⁰ After Germanicus' death at the end of Book 2 there is no equivalent figure in the Tiberian books, and this may be another factor in the failure to engage fully with the foreign sections there.

A further consideration remains: the status of foreign warfare in the first and second centuries AD, the setting for the *Annals*' content and composition respectively. The slowing of Roman expansionism after the end of the republic has long been noted, although recent studies have stressed that this was a complex phenomenon, the culmination of a long-term process rather than a sudden shift dictated by constitutional change.²¹ This development may have influenced modern scholars to underplay the Roman interaction with foreigners that Tacitus reports for the early imperial era, not least

¹⁹ For the later books, see Gilmartin (1973), Keitel (1978), Roberts (1988) and Clark (2011). For Tacitus' other works see e.g. O'Gorman (1993), Clarke (2001), Ash (2010a) and ead. (2010b), and Lavan (2011); for both, see Lavan (2013) 127-55. cf. nn. 53-4 below.

²⁰ See esp. Syme (1958b) 236-48, 492-8 (though Keitel (1978) 462 draws attention to his and others' dismissive attitude to the later eastern sections); cf. pp. 268-9 below. On Corbulo see p. 269 below.

²¹ Cornell (1993) and Sidebottom (2005), who discusses previous scholarship at 315-9.

as most of the foreign episodes in *Annals* 1-6 involve local problems on the edges of the empire rather than attempts to expand it and confront external enemies. Tacitus himself seems to emphasise this, apparently with special reference to the first hexad, in a digressive passage at 4.32-3. In this he draws attention to the present lack of the *ingentia...bella, expugnationes urbium* and so on that once characterised republican historiography, and the disadvantages of narrating the grim history of the empire under a *princeps proferendi imperi incuriosus* (4.32.1-2).

It is suggested below, however, that this important and much-discussed passage is not to be taken at face value: a strong case can be made for reading it as an affirmation of certain continuities between republican and imperial history, and of the enduring importance for a historian's work of military encounters on the fringes of the empire, even if they no longer form part of a glorious narrative of conquest (see pp. 185-95). It has also been argued that in the early imperial era, while wars of conquest were rare, the provinces were the scene of persistent low-level resistance to Rome that required military intervention, even if this did not attract much attention at the centre of the empire, either because emperors chose not to make much of events in which they were not involved, or perhaps because such suppression of minor rebels was not seen as worthy of publicity. Either way, literary sources provide a very inadequate record. The very fact that Tacitus has singled out some of these encounters in the *Annals* seems to differentiate him from other authors of the period, as most of the episodes involving Romans and others in Books 1-6 are not recorded in any other extant narrative.²² So it seems plausible to

²² See nn. 1 and 55 of Chapter 4 and, more generally, Bowersock (1987), Woolf (1993) 187-9 and id. (2011b), and especially Cornell (1993) 152-3 for why events on the empire's fringes may have been underreported (although at 152 he accuses Tacitus of making provincial history look more peaceful than it actually was; the historian does not, however, undertake to provide an exhaustive account of events abroad). See also Syme (1979b) 218-24 and Woodman and Martin (1996) 322 *ad* 3.38.3-47 on the difficulties of transmitting information about what happened away from Rome.

conclude that those episodes that do feature in the first hexad of the *Annals* have been carefully selected, and deserve as much attention as any other aspect of the text.

This desire to challenge the approach taken by previous studies is one reason for limiting the discussion to the first hexad. But while the later books are naturally taken into account, other considerations also suggest why it is fruitful to focus on the Tiberian books in particular. Tiberius is the only emperor in the *Annals* whose accession and death are both included in the extant text. The loss of most of Book 5 notwithstanding, Books 1-6 accordingly form a unified arc that follows the reign of the second *princeps*, whose succession confirms that the principate is a hereditary system.²³

Not only that, but the *Annals'* account of Tiberius' years in power serves a distinctive purpose, in that it sets up the rest of the work by characterising the nature of Rome's government. It is argued below that Books 1-6 make the point that, despite the republican practices that Augustus retained in Roman political life, the principate was in fact an autocracy. Tacitus depicts the gradual extinction of republican forms as the Tiberian narrative advances; by the end of the emperor's life, the principate is clearly a tyranny, and this categorisation will not be significantly revised when his successors' reigns are narrated. The Tiberian books therefore deserve particular emphasis, as they serve to introduce and characterise the principate itself, a process that raises important questions about freedom in Rome and elsewhere, and its opposites, that have not all been considered with reference to this part of the narrative (cf. pp. 24-8 below).

Moreover, there is another respect in which the first hexad fulfils a literally pivotal function between the past and the future, for the theme of civil war reverberates throughout it. To a greater extent than any other part of the extant text, Books 1-6 both

²³ See n. 12 of Chapter 3.

recall the principate's origins in civil strife and prefigure the eventual implosion of the Julio-Claudian dynasty in internal conflict. The narrative of Tiberius' reign looks back to the republic, and includes clear echoes of other authors' accounts of the turbulent first century BC, but intertextual links with Tacitus' own portrayal of the wars of 69 also appear as early as the beginning of *Annals* 1. This combination of allusions to conflicts past and to come stresses how internecine strife recurs in Roman republican and imperial history. It also becomes increasingly apparent that Tiberius' reign can itself be characterised with direct reference to civil war, and in the emperor's final years a real conflict breaks out: although the later books will similarly see numerous acts of internal violence, this specific evocation of actual war in Rome will not recur. The Tiberian principate thus acts as a special link between Rome's troubled past and future: this thesis demonstrates the full relevance of the notion of 'civil war within the principate', which previous work on the first hexad has only partially explored (see p. 30 below), to Tacitus' description of Rome under Tiberius.

c. The Thesis in Outline

The discussion to come treats the narrative of the first hexad predominantly – although not rigidly – in chronological sequence. Chapter 1, *Alibi quam Romae*, initially considers the account in *Annals* 1 of the accession of Tiberius and the mutinies amongst the troops in Pannonia and Germany that happened at about the same time. Verbal and thematic parallels between the German mutiny in particular and episodes in Book 1 of Tacitus' earlier work, the *Histories*, suggest that the uprising of AD 14 could have developed in the same way as the seditious movements of 69; even though Germanicus

defuses the situation, he rather resembles the generals who would be found operating in the northern provinces and potentially posing a threat to the incumbent emperor in the second half of the first century AD. At the beginning of the *Annals*, the ultimate end of the Julio-Claudian principate, and indeed later flashpoints in Roman imperial history, are foreshadowed.

When the mutinies are over Germanicus leads his legions into Germany, but achieves little lasting success; the independent Germans' resistance proves that Roman empire-building under the principate has distinct limits. But the relationship between Romans and Germans is not a simple polarisation: civil war features in the recent history of both peoples, but its different consequences in each case draw attention to the contrast between Roman autocracy and German freedom. Moreover, the Germans' spirited response to the attempts of aspiring autocrats to rule over them begins to illuminate the nature of the principate and the status of its representative Germanicus, whom some Romans associate with *libertas* and a putative return to the republic.

Chapter 2, **Germanicus in the East**, follows Germanicus from Germany to the eastern Mediterranean, after considering the survey of recent Roman involvement with Parthia and Armenia included at the beginning of *Annals* 2. As in the case of the Germans, the history of these eastern peoples mirrors Roman themes of freedom and civil war; it also hints that the two great imperial powers Rome and Parthia may be following a similar historical trajectory. Much of Book 2, however, is taken up with an account of Germanicus' travels in the eastern Mediterranean. The discussion shows that as he journeys further east he initially seems to resemble his grandfather Mark Antony, but can also be linked to a variety of figures from the late republic and early empire, from Scipio Africanus to Trajan. Far from being an anachronistic adherent of republicanism, he

therefore symbolises the principate's origins in the late republic and the continuity between past and future: his obituary further delineates the principate's autocratic nature.

Two further themes are prominent in Chapter 2. The enmity between Germanicus and his colleague in the east Gnaeus Piso spans the eastern narrative, but while the two men initially threaten to replay the battle of Actium, after Germanicus' death Piso wages what appears to be a brief civil war against his rival's representatives; echoes of the *Histories* can once again be discerned, and the future is once again foreshadowed. The narrative may also look even further ahead, to Trajan's Parthian campaigns during the period in which the *Annals* was being written. Germanicus' death in the east may have had resonance for the historian's contemporary audience, and wider themes of the fragility of great empires and the inadvisability of attacking Parthia also seem to feature in the narrative.

Chapter 3, **The 'Long Book 3'**, returns to Rome, and treats the theme of continuity between the republic and the principate from a different angle. It looks at the 'long Book 3', a portion of the narrative that starts midway through Book 2 and ends soon after the beginning of Book 4, and which is structured by a succession of passages depicting the Roman war with the north African rebel Tacfarinas, which are imbued with historiographical echoes of Rome's past. It is argued that in this section of the text Tacitus offers a gradually more ironic view of the Augustan principate's republican façade. He depicts events in Rome with reference to previous episodes in Roman history, and the late republican past becomes more and more relevant as a point of reference: he echoes the works of Sallust in particular. By portraying the actions of the senate in this way, Tacitus underlines its members' blinkered adherence to the republican forms that Augustus maintained alongside their inability to play a full role in government under the principate.

There is a further dimension to the Sallustian narratives that develop within the text. Echoes of the *Bellum Jugurthinum* in Tacitus' depictions of the fighting against Tacfarinas suggest that there are some reassuring links between the past and the present, but the *Bellum Catilinae* also becomes a key intertext with more ominous connotations, especially as the beginning of Book 4 and Sejanus' formal introduction come closer. The sense that Sejanus is a new Catiline implies that the late republic is indeed relevant to the early principate – but not in the way that Augustus intended. Sejanus' appearance heralds the beginning of a 'civil war within the principate', and his activities look ahead to the prospect of even more serious conflicts to come.

Chapter 4, **Perspectives on the Principate**, begins with a reading of Tacitus' reflections on the nature of republican and imperial historiography at 4.32-3. It is argued that this digression, contrary to the impression it may give at first, further supports the notion that there is overlap between the republic and the empire, but also draws attention to particular and rather depressing aspects of imperial history. The discussion then focuses on Tacitus' depictions in Books 2, 3 and 4 of Thracians, Gauls and Frisians, and their relations with Rome. In almost all the episodes in question, foreigners resist Roman control, and although none of them prove a match for Roman forces to the extent that the Germans in Books 1 and 2 do, a pattern emerges: the peoples who are less subject to Roman influence are more successful in their opposition. As the case of the Germans suggested, being independent from external control in the first place appears to be conducive to efforts to preserve that independence.

The implications of this pattern for imperial Rome become clear, and these foreign movements indeed contrast with Romans' failure to resist the principate and its erosion of their freedom. The only individual in the Tiberian books who does not fit this trend is the historian Cremutius Cordus. The episode in which he directs a defiant speech

at Tiberius (4.34-5) is analysed at the beginning of Chapter 4 along with the excursus at 4.32-3. Cordus' words call into question the presence of *libertas* in Rome and also underline Tacitus' own status as a historian of civil strife. Indeed, the chapter concludes by tracing the continuing evolution of the 'civil war' in Tiberius' Rome. Strife within the *domus Augusta* itself is triggered by Sejanus' attacks on members of the imperial family, and his unfounded accusations about their involvement in treasonous activities contrast with his own covertly subversive role.

Chapter 5, **Rome from the Outside**, goes on to examine the full eruption of the Tiberian civil war. It begins by suggesting that an episode in *Annals* 6 in which Romans easily overcome a further foreign revolt shows that the previous sequence of relatively successful anti-Roman insurrections is over. All external threats have apparently been suppressed, *metus hostilis* (see pp. 28-9 below) is no more, and internal strife and self-destruction in Rome remain. The various elements of the discord in the city now reach a climax. Although Sejanus is dead, Tiberius continues the assault on his own relations, and they make some effort to fight back; the emperor also wages a form of war on his subjects and they too seem to be resisting him. There are signals that all this will continue after Tiberius' own death. Moreover, Rome's citizens seem to turn on each other, and various narrative tropes suggest that a real civil war has broken out amongst them: once again, it is clear that Tiberius' reign looks ahead to the wars that will follow the fall of the Julio-Claudian dynasty.

The final section of the chapter considers the portrayal of Roman relations with Parthia in Book 6: Tiberius sends out a rival claimant for the Parthian throne who manages to depose the current king, although the latter eventually reclaims his position. The parallelism between Rome and Parthia identified in Chapter 2 recurs much more strongly here at the end of the hexad: the civil discord amongst the Parthians mirrors and

amplifies the situation in Rome, and the two rulers both preside over a tyrannical regime. Nevertheless, although Tiberius' foreign policy is more adept than that of his eastern counterpart, his diplomatic approach to outsiders contrasts with the Parthian king's attempts to wage war on others. Tiberius' non-confrontational attitude works, but it proves to be emblematic of Rome's inability to escape from the claustrophobic and inward-looking phenomenon of civil war. This Parthian episode is the last foreign narrative in the first hexad: it offers a devastating perspective on Rome itself.

Finally, the **Conclusion** briefly looks forward to the rest of the *Annals*, and speculates how two key episodes in the principates of Caligula and Claudius, which unfortunately do not feature in the extant text, may have served to develop some of the historiographical themes that have featured in the discussion, and to link the Tiberian narrative with the later books.

Now that the structure and content of the thesis as a whole have been surveyed, it will be helpful to introduce in detail several historiographical themes that recur in the chapters to come: previous scholarship on mirroring in Roman authors' descriptions of foreigners, *libertas*, the related notions of 'civil war within the principate' and *metus hostilis*, and the relationship between Tacitus, his work, and the era in which he wrote.

d. Mirroring in Roman Historiography

The Mirror of Herodotus has significantly influenced the approach to the *Annals* taken in what follows, but other studies also offer important comparative material. A range of ancient works have also been analysed with reference to the notion that literary

and historiographical portrayals of foreigners can be illuminating, and that ‘selves’ can be mirrored by ‘others’. There is no need to reintroduce this capacious topic in detail here.²⁴

This section of the Introduction, however, will set out some of the different kinds of mirroring that have been identified in scholarly work on Roman historiographical texts. It also draws attention to the important consideration that the polarisation between ‘selves’ and ‘others’ tends not to be simple and static. Mirroring is rarely a matter of binary opposition between two isolated parties; it is generally part of a more complex nexus of similarity and difference that can be linked to the existence of real historical connections between Romans and non-Romans.

Several approaches to Caesar’s *De Bello Gallico*, Sallust’s *Bellum Jugurthinum*, and Tacitus’ own *Germania* and *Agricola* will now be considered. All these works depict non-Romans in a narrative that has at least some direct reference to Rome.²⁵ Scholars have drawn thoughtful conclusions from the portrayal of this interaction that look forward to the themes that are discussed in this thesis. It is also the case that some of the foreigners in these texts feature in the *Annals* as well, and it is shown in the chapters to come that at times Tacitus appears to be responding to these earlier writings. The four works accordingly offer interesting comparative material for a study of *Annals* 1-6.

Scholarship on Caesar’s *BG* has gradually advanced from anatomisation of his alleged manipulation of the truth to more sophisticated studies of the work’s style and wider context.²⁶ A central strand in many of these studies is the artful distinction Caesar makes between Gauls and Germans and its implications for his presentation of his

²⁴ For now see n. 19 above on other work on Tacitus, along with Hall (1989) and, for overviews of ancient ‘othering’, Rives (1999) 11-16 and Gruen (2011), a lengthy, revisionist study. cf. of course Said (1978).

²⁵ The *Germania* is of course the only surviving example from antiquity of a freestanding ethnographic work: see Rives (1999) 48-56 and Dench (2005) 41.

²⁶ See Krebs (2006) 112 n. 4 and Riggsby (2006).

campaigns: the echoes in *Annals* 1 and 2 of this distinction are noted in Chapter 1.²⁷

Reflections of various contemporary developments in Rome have also been identified in Caesar's portrayal of the Gauls, but although this perspective on the text may be useful, it does not always take into account the fact that Caesar's description is part of an account of Gaul's incorporation within the Roman sphere of influence.²⁸ By contrast, Dench's brief discussion of the *BG* does address this issue: she highlights episodes in which Gauls look like Romans, but she goes on to cite a more profound 'blurring of "us" and "them" in terms of ethics and characteristics...[to] some extent, the activities and attributes of Gauls at their most rebellious remind us of Romans'. She links this to a 'peculiarly Roman emphasis on the potential to transform and be transformed'.²⁹

This is a crucial point. The foreigners described by Caesar, Sallust and Tacitus – in both his longer and shorter works – are not isolated 'others' who serve as a neatly inverted mirror of the Roman 'self'. They are specific peoples with whom Romans have come into contact and who are likely to have been influenced in some way by that contact. It may accordingly be tempting to link the sense of blurred boundaries that these authors evoke to actual historical developments, and to the fact that experience of Rome may well have altered non-Roman societies. The issue does feature in these texts:

Sallust's Jugurtha and his Roman connections are discussed below, and several foreigners whose dealings with Rome have given them knowledge of Roman ways also feature prominently in the Tiberian books. Roman historiographical texts, however, do not necessarily provide an accurate picture of 'Romanisation',³⁰ and in any case it will be

²⁷ See pp. 59-60 and n. 67 of Chapter 1 for references.

²⁸ See Gerhard (1991), Barlow (1998) 153 and Torigian (1998) 49-50, although Bell (1995) is also salutary.

²⁹ Dench (2005) 53-4: she cites Orgetorix' desire for *regnum* and exhortations to the Helvetii to win *imperium* through *virtus* (*BG* 1.2), and the difficulty of distinguishing Gauls on both sides at Alesia (*BG* 7.50). For the *BG* as a military and literary 'conquest', see Krebs (2006) 113-19; cf. pp. 23-4 below on the *Germania* and *Agricola*.

³⁰ See Woolf (1998) 1-23 and Wallace-Hadrill (2008) 9-14, with Woolf (2007) 144-5 and id. (2011a) 91-4; cf. Riggsby (2006) 101 and Fear (2011) 28-34. See also pp. 63-4 below on the Germans in *Annals* 1 and 2.

shown in due course that historical assimilation is not the main focus of Tacitus' presentation of the interaction between Romans and others in the *Annals*. Although the historian makes it look as if foreigners who have had more contact with Rome are less adept at resisting Roman rule, he does not include sufficient detail to confirm whether this accurately reflects the situation in the provinces in the first century AD: more important is what this tendency implies about *libertas* at home and abroad.

It is more relevant that all the foreigners in the Tiberian books (even the Parthians and Germans, who are not subject to Rome) have come into contact with Romans, like the Gauls in the *BG*: dealings between each people and the Romans have shaped the behaviour of both sides. This bilateral connection means that these non-Romans offer a mirrored perspective on the development of Roman history and identity. The various ways in which they look like or unlike Romans, or emphasise the existence of repeated patterns of Roman behaviour, reflect back on Roman phenomena of which the effects were felt over a wide area: imperialism, civil war, the principate. Moreover, Dench writes of 'the potential to transform *and* be transformed' (my italics). The process works in both directions: points of contact between Romans and non-Romans show that Rome itself has changed even as it has brought about change amongst others.

Dench also considers Sallust's *Bellum Jugurthinum* in the same terms. In analysing that text she focuses on the apparently contagious nature of Roman corruption and the parallel character-development of Marius and Jugurtha, and sees the 'imperial world' depicted within it as 'a gloomy and decidedly claustrophobic place, the effects of Roman rule spilling over onto the ruled...Sallust's narrative emphasizes a blurring of 'outsiders' and 'insiders'.³¹ Even as each commander's career illuminates the other's, there is also a deeper sense of mutual influence between Romans and Numidians.

³¹ Dench (2005) 89: see too her identification in the *Agricola* of a 'sense of outsider and insider as relative categories, placed on a sliding scale rather than as mutually exclusive, polarized entities' (85).

Jugurtha's Roman links are signalled early on, but his service under Scipio turns out to have taught him that *Romae omnia venalia esse* (*BJ* 8.1; cf. 20.1, 31.25) and this knowledge will shape his own dealings with Rome. Similarly, by the work's end Marius 'manifests as much as craft and knowledge of the terrain as Jugurtha did before him'.³² A similar sort of 'imperial world' will emerge in the coming discussion of *Annals* 1-6.³³ Romans and others reflect each other as entities, and at the same time several foreigners – who often have practical links with Rome – serve to mirror individual Romans and indeed the principate and Rome itself.³⁴

Other recent scholarship on Sallust's *BJ* also offers further useful models for an analysis of the interplay between a Rome-centred narrative and material set 'elsewhere', as well as showing how this relationship may work across time as well as space: along two axes rather than just one. The text's two digressions that are not of obvious relevance to Rome (*BJ* 17-19, the history of north Africa, and 79, the tale of the Philaeni; *BJ* 41-2 surveys Roman history and is imbued with a sense of the failure of *metus hostilis*, on which see pp. 28-9 below) were for a long time not explored in much depth, rather like the foreign sections of *Annals* 1-6.³⁵ Recently, however, more innovative approaches have been pursued. Notably, it has been suggested that a broad parallelism between Rome and Carthage can be detected. Scanlon highlights some striking verbal echoes at *BJ* 17-19 of the account of Rome's past at the beginning (*BC* 6-13) of Sallust's other monograph, the *Bellum Catilinae*, which hint that both Rome and 'Africa' have moved towards imperial expansionism combined with discord at home. The evocation of Carthage and its fall may therefore be read as a kind of belated warning for Rome. Scanlon also suggests that the third digression (*BJ* 79) looks back to the first, while the fact that the Philaeni are

³² Kraus (1999) 241 – cf. Morstein-Marx (2001) 198 on how the Romans adopt Numidian-style tactics.

³³ See Chapter 3 for specific echoes of Sallust's *BJ* in the Tiberian books.

³⁴ Compare especially Earl (1961) 62, who suggests that Jugurtha, in his progression from youthful virtue to later corruption, reflects the historical development of Rome itself, with pp. 70-3 below on Arminius.

³⁵ Syme (1964) 152 terms the digressions 'Greek erudition and fancies', an influential characterisation.

Carthaginian reinforces the connection already posited between Rome and Carthage. Just as the city they served was destroyed, so Rome's leaders may ultimately bring about Rome's destruction.³⁶

Although this hypothesis conflates Carthage and Numidia,³⁷ it nevertheless offers a useful template for mirroring that does not just set one people against another but also alludes to the parallels between historical change over time on both sides. It affirms that Rome and Carthage have followed similar courses, but within the wider narrative of the *BJ* there is a continuing awareness of the view that the expansion of Rome's empire was linked to the destruction of Carthage (see further p. 28 below). North Africa, one focus of that expansion, is an appropriate location for an illustration of its long-term effects on Rome, and so this concise historical summary embedded within Sallust's account of the war offers interpretative possibilities for the main Roman story. Similarly, it is shown in the chapters to come that the accounts of various foreign peoples in *Annals* 1-6 encapsulate trends in Roman history: these miniature narratives also hint at the differences between Romans and others that have made their respective stories diverge.

This notion that a depiction of change in Rome over time can be discerned in a foreign context comes into focus even more clearly in recent work on Tacitus' two monographs, the *Germania* and the *Agricola*. These depict peoples at the edges of the empire in the context of Roman involvement in these regions,³⁸ but once again these

³⁶ Scanlon (1988) 139-43, 162-9. For the fall of Carthage see *BJ* 5.4, 41.2 and 79.1, and *BC* 10.1. cf. Wiedemann (1993) on how these passages reinforce the twin themes of unity and division that run through the text, but such a reading does not evoke the importance of contact and transformation, or of the historical processes that may have brought about this similarity.

³⁷ Morstein-Marx (2001) 193 n. 51 has a full discussion of this, although see also Woolf (2011a) 56.

³⁸ The *Agricola* focuses on the Romans' activities in Britain under its subject and his predecessors (8-38; see the description of the Britons at 10-13); the first half of the *Germania* (1-27) delineates the apparently isolated Germans, but in the second part (28-46) individual tribes and their various Roman dealings feature.

aspects of the texts have not always enjoyed full critical attention.³⁹ Now, however, several studies have considered how Tacitus' Germans and Britons mirror aspects of Rome's past, and the relationship between that era and the imperial present. The first part at least of the *Germania* (1-27) was traditionally seen as an account of a primitive society that stands in polar opposition to Rome, but O'Gorman has argued that Tacitus' description of the Germans in both halves of the text indirectly censures the contemporary situation at the heart of the empire, which is symptomatic of the dissolution of Rome's very identity under the principate.⁴⁰ Clarke has an analogous reading of the *Agricola*, with particular reference to the rebel Calgacus, who appears to retain old-fashioned Roman *virtus*, and to the sense that Britain is still – to some extent – a suitable environment for deeds that can no longer be achieved closer to Rome.⁴¹

At the same time, however, both scholars also draw attention to the shaping role of Roman influence on the lands inhabited by the Germans and Britons, and to how the texts themselves encapsulate this: actual mastery and literary control are bound up together.⁴² The *Agricola* reports at length the Romans' efforts to make the Britons their subjects (*Agr.* 8-38), as the narrative focus moves from the more 'Romanised' peoples who live in the south of the island (*Agr.* 11.3-4, 13.1-2, 21) to Calgacus' northern rebels who fight at Mons Graupius. Meanwhile, the *Germania* includes a reminder of the recurring challenge presented to Rome by *Germanorum libertas – tam diu Germania vincitur* (*Ger.* 37.2) – but in its second half includes many tribes who have had substantial dealings with Rome and who may not be as free as is first apparent.⁴³

³⁹ Note especially Ogilvie and Richmond (1967) 31: '[g]eographical information in the *Agricola* is largely incidental to the biographical and rhetorical nature of the work'; see too Anderson (1938) ix-x, with some discussion of earlier studies. Not all older scholarship is unhelpful in this respect: cf. Liebeschuetz (1967).

⁴⁰ O'Gorman (1993) esp. 147-9; cf. Anderson (1938) xvi-xix.

⁴¹ Clarke (2001) esp. 105-9. See too Woolf (2007).

⁴² O'Gorman (1993) 135-44; Clarke (2001) 100-4. cf. Murphy (2004) 50-61 and 129-33. Dench (2005) 80-6 discusses these texts in terms of imperial transformation: see again pp. 19-20 above.

⁴³ Jens (1957) 337-8, Lavan (2011) 296-7 and Woolf (2011a) 91; Rives (1999) *ad locc.* and Woolf (2011a) 101-5. Gruen (2011) 159-78 also discusses the *Germania*'s complex tapestry of similarities and differences.

The foreigners in the *Agricola* and *Germania* are not simply like or unlike the Romans. They look back to earlier stages of Roman history, but when at least some of them are shown to have become more acculturated and indeed more ‘Roman’, they trace Rome’s own shift from the past to the present. This present is itself found reflected in these texts: in particular, analogies have been drawn between Roman control of others and control of Romans by the emperor.⁴⁴ Imperialism in the external sphere and its effects can be closely tied not only to political change in Rome but also to the state of the principate. In the chapters to come, these themes of subjection and freedom will continue to be explored.

e. Libertas, Liberty, Freedom...

Freedom and subjection: these terms raise broader questions. The Roman concept of *libertas* is termed by Wirszubski the ‘capacity for the possession of rights, and the absence of subjection’; he goes on to trace its role in Roman political culture in the late republic and early empire.⁴⁵ Recent work has sought to refine his conclusions, and the idea that *libertas* could harbour distinctive political connotations and indeed was almost a slogan has been challenged by those who argue that it must primarily denote a lack of servile constraints. This important caveat nevertheless risks unduly underplaying the flexible nature of *libertas* and its use to refer to the level of political independence under the principate that at least some senators considered desirable. It seems unwise to focus on the term’s connotations of freedom from slavery at the expense of the wide range of evidence for its political usage in the early imperial era, when *libertas* could evidently be

⁴⁴ See Lavan (2011) and id. (2013) 127-42 (the second discussion is a reworking of the first).

⁴⁵ Wirszubski (1950) (quotation from 1).

deployed to signify both the political elite's relative autonomy but also, in some contexts, the republic itself.⁴⁶

Scholars have also considered Tacitus' conception of *libertas*: whether it changes in the course of his works, from the *Agricola* to the *Annals*, to what extent it is embodied by the characters with whom it is linked, and what its antitheses may be. Once again, this approach has been criticised for taking a narrow view 'remote from the lived reality of slavery', and the close political orientation of most such discussions is indeed striking.⁴⁷ One way of broadening the focus is to consider Tacitus' depictions of Rome's foreign subjects and their relative independence, and the possibility of relating them to the situation in Rome, as several important studies have done.⁴⁸ Moreover, critical works that do examine the representation of senatorial *libertas* in the *Annals* tend to focus on the last few books, and the defiance of Nero shown by Thrasea Paetus in particular. Much less has been written on the Tiberian hexad.⁴⁹

This thesis aims to correct that, not least by showing how those two important ways of defining *libertas* in the first century AD, republicanism and senatorial rights under the principate, can be traced within *Annals* 1-6. Tacitus implies that to use *libertas* in the sense of 'the republic' is not meaningful in an imperial context, and he in fact proffers an alternative characterisation of the principate: *regnum*, the polar opposite of *libertas*.⁵⁰ His programmatic dismissal of true nostalgia for the republic under the principate (*quotus quisque reliquus, qui rem publicam vidisset?*, 1.3.7) is furthered when he hints at the mistaken nature of popular beliefs that certain imperial representatives

⁴⁶ Roller (2001) 219-33 and Lavan (2013) 76-7 question the classic approach. Gallia (2012) 13-32 carefully appraises the political usages of '*libertas*' in the first century AD; cf. Wallace-Hadrill (1982) 38-9.

⁴⁷ See Wirszubski (1950) 160-7, Jens (1957), Vielberg (1987) 150-68 and Morford (1991); see the summary at Andrade (2012) 444-5 and n. 9. For objections see Lavan (2011) (quotation from 295 n. 5).

⁴⁸ See nn. 53-4 below.

⁴⁹ See Jens (1957) 346-9 and Morford (1991) 3442-7 (cf. Vielberg (1987) 48-70). This comparative neglect of *Annals* 1-6 may result from the absence of a figure such as Paetus, but it may also be due to the failure to consider the foreigners in this part of the text that has already been discussed; by contrast, it is here argued that they are central to Tacitus' depiction of freedom under Tiberius.

⁵⁰ See n. 102 of Chapter 1.

would restore the republic,⁵¹ and several other developments in the Tiberian books also hint that a true revival of the republic within the Augustan principate is impossible.⁵² At either end of the hexad, this perspective on Rome is mirrored by Tacitus' portrayals of the Germans, in whose case freedom triumphs over autocracy, and then the Parthians, who reflect Roman *regnum*.

The situation abroad also contributes to the representation of *libertas* in its more restricted imperial sense of political independence. In *Annals* 1-6, not only is republicanism clearly impossible, but no Roman really challenges the principate. The historian Cremutius Cordus, before his suicide, claims the right to speak freely (cf. p. 15 above), and then a degree of antagonism against Tiberius develops late in the hexad, but this is not effective opposition to the regime. By contrast, on the fringes of the empire a number of reasonably successful attempts are made to reject Roman rule. This basic contrast between Roman and non-Roman attitudes to Roman oppression, whether this is inflicted by the emperor himself on his peers or by Romans presiding over foreigners, is reinforced by a distinct positive correlation in the text between a people's distance from Rome and its ability to resist Roman control. Proximity to Rome is apparently injurious to independent action and even to using the rhetoric of *libertas*: the failure in Rome itself to oppose Tiberius is thus hardly surprising. This identification of a dichotomy between relative freedom elsewhere and absent freedom in Rome has already been explored in studies of other parts of Tacitus' oeuvre: foreign resistance to Rome been juxtaposed with

⁵¹ For '*libertas*' denoting the republic, see Gallia (2012) 23-8. See also pp. 132-3 and 169-70, and n. 15 of Chapter 3, on '*res publica*', a term that, according to the context, can refer to the pre-imperial era but also has a more general meaning.

⁵² It is likely that this view coloured Tacitus' presentation in the full *Annals* of the efforts to 'restore the republic' made in AD 41 after Caligula's death: cf. pp. 280-2 below and Low (forthcoming).

Romans' more passive attitude to the principate,⁵³ and the repressive nature of Roman rule of others has been seen as analogous to imperial control of Rome.⁵⁴

This thesis, however, argues that the portrayal of the Germans in Books 1 and 2 offers a quasi-historical explanation for how this state of affairs has come about. The narrative shows that there are significant points of contact between recent German and Roman history, as well as between the commanders Arminius and Germanicus, but these direct reflections also highlight striking dissimilarities. After successfully forestalling Roman attempts to conquer them, the Germans go on to defeat leading Germans' efforts to become king by means of armed force. Internal strife amongst the Germans does not escalate, and their would-be monarchs fail; this contrasts with Tacitus' vision of the principate as an oppressive regime that risks imploding in destructive civil war. A further difference is suggested by the context of these events, Germanicus' campaigns in Germany: the Romans have an empire that they are seeking to extend, while the Germans do not. These divergences suggest that the development of the principate and Rome's consequent loss of *libertas*, whether that term denotes the republic or merely senatorial freedom under an emperor, can be linked to Roman removal of others' freedom.

So the Germans reflect what the Romans once were, and could still have been if they had not acquired an empire: it seems that the Romans have lost their own internal freedom by depriving others of their freedom from outside control.⁵⁵ As the discussion below acknowledges, Tacitus does not explicitly adduce imperialism as a historical explanation for the turn taken by Roman history in the late republic and early empire, or propose that a lack of imperial expansion could reverse the process. Nevertheless, this

⁵³ e.g. Edelmaier (1964) 57, Dench (2005) 82-3; cf. Pagán (2000).

⁵⁴ See Jens (1957) 337-8 and 349-52, Liebeschuetz (1966), Roberts (1988), Clarke (2001) and Lavan (2011) and id. (2013) 124-55. For another perspective on Tacitus' views of Roman imperialism, see Fear (2011).

⁵⁵ This evokes not so much *libertas* as the twin Greek concepts of *autonomia* (freedom from external control) and *eleutheria* (personal or political freedom within a state), although their definitions were not always fixed (see Hansen (1995) 41 and Dmitriev (2011) 16-66). Is the fact that Latin does not make this distinction symbolic of how the Romans' own *autonomia* was hardly ever threatened?

way of reading the role of *libertas* in the first hexad suggests that Tacitus was not only concerned with its association with the republic, and with the position of the senate under the early emperors: he also seeks to represent somehow the paradox that so few individuals had influence within a state whose own external sway stretched over much of the known world.

f. Civil War and the Principate

The internal conflict experienced by the Germans – and other foreigners in the first hexad – is a very important aspect of the mirror that those at the edges of the empire hold up to Rome, for in *Annals* 1-6 Tacitus is deeply concerned with the enduring Roman propensity for civil war. His evocation of a series of Roman conflicts will be surveyed shortly, but first it is necessary to introduce a concept that he applies to Romans and non-Romans alike: *metus hostilis*, the notion that collective fear of external enemies may serve to promote valour and prevent internal dissension in a state, and that its disappearance can engender civil conflict. It would have been familiar in Roman historiography from the works of Sallust in particular, which propagate the tradition that Carthage's final destruction in 146 BC and the resultant absence of a serious rival to Rome contributed significantly to the rise of Roman internal disorder in the second and first centuries. The chapters to come will highlight the variety of verbal and thematic echoes of Sallust's works in the Tiberian books and, although no previous study appears

to have considered Tacitus' use of *metus hostilis*, it is not surprising that this key Sallustian trope should be discerned in the *Annals*.⁵⁶

As with the association between imperialism and autocracy discussed above, Tacitus does not explicitly recommend *metus hostilis* as an overarching explanation of Rome's late republican history. Nevertheless, his implications about the consequences of its withdrawal shape what appears to be a universal pattern in Rome and elsewhere: elimination of external enemies is generally followed by internal discord. This characterises the situation in Rome under the Julio-Claudian dynasty, which began and will end in civil war, but it also focuses attention on the ways in which the Romans are like and unlike other peoples in the text. Notably, at the beginning of the Tiberian narrative the Germans weather the civil wars that follow the defeat of their external Roman enemies: it is their abstention from imperialism that seems to allow this, and at the same time the Romans have not managed to initiate a full-blown war with them and thereby restore their own *metus hostilis*. Near the hexad's conclusion, however, the Parthians' efforts to generate foreign wars give way to civil discord, and it is just the same in Rome, which has begun to look like an eastern autocracy in other ways as well.

Rome's late republican and early imperial history was indeed blighted by civil strife: the Augustan principate was established after years of fierce internal fighting, and after the death of the last Julio-Claudian, Nero, in AD 68, further conflicts ensued. The Tiberian books of the *Annals* describe a period between these two developments in which Rome purportedly enjoyed internal concord, but within them Tacitus insistently stresses the turbulent past and future. Echoes of accounts of late republican history by Sallust in particular, and allusions to Tacitus' own *Histories*, show that the Julio-Claudian

⁵⁶ For general surveys of ancient *metus hostilis* see Kapust (2008) 361-7 and id. (2011) 38-43. cf. also Toher (1990) 149. For its role in the republic see Bellen (1985), and for some authors' use of it in the early principate Jacobs (2010) 123-6 and *passim*.

principate is poised between successive civil wars, and hint that it is constantly at risk of imploding in such a conflict. The way in which the mutinies in Germany and Pannonia in *Annals* 1 threaten to echo the events described in *Histories* 1 makes this clear from the work's outset. There is also, however, a distinct sense that the Tiberian principate can itself be seen as a form of civil war.

The notion that in the *Annals* the principate is represented as a continuation of civil strife has been discussed in several studies, beginning with Keitel's important article of 1984.⁵⁷ In the chapters to come, the applicability of this idea to the Tiberian books in particular is further explored, with additional reference to the foreign episodes in the text. It is shown that, as the hexad advances, the characteristics of a civil war are increasingly attributed to the situation in Rome. A climax is reached in Book 6, in which several 'conflicts' ensue: Tiberius and members of his family take each other on, while the emperor also faces both the senators and the populace, and finally Romans start to attack one another. In evoking this chaotic scenario, Tacitus uses language reminiscent of descriptions of real civil wars; the outbreak of genuine strife seems very close, even more so than it does at the equivalent point in Nero's reign, which was soon to be succeeded by internecine fighting. Just as the Tiberian books begin by evoking the spectre of the wars of AD 69, so they end by signalling how that conflict is now drawing nearer.

It is not known at what point the *Annals* ended. Syme proposed that the work probably concluded with Nero's death in June of AD 68, although that year's remaining events may have been covered in a sardonic footnote to the main narrative, while other scholars have suggested that Tacitus did in fact recount the rest of 68 and may even have

⁵⁷ Keitel (1984). cf. Woodman (1998d) 136 and id. (1998f) 184-5, O'Gorman (2000) 23-7 and Sailor (2008) 190; the concept has now been applied to *Histories* 4 (and, speculatively, the rest of the narrative) by Joseph (2012) 169-89.

intended the end of the *Annals* to lead into the beginning of the *Histories*.⁵⁸ Either way, for readers of the *Histories*, the Tiberian books of the *Annals* are likely to have evoked a depressing sense of *déjà vu*.

g. Trajan, Parthia and the Present

There have been a number of discussions of the relationship between Tacitus, his work, and the time in which he was writing; Syme's monograph devotes much space to this question, while recent studies have shown a renewed interest in Tacitus' life and position in Rome of the early second century.⁵⁹ The *Annals*, however, ostensibly offers few clues about its author's attitude to the era in which he lived. Unlike the opening chapters of the *Agricola* (*Agr.* 3.1; cf. 44.5) and the *Histories* (*H.* 1.1.4),⁶⁰ no praise of the current state of Roman affairs features at the outset, and there are no overt and unambiguous references to the present day in the narrative itself. Nevertheless, several ways of reading this work that refer to its contemporary context are possible. There is the Symean tactic of seeing uncomplimentary allusions to Trajan and Hadrian in Tacitus' account of the reigns of the Julio-Claudians;⁶¹ conversely, given the ancient interest in figured speech, it could be argued that dilating on the wrongs done by earlier emperors paradoxically acclaims how their successors were different.⁶² Some scholars, however,

⁵⁸ Syme (1958b) 265-6 (cf. how the *Histories* opens with a recapitulation what ensued between June 68 and January 69: *H.* 1.5-11). For the opposing view see Goodyear (1970b) 18 n. 1 and McCulloch (1984) 169-73, who proposes that Tacitus did mean his two works to join up and be read in succession.

⁵⁹ See esp. Syme (1958b) 1-99, 217-52, 465-519 and 611-204, and now Birley (2000), Whitton (2007), Sailor (2008) and Woodman (2009c).

⁶⁰ These passages themselves may not lack ambiguity: see Leeman (1973) 183-4, 203 and Rutledge (1997) 153.

⁶¹ See Syme (1958b) 481-98 on Trajan and Hadrian; his approach is defended by Birley (2000) 242-4.

⁶² Tacitus mentions an inverted version of his idea at one point (*etiam gloria ac virtus infensos habet, ut nimis ex propinquo diversa arguens*, 4.33.4), but he hardly endorses it: on this passage see for now O'Gorman (2000) 102 and Rutledge (1997) 144, and pp. 196-8 below. Ramage (1989) esp. 655-7 argues

have taken a new approach and challenged the traditional assumption that Tacitus was an overtly dissident critic of the principate. Sailor in particular stresses the historian's successful political career which, as a result of the independent and caustic tone of much of his writing, has often been downplayed.⁶³

But while it is salutary to question long-held conjectures about Tacitus' status as an isolated opponent of the principate that gloss over his participation in elite society, the Tiberian books and, indeed, the rest of the *Annals* hardly give the impression that their author thought benevolently of the imperial system. Tacitus' characterisation of Tiberius and his fellow-emperors as rulers who preside over dysfunctional government and internal conflict does not explicitly apply to Trajan and Hadrian, but it does not take the trouble to exclude them, either. Nevertheless, obvious echoes of known events from Tacitus' own time seem not to be found in the *Annals*, and there is no way of verifying putative more subtle references: there remains too the vexed question of the work's exact dating (discussed at pp. 110-13 below). This thesis accordingly seeks to take a moderate line. For the most part it focuses on how Tacitus draws on the history of the late republic and of AD 69, and the years in between, in the course of his presentation of events in Rome under Tiberius. The repeated intertextual and thematic references to this period (many of which have been identified in previous scholarship) that occur in the narrative recommend such a view, which is likely to be more fruitful than a search for faint allusions to the early second century.

Nevertheless, this does not preclude speculation that the key themes of Roman civil war, imperialism and freedom presented in the Tiberian books may have found additional resonances in the work's early second century context: such a notion is not

that Tacitus and other authors praise Trajan by denigrating his predecessors, but this is robustly challenged by Wilson (2003) 526-34. On figured speech see Ahl (1984) and, on the difficulty of pinning down Tacitus' opinions, Luce (1986).

⁶³ Sailor (2008) esp. 6-50, 250-313. cf. Whitton (2007) 1-17; he does not treat the *Annals* in detail.

crucial to the arguments advanced, but it has the potential to constitute an extra dimension to the Julio-Claudian narrative. In the chapters to come it is suggested that Tacitus' portrayal of his fellow-historian Cremutius Cordus, whose final speech is reported at 4.34-5, may reflect some of Tacitus' own preoccupations and indeed may constitute a claim to freedom of a certain kind under the principate: as has already been noted, Cordus' adherence to *libertas* marks him out from all the other Romans in the first hexad. More broadly, the possibility that the *Annals* was written with knowledge of the military expedition in the east that Trajan undertook in AD 113-17 is also canvassed. It is impossible to determine the work's exact dating, but there is external evidence that suggests it may have been produced at a time when these campaigns had begun or at least were being planned. Either way, the Tiberian books depict a leading Roman, Germanicus, dying in the east; they also present a pessimistic assessment of the Romans' ability to extend and even to maintain their empire, even as they face trouble closer to home. Although the Tiberian narrative includes episodes set in the east, Tacitus' account of them makes no mention of contemporary events there.⁶⁴ But if he was writing with Trajan's campaigns, and in particular their real or anticipated lack of success, in mind, the ambivalent perspective on Roman imperialism offered by the first hexad's narrative of AD 14-37 would be enhanced by a striking sense of contemporary relevance.

The 'mirror of Tacitus' in the Tiberian books of the *Annals* draws together Rome's past, present and future and the continuities between them, and it illuminates the text's portrayal of the relationships between Romans and non-Romans, whose different societies are nevertheless linked by similar trends. The prominence of these elements in

⁶⁴ See n. 93 of Chapter 2.

Tacitus' account of the Julio-Claudian era urges those who read his work to consider early imperial Rome in their light: the historian is himself 'the mirror through which others, who came later, [have] tended to see the world.'⁶⁵

⁶⁵ cf. n. 3 above.

Chapter 1

Alibi quam Romae

a. Introduction

i) Romans, Germans and Civil War

Tacitus' presentation of the first years of Tiberius' rule introduces several themes that will shape his whole account of the years AD 14 – 37. At the same time, ideas about the nature of the Tiberian principate – and the principate as an institution more generally – are built up. This chapter will demonstrate how the theme of civil war in Roman history, and also the sense that the Julio-Claudian principate can be characterised in terms of civil war, are introduced at this early stage in the text. Tacitus' presentation of Book 1's first major episode, the mutinies, and in particular Germanicus' role in them, is central to this. Such strife, however, also features in his account of developments amongst the Germans after the Roman withdrawal in Book 2, which look distinctly relevant to Rome.

The Germans are opposed to the subjection of others, but they themselves are free of both internal autocracy and external rule. This marks them out in the Tiberian narrative as the only people whom Rome cannot defeat, but their status also contrasts with that of the Romans themselves, whose empire Germanicus is shown trying to extend in Books 1 and 2 but who are subjects of the principate. So the German example suggests that there is an apparent connection between ruling over others and being ruled, and this chapter will examine how this is applicable to Rome. It will ask what Tacitus' portrayal of continuing German freedom says about the status of Roman *libertas* and how the issues

raised in his account of the Germans may be compared with the principate's portrayal in Books 1 and 2 and later on. The discussion will fall into three sections.

The first part will consider the opening chapters of Book 1, which cover the aftermath of Augustus' death (1.6-15), and then the mutinies amongst the Pannonian and German legions (1.16-49). Tacitus' account of Tiberius' accession hints that the new emperor's position was vulnerable because of the possibility that Germanicus, stationed on the Rhine, might lead his troops against Rome, and in his account of the mutinies he seems to explore how this threat could in theory have been realised. A close reading of the mutiny narratives will show that in numerous respects they echo several episodes in Book 1 of Tacitus' earlier *Histories*.¹ Important individuals in this section of the *Annals* share characteristics with their 'counterparts' in the *Histories*, there are certain common aspects to the soldierly rebellions in each text, and a number of verbal parallels reinforce the sense of a conceptual overlap. In this way an image of the outbreak of hostilities in 69 is proleptically evoked in the mutinies of 14: at this key juncture, the first transfer of power from Augustus to Tiberius, the Julio-Claudian principate is shown to harbour the potential for civil war. Germanicus himself is also shown to be a polyvalent figure who suggests what the principate might become as well as what it actually is, and whose position 'elsewhere than in Rome' at the time of Tiberius' accession foreshadows key moments in the history of the first century AD.

In the second section the focus will shift to the Germans, against whom Germanicus leads his troops once the mutinies have ended (1.50-71, 2.5.2-26). Following the trail of Varus, the Romans fight a series of engagements, but after advancing into German territory they are overwhelmed by a cataclysmic storm and at the end of the

¹ For other work that sees the *Histories* and *Annals* as two texts on a Tacitean continuum, cf. Woodman (1998c), O'Gorman (2006), and indeed Jerome's reference to Tacitus' thirty-book *Lives of the Caesars* (see also McCulloch (1984) 173-4 and Haynes (2008) 112-18).

campaigning season Germanicus is recalled by Tiberius: as a whole, the Germans have proved more than a match for the Roman troops. In Tacitus' account, mirroring between the Romans and the Germans that functions across geographical space can be identified, in contrast to the chronological reflections of the future in the present in Tacitus' description of the mutinies (where the historian's earlier work was reflected in his later one). Initially the relationship between the two looks oppositional, as the Germans' military prowess is set against the Romans' inability to defeat them; emphasis on the wild and untamed nature of Germany itself heightens the contrast, and it looks as if the Germans demonstrate that Roman imperialism can only be extended so far. But the image of Rome thus reflected back is not merely a simple inversion: an important aspect of this analysis will be the way in which such mirroring evolves in the text, and acquires additional nuances and subtleties.

The final section of the chapter will indeed show how the mirroring between Romans and Germans moves away from mere opposition: Tacitus' account of developments in Germany after Germanicus' retreat (2.44-46, 63, 88) links the two groups via a complex nexus of similarities and differences. Civil war ensues when Maroboduus seeks to create a *regnum* for himself, while Arminius champions the cause of *libertas*. The latter prevails, but at the end of Book 2 he is said to have sought a kingdom of his own and been assassinated by his peers as a result; nevertheless, he is ultimately acclaimed by Tacitus as the author of German freedom. These events make the Germans look like the Romans, but also unlike them in a significant way.

The sequence of an external threat disappearing and then domestic conflict breaking out recalls the Roman trope of *metus hostilis* (cf. pp. 28-9 above). It is notable, however, that civil war seems not to have a particularly detrimental effect on the Germans, and this contrast invites consideration of what marks the Germans out from the

Romans. A final focus on Arminius himself will illuminate this. The text links him to his enemy Germanicus, and his transformation from representative of freedom to would-be autocrat echoes the ambivalences in Germanicus' own portrayal. But his obituary, in which the enduring freedom he won for the Germans ultimately seems more important than the manner of his end, also reflects back on Rome and on the principate's claims of *libertas*.

ii) A Preliminary Note: Self-Imitation

Identifying and analysing the way in which Tacitus seems to allude to his earlier work, the *Histories*, in *Annals* 1 will be a central element in the first section of this discussion. This raises some methodological issues, and so a short introduction to intertextuality and self-imitation will be helpful. Self-imitation occurs fairly often in ancient texts, albeit more in poetry than prose,² but identifying and interpreting parallels can be problematic in more general terms of allusion and intertextuality: 'if someone wants to convince the interpretative community of a particular intertextual relation, they must say how the correspondence between the source- and target-texts is special, and they must do something interesting with it, make it mean.'³ Moreover, even if reader response is privileged over authorial intention, imitation in historiography can present particular issues, as it may not be clear whether an apparent allusion picks up shared knowledge of previous events or a specific narrative version.⁴ In the case of the *Annals* and the

² See Cairns (1979) and Burbidge (2007) 1-14. Woodman (1998c) will be considered below.

³ Fowler (1997) 20; cf. also Hinds (1998).

⁴ Fowler (1997); Damon (2010a): at 385-6 she considers the possibility that the behaviour of historical characters may be conditioned by their predecessors, though cf. Clauss (1997) 182 and Nousek (2010) (see also n. 43 below). On these questions see also Woodman (1998g) 229-36, Marincola (2011) and Pelling (2013).

Histories, some parallelism may be expected in two narratives by the same author that encompass similar themes.⁵

While Tacitus' ultimate intentions necessarily remain obscure, however, the notion that in *Annals* 1 he seems to be recalling *Histories* 1 can be buttressed in a number of ways. A case will be made that the numerous thematic and verbal correspondences between the two texts are 'special', and that what can be done with them is historiographically interesting. As will be shown in due course, the conclusions drawn from the links identified between the two texts fit other established readings of the *Annals*. The series of insurrections in *Histories* 1, moreover, unfolds in rather different circumstances from the mutinies in the *Annals*. In the latter, one mutiny in the provinces is followed by another along similar lines, although only in the second case do the soldiers moot the installation of a replacement emperor, Germanicus. In the *Histories* there are two distinct mutinies, one in Rome and one abroad, each in favour of a different aspiring *princeps*, and later an additional uprising in the city. There are also a number of other mutinous episodes in the *Histories*, none of which is narrated in a manner that invites comparison with accounts of similar events in the *Annals*.⁶ Accordingly it does not look as if the echoes that do resonate between the two works derive from accident, or the fact that the events in each case were similar, or the use of the same 'template' for describing military insurrections. It seems reasonable to assert that the mirroring of *Histories* 1 in *Annals* 1 is pointed.⁷

⁵ Conversely, Williams (1997) 44-5 argues that the mutinies in the *Histories* bear very little resemblance to those in the *Annals* 1, but she seems to be seeking very basic parallels.

⁶ Woodman (2006a) 304-8 discusses the broad similarities between the two episodes in *Annals* 1; Williams (1997) 45 n. 3 lists the other mutinies in the *Histories*.

⁷ cf. Joseph (2012) 115-29, who identifies a similar pattern of verbal links and thematic continuities between Tacitus' accounts of the two battles of Cremona (*H.* 2.39-45, 3.25-34).

b. The Beginning of the *Annals*: Tiberius *nusquam cunctabundus nisi...* (1.7.5)

The concise and sweeping proem (1.1) of the *Annals* is soon followed by a more immediate overview of the Augustan principate (1.3-4.1). After the deaths of the various individuals intended as *subsidia dominationi* (1.3.1), the focus shifts to Tiberius, Agrippa Postumus and finally Germanicus, who had been put in command of eight legions on the Rhine, and whom Tiberius was compelled by the emperor to adopt *quo pluribus munimentis insisteret* (1.3.5). Thus the first *princeps*' intricate plans for the succession give way to a stress on the military strength deployed on the empire's edges and the perceived need to shore up the principate.⁸ Germanicus is only mentioned twice more in the opening section of Book 1 (1.1-15). At 1.7.6 Tacitus alleges that after Augustus' death Tiberius wrote to the armies as if his position was already confirmed, and was *nusquam cunctabundus nisi cum in senatu loqueretur. causa praecipua ex formidine, ne Germanicus...habere imperium quam expectare mallet.*⁹ Later, the new emperor seeks proconsular *imperium* for his stepson and a delegation is sent offering him condolences on Augustus' death (1.14.3). A few other items are reported before the scene moves abruptly to the mutinies in Pannonia (1.16-30) and then Germany (1.31-49).¹⁰

The theme of Tiberius' hesitation over taking power (represented by *cunctabundus*) recurs in this opening sequence, and his actions have been interpreted

⁸ Conversely, those said to have been deemed *capaces imperii* by Augustus (...*cum tractaret, quinam adipisci principem locum suffecturi...*, 1.13.2) are only mentioned when Tiberius' accession is apparently assured.

⁹ Does the *causa praecipua* account for the letters to the armies or the hesitation? The latter, assumed by Sage (1982/3) 314 and Woodman (1998b) 53-7, seems more likely (note the following details *dabat et famae...postea cognitum est ad introspicendas etiam procerum voluntates*, 1.7.7), but confirming his military support would show that Tiberius had not 'crept in' *per uxorium ambitum et senili adoptione* (ibid.).

¹⁰ There has been much discussion of the mutinies' timing (see Sage (1982/3) 294-308 and Pettinger (2012) 186-90) but Tacitus' presentation of events rather than their actual dating will be considered here.

more or less charitably.¹¹ Here, however, the focus will not be on further analysing the slant Tacitus gives to Tiberius' actions or determining whether the new emperor really was afraid of his stepson;¹² rather, the question of the potential threat that the text attributes to Germanicus will be considered. Although Germanicus does not feature heavily in this part of the narrative,¹³ the references that Tacitus does include are slightly troubling. The passages quoted above stress his status as the commander of large numbers of troops in a distant location, and refer to Tiberius' supposed fear of him. The significance of this is not immediately obvious: Tiberius' alleged misgivings about Germanicus do not prevent him from quietly starting to act as emperor, and the debate over his own role soon peters out (see 1.11-13.5). There is no hint of any associated trouble in the provinces.

Other historians' accounts of this same sequence of events, however, include similar information about Germanicus' status but allot it a great deal more importance. Although Dio also mentions the new emperor's character as a factor in his reluctance, he cites Tiberius' fear of Germanicus as a key reason for his doubts over assuming power. This notion, along with the suspicion that the Pannonian and German legions might revolt, is introduced at 57.3.1 (cf. 57.3.5), and reiterated when the mutinies in Pannonia (57.4.1) and Germany (57.5.1) are mentioned. At 57.5.2 the German troops' desire to reject Tiberius in favour of Germanicus is reported. In due course it is confirmed that Germanicus, *δυνηθεὶς ἂν τὴν αὐτοκράτορα ἀρχὴν λαβεῖν* (57.6.2), remained loyal,

¹¹ See e.g. Woodman (1998b) (sympathetic to the Tacitean Tiberius here, unlike many earlier studies, though cf. Kampff (1963) 32-46) and Pettinger (2012) 157-68 on Tiberius' hesitation as a wide-ranging literary theme.

¹² Pettinger (2012) 185-94 argues that in reality Tiberius did wait to see how Germanicus reacted to his accession (but this was not the main factor in his hesitation). See too Woodman (1998b) 56-7. In this vein, it might be added that the vague references to Germanicus in 1.1-15 may echo the presumably imperfect transmission back to Rome of events abroad, but that does not account for them entirely.

¹³ Koestermann (1961) 334, Borszák (1969) 600 and id. (1970) 280. Koestermann (1963) 72 *ad* 1.3.3 notes the reference to Augustus' supposed doubts about Germanicus at 4.57.3, but his subsequent suggestion (id. (1965) 170 *ad* 4.57.3) that Tacitus had gained a new understanding of his sources in the interim seems reasonable.

but only when the unrest is over does Tiberius consent to become emperor (57.7.1). Meanwhile Suetonius numbers *duplex seditio militum in Illyrico et in Germania*, along with the German legionaries' urging that their commander seize power for himself, amongst several reasons for Tiberius' unwillingness to commit himself (*Tib.* 25.1-2).¹⁴

As a result of this apparent discrepancy, Sage suggests there were two traditions about what happened in 14 and that both strands can be discerned in the sources. One is found in Dio and Suetonius, namely that the mutinous soldiers in Germany saw Germanicus as an alternative to Tiberius, and this prompted the latter's hesitation. The other is preferred by Tacitus and Velleius (2.125.1-2), who keep the mutinies and Germanicus' response to them almost entirely separate from Tiberius' doubts: as will be shown below, only later on is the German legionaries' wish to install Germanicus as emperor mentioned by Tacitus, and in itself this does not dominate the account of the mutinies as a whole. Sage suggests that Dio and Suetonius reflect a tradition that stressed the threat posed by Germanicus,¹⁵ while Tacitus followed the version he found more plausible, which underplayed that threat; Sage also assumes that Tacitus' portrayal of Germanicus as less than authoritative in the rest of the narrative confirms his distrust of the version that saw him as a significant factor in Tiberius' hesitation. If vestiges of the first tradition can be glimpsed in the *Annals*, this is because it suited Tacitus' portrayal of the 'enmity' between the two men.¹⁶

The relationship between Tiberius and Germanicus, however, is not one of mere personal antipathy. Germanicus' presentation in the text has regularly divided scholars

¹⁴ Suetonius also mentions the pseudo-Agrippa, Clemens, and Libo Drusus. This has generally been considered an anachronistic error (Sage (1982/3) 299), but see now Pettinger (2012) 167-8 and 195-215.

¹⁵ Pelling (1993) 66 n. 15 cautions against accepting Dio's conjectures about political motives; he also acknowledges that Dio and Tacitus seem to have employed similar source material. The potential for such an interpretation was there, although Dio may have been influenced by Septimius Severus, who launched his bid for the throne in 193 as governor of Pannonia (Herodian 2.9-10).

¹⁶ Sage (1982/3) 313-20 (quotation from 320).

and at times he seems to display obvious flaws,¹⁷ but Tiberius' positive distrust of him and of his wife Agrippina, and his suspicions about what they might do, are a regular theme throughout Books 1 and 2.¹⁸ Even when the mutinies have been quashed, the emperor is said to have grieved because Germanicus *largiendis pecuniis et missione festinata favorem militum quaesivisset* (1.52.1; note the subjunctive suggesting that this was Tiberius' interpretation). But his feelings of foreboding do not appear to be justified by what happens. Germanicus never shows himself to be overtly disloyal, and indeed Tacitus states that the reasons for Tiberius' resentment were *acriores quia iniquae* (1.33.1).¹⁹ Nevertheless, Germanicus' troops seem to be influenced by a similar belief in what he could potentially do. The two mutinies will be analysed shortly, but in contrast with the Pannonian soldiers, who harbour a generalised *ex civili bello spem praemiorum* (1.16.1), the German legions are said to act *magna spe fore ut Germanicus Caesar imperium alterius pati nequiret daretque se legionibus vi sua cuncta tracturis* (1.31.1);²⁰ at 1.31.5 they boast that *sua in manu sitam rem Romanam, suis victoriis augeri rem publicam, in suum cognomentum adscisci imperatores*.²¹

These various oblique notices prove nothing about Germanicus' actual intentions, but it is unlikely that they merely serve to underline how Tiberius was not very fond of Germanicus, or that they are remnants of an alternative tradition of which Tacitus happened to incorporate a few elements into the text. A more plausible interpretation is to consider them inclusions that draw attention to the possibility that Germanicus could have

¹⁷ Shotter (1968), Ross (1973) and Rutland (1987) focus on the less praiseworthy or at least more complicated aspects of his portrayal in Books 1 and 2. See more generally Pelling (1993) and Williams (2009) 117.

¹⁸ 1.33, 1.52, 1.69.3-5, 1.78.2 (Germanicus' *male consulta*), 2.5.1-2, 2.26.2-5, 2.42.1, 2.43.4-6, 2.59.2; cf. 3.3.

¹⁹ See Pelling (1993) 72. 1.33.2 may be focalised to Germanicus but the text does not suggest he is wrong.

²⁰ See Ross (1973) 211 and Williams (1997) 51-2.

²¹ Goodyear (1972) 246 *ad loc.* notes that they probably mean the elder Drusus and Germanicus himself as commanders with *imperium*, but see p. 49 below for the metatextual resonance of the name 'Germanicus'. *sua in manu*: cf. *in cuius manu* (1.7.6; cf. p. 41 above) and Mucianus' advice to Vespasian at *H.* 2.76.2, that *imperium* is *in tua manu*. The expression seems linked to the transmission of power in civil war.

tried to seize power for himself when Tiberius succeeded Augustus, or that his troops could have induced him to do so. In his account of the accession and the mutinies Tacitus seems to gesture towards an alternative version of events – which happens to survive in Dio – without fully committing himself to it. Moreover, this reminder of one (potential) usurpation may be a prompt to look for the allusions to another such story that will be brought to mind when the mutinies begin.

An examination of how Tacitus alludes repeatedly to *Histories* 1 in the mutiny narratives themselves will now permit further analysis of Germanicus' portrayal as a leader who could have challenged the new emperor. The links between the texts mean that *Annals* 1 threatens to turn into a narrative of civil war, along the lines of what happened after Nero's death and Galba's accession. Both Tiberius' suspicions of Germanicus and the soldiers' hopes are unfounded, but in the wider context of the first century AD they evoke a somewhat familiar pattern. In *Annals* 1, the restoration of order in Germany and Pannonia confirms that in this case civil war has been avoided, but the situation as a whole looks forward to the scenario of 69, when this will not happen. The possibility of such strife is evidently present early in the Julio-Claudian era.

c. *Nullis novis causis* (A. 1.16.1): Mutiny and Sedition

i) *Histories Repeated?*

At the beginning of *Histories* 1, Tacitus undertakes a brief review of what ensued after Nero's death in June of AD 68, with emphasis on the empire's military trouble-spots

(*H.* 1.4-11).²² He refers to the fickle urban troops' resentment of Galba's *severitas* (*H.* 1.5.2) and at *H.* 1.8-9.1 contrasts the Gallic provinces' reliability with the doubtful loyalties of the armies stationed in upper and lower Germany. He also draws attention to the effects of Nero's death: *evulgato imperii arcano, posse principem alibi quam Romae fieri* (*H.* 1.4.2). This idea that emperors can be made 'elsewhere than in Rome' resonates throughout the surviving *Histories* – and beyond.

The introductory summary is concluded at *H.* 1.11.3, with the note that *hic fuit rerum Romanarum status* at the beginning of 69. In *Annals* 1, the transition from the introductory account of Tiberius' accession to the situation abroad is phrased in strikingly similar terms: *hic rerum urbanarum status erat...* (*A.* 1.16.1). The Pannonian troops are then said to have revolted, *nullis novis causis, nisi quod mutatus princeps licentiam turbarum et ex civili bello spem praemiorum ostendebat* (*ibid.*). *nullis novis causis* may well look back to the late republic,²³ or serve as a universalising comment on soldiers' propensities, but given the *hic...status* parallel and the reference to *civile bellum* it is also tempting to see it as a knowing reference to revolts previously described by Tacitus. The German legions will go on to act *isdem causis* (1.31.1), which similarly has an immediate and also a potentially more general applicability.

As the mutinies of the *Annals* unfold, further aspects of the narrative look distinctly familiar to a reader of *Histories* 1. In the latter text a new emperor, Galba, is brought down by a military uprising initiated by a younger and more popular associate, Otho. It is then revealed that a further insurrection in favour of another general, Vitellius, has also occurred amongst the German legions, and this second pretender begins a struggle to gain the principate, while the first – now emperor himself – only with difficulty quashes a mutiny amongst his own troops. The two narratives are not developed

²² See Damon (2003) 98-100 *ad loc.*

²³ The general summary of the civil wars at 1.1-2 may be fresh in readers' minds: at 1.42.3 Germanicus refers to mutinies under Julius Caesar and Augustus. See also O'Gorman (2000) 48-9 and n. 45 below.

in the same manner in all respects, of course, but these key details find suggestive parallels in the *Annals. Histories* 1, and within it Otho's and Vitellius' insurrections against Galba, as well as the uprising of Otho's troops at the end of the book (*H.* 1.25-47, 51-62 and 80-2), can be seen, albeit anachronistically, as a cautionary tale for Tiberius. They serve to outline various aspects of a scenario that could have occurred in 14 if events had taken a different course.

An important factor in this is the way in which characters in the *Annals* echo their analogues in the *Histories*:²⁴ both texts sketch out a broad dynamic between emperor, pretenders (real or imagined) and others, even though what is realised in the *Histories* does not come to pass in the *Annals*. In *Histories* 1 Galba's unpopularity is stressed initially, just as Tiberius is presented as a less than winning figure from the beginning of the *Annals*. At *H.* 1.37.4 Otho castigates the former for hiding such qualities as *saevitia* under *falsis nominibus*,²⁵ and his obituary at *H.* 1.49.2-4 encompasses further links to Tiberius.²⁶ Moreover, his successor Piso Licinianus is characterised as *vultu habituque moris antiqui, aestimatione recta severus* (*H.* 1.14.2; cf. 1.38.1). Such a description has something in common with Tiberius' son Drusus, who is said to have a *promptum ad asperiora ingenium* (*A.* 1.29.4; cf. 1.76.3). In the short term they are both successful when dispatched to calm rebellious soldiers (*H.* 1.31.1 / *A.* 1.29-30);²⁷ both will in due course be cut off by more powerful individuals without having attained a leading role (see *H.* 1.43.2 / *A.* 4.8.1, and p. 169 below).

²⁴ This is in accordance with the 'remarkable Roman capacity for seeing one individual in terms of another' (Woodman and Martin (1996) 85 *ad* 3.2.2); see the general remarks of Griffin (1985b).

²⁵ cf. 1.4.3-4 on Tiberius: his *dissimulatio* is of course a key trait. Otho also charges Galba with passing off *avaritia* as *parsimonia*. Tiberius is not as aged as Galba (cf. *H.* 1.6.1), but at 3.52.1 he is termed a *princeps antiquae parsimoniae* (with which cf. Galba's *antiquus rigor et nimia severitas*, *H.* 1.18.3).

²⁶ cf. *alieno imperio felicius quam suo* (*H.* 1.49.2) and *egregium vita famaue, quoad privatus vel in imperiis sub Augusto fuit* (6.51.3).

²⁷ At *H.* 1.29.2 Piso says he will lament *patris et senatus et ipsius imperii vicem* if unrest ensues; at *A.* 1.26.1 Drusus refers to *arbitrium senatus et patris*. Germanicus mentions no such pairing. Bellemore (2013) 89-92 considers Drusus' career and argues that after the mutinies he began to be deemed a potential heir to the throne.

In the *Annals*, after Drusus has calmed the Pannonian troops the focus shifts to Germanicus and the German mutiny, and Germanicus' actions recall Otho and Vitellius much more than Piso Licinianus. In terms that echo the contrast between Tiberius and Germanicus, Tacitus establishes early on how Galba was compared unfavourably to Nero,²⁸ but the two pretenders in the *Historiae* illustrate further aspects of Germanicus' character. Otho's luxuriousness (see *H.* 1.22.1) finds some parallels with the way in which Germanicus is at least perceived by others in the *Annals*,²⁹ and his efforts to win the *studia militum* (*H.* 1.23.1) foreshadow Tiberius' fears about Germanicus' manner of quashing the mutiny at 1.52.1 (quoted above).³⁰ Otho's subsequent success may suggest to a reader of the *Annals* that the emperor is less unreasonable in his reaction to Germanicus' actions than the immediate situation suggests.

Before Otho has deposed Galba, however, Vitellius' insurrection has already been signalled as a threat: the shaky loyalties of the German legions are referred to at *H.* 1.9.1, and again at 1.26.1. This emphasis on Germany as a potential trouble-spot may render the *Annals*' reference to *Germanicae legiones turbatae, quanto plures, tanto violentius* (*A.* 1.31.1), along with their hopes that Germanicus will seek the throne for himself, especially ominous. When the full story of Vitellius' actions begins to be revealed at *H.* 1.51, the implications for the narrative of the German legions' mutiny in *Annals* 1 are even greater.³¹ Vitellius, like Otho before him, is described winning the troops' favour and his supporters praise his *comitatem bonitatemque* (*H.* 1.52.2); his popularity is

²⁸ See *H.* 1.7.3 and *A.* 1.4.3-5, and with *H.* 1.7.2 cf. *A.* 1.33.2, *iuveni civile ingenium, mira comitas et diversa a Tiberii sermone vultu...*: two analogous pairs, Nero/Galba and Germanicus/Tiberius (marking youth/age, popularity/unpopularity) are established. Germanicus and Nero are linked elsewhere: see pp. 54 and 103.

²⁹ Compare Otho's reported greed for *luxus...ceterasque regnorum libidines* (*H.* 1.22.1) with Piso's words *in luxum*, directed at Germanicus at 2.57.4. cf. Pelling (1993) 75-6 and p. 105 below.

³⁰ cf. also Tiberius' reaction to Agrippina's behaviour at 1.69.3 (*non enim simplices curas, nec adversus externos <studia> militum quaeri*) although the text is not certain: see Goodyear (1981) 127-8 *ad loc.* See too *H.* 1.82.1, where Otho restrains his troops *precibus et lacrimis*. There is some overlap with Germanicus' emotional speech at 1.42-3, the chaos that ensues at 1.48.3-49.2, and his own *lacrimae* at 1.49.2.

³¹ At *H.* 1.8.1 and 51.3 the armies' separation from the loyal Gallic provinces is highlighted, and this is reflected at *A.* 1.34.4 (*Galliarum fidem extollit*).

paralleled by that of Germanicus.³² At *H.* 1.62.2 he in fact takes the title ‘Germanicus’,³³ and at *H.* 2.59.2 he also bestows the same appellation on his son, who is described as an *infans* wearing a military cloak. Is the young Caligula, the *infans in castris genitus* who wears soldiers’ boots (*A.* 1.41.2), prefigured here?³⁴

These correspondences between individuals are complemented by other significant details. While the revolts in each work are rather different in character and outcome, they are linked by geography. At *H.* 1.52-5 the narrative focuses on the upper and lower German armies, tracing what happens until they revolt from Galba and hail Vitellius as emperor. In the *Annals* it is only the lower army that mutinies, but fears about the upper one are reported (see *A.* 1.36.1), as if the course of events in the *Histories* is recollected. This geographical connection is supplemented by a succession of noteworthy verbal parallels, especially in the depiction of soldierly psychology (see Appendix I). These serve to draw together the actions of each set of soldiers, which unfold in a rather different context in each text.³⁵

Finally, it has previously been argued that two subsequent passages in the narrative of the Romans’ German campaigns also create a connection between the *Histories* and *Annals* 1, with particular reference to Germanicus. As Woodman has shown in detail, the description of Germanicus at the site of Varus’ disaster at *A.* 1.61-2 echoes the account of Vitellius’ visit to the battlefield at Cremona at *H.* 2.70. Soon afterwards,

³² Otho is said at *H.* 1.13.4 to have administered Lusitania *comiter* (see Morgan (1993a) 568-71): cf. Germanicus’ *comitas* (1.33.2). See Wallace-Hadrill (1982) 41-4 for this quality in early second century imperial discourse (cf. Lana (1973) esp. 473-5, and Santoro L’hoir (2006) 133-6). It hardly enhances Germanicus’ republican credentials: cf. n. 55 of Chapter 2, and Pelling (1993) 79. For his popularity, see *A.* 2.13.1.

³³ As well as being a Julio-Claudian *cognomen*, the title was assumed by Domitian, Nerva and Trajan (see Syme (1958b) 222 and Borszák (1969) 599 on its associations, as well as Haynes (2008) 96-7.

³⁴ Caligula’s presence also looks ahead, to his assassination, as Cassius Chaerea has already appeared at 1.32.2 (see Kraus (2009) 108). More generally, the historical Vitellius may have been aware of Germanicus’ example (see n. 4 above on this issue); Tacitus’ readers may have associated him and Germanicus prior to reading the *Annals*. But Tacitus was not obliged to play up the parallelism or to link *Histories* 1 and *Annals* 1 in other ways.

³⁵ The detailed account of Otho’s efforts to solve the problem of *vacationes* (*H.* 1.46.3-4) is perhaps also recalled at *A.* 1.17.4, when the Pannonian troops complain about this; Tacitus may gesture at his earlier work.

the uncomfortable night passed deep in German territory by the troops under the command of Caecina Severus at *A.* 1.64-5 bears some verbal resemblance to the plight of Roman troops fighting Batavians at *H.* 5.14.2-15.2. Moreover, it is worth pointing out that the role of Caecina himself, commander of the lower German army (1.31.2), in *Annals* 1 is far more prominent than that of the two others who receive triumphal honours with him at 1.72.1.³⁶ It is possible that this emphasis evokes A. Caecina Alienus, who is introduced at *H.* 1.53.1 as a seditious commander in upper Germany and figures so prominently in Tacitus' account of the civil wars of 69-70.³⁷

Either way, Woodman attributes the parallels he identifies to 'substantive imitation' and, more specifically, to a Tacitean wish to provide an entertaining story.³⁸ But although the mutinies are well over and the German campaign is in full swing by *A.* 1.61-2, the other links between the two works mean that it is hard not to see these echoes of the *Histories* as belated confirmation that Germanicus can be seen as reminiscent of Vitellius in particular. Tacitus does not necessarily imply that Germanicus and his less than admirable counterpart have a great deal in common, but these verbal correspondences reinforce the impression that his account of the mutinies of 14 is to be seen in terms of the military sedition of 69.³⁹

³⁶ See 1.56.1, 66.2 and Koestermann (1963) 234-5 *ad* 1.72.1.

³⁷ See Birley (2000) 231-2 and nn. 15-18 (with references) for discussion of the possibility that Tacitus was related to the Caecinae, although the familial connection (if any) between Severus and Alienus seems obscure.

³⁸ Woodman (1998c), with analysis of Tacitus' motives at 80-5. Morgan (1992) 22-6 is unconvinced, but if Tacitus had wished not to echo the *Histories*, surely he could have presented Germanicus' actions differently? See also Pelling (2002b) 159-60, and 169 n. 84.

³⁹ One final point: Tacitus tells the stories of Clemens (*A.* 2.39-40; Mogenet (1954)) and the false Nero (*H.* 2.8-9) in a markedly similar way: both passages have comparable narrative movement and alliteration (see Morgan (1993b) 781-2 on *H.* 2.8-9). Does this further the connection between the two texts? See also n. 14 above.

ii) *Priores et futuri principes* (H. 1.40.1)

In the *Annals*, of course, Tiberius is not unseated by a pretender, Germanicus proves loyal, more of a Verginius Rufus than an Otho or a Vitellius,⁴⁰ and the German legions' unrest is contained. The verbal echoes, broad narrative similarities and overlaps between key characters that unite the mutiny narratives of *Histories* 1 and *Annals* 1 illustrate a series of suggestive possibilities rather than an actual replication of events.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the civil strife that does not happen in the *Annals* looks forward, and backwards within Tacitus' oeuvre, to the turmoil that is described in the *Histories*. Scholars have already considered the mutinies' relationship to the later civil wars in more general terms, seeing them as a proleptic foreshadowing of the ending of the *Annals*,⁴² and the approach adopted here extends that interpretation. The historian turns an episode that probably did not present a great threat to Tiberius into a striking prefiguration of the events that followed the Julio-Claudian dynasty's implosion: his account of the mutinies seamlessly spans the intervening years.⁴³

The potential for military sedition and for the emergence in the provinces of a challenger to the throne is shown to have been embedded within the principate from the death of Augustus onwards, and the truth of the *arcanum imperii*, that *posse principem alibi quam Romae fieri* (H. 1.4.2), is reinforced. Tiberius, who fears from the outset that Germanicus is acquiring undue influence, and the German legions, who hope that their commander will try and seize power, seem to have acquired an early awareness of this.

⁴⁰ See especially H. 1.52.3-4, 2.51 and 68.4. Rufus is an elusive figure within the extant *Histories*: see Shotter (1967), and cf. Gallia (2012) 32-6.

⁴¹ cf. Haynes (2008) 112-8 and Hardie (2010) 12.

⁴² Pelling (1993) 69; cf. Kotzé (1996), as well as Malloch (2004) 200-1, Pagán (2005) and Fulkerson (2006) 172. See also Haynes (2008) 112-8. For when the *Annals* may have ended, see pp. 30-1 above.

⁴³ See Fowler (1997) 18, and O'Gorman (2009) 239 on how intertextuality tests 'our sense of what is temporally prior and invites us to consider the authority implicit in temporal priority'. cf. Urban (1999) 36-8.

Their viewpoint in fact aligns them with external readers of the *Annals* who have an acquaintance with Tacitus' earlier work. Those readers, moreover, may not have thought only of the events described in *Histories* 1. Although Germanicus displays characteristics of Otho and Vitellius, Tacitus' implication that he represents the potential for civil war to originate in the provinces also may also have broader applicability. AD 14 and 69 were by no means the only dates in the early imperial era when treasonous intentions were attributed to a prominent Roman commander in the north, and a number of 'virtual history' scenarios representing the possibility for this kind of conflict present themselves.⁴⁴

Dio reports that, when in AD 7 Tiberius himself was contending with the Dalmatian revolt, he was suspected by Augustus of prolonging the war in order to remain with his army, and Germanicus was sent out with more troops in order to ensure his swift return.⁴⁵ The possibility that Tacitus had this earlier episode in mind in depicting Tiberius' suspicions about Germanicus is intriguing, but more obvious resonances can be found in events later in the first century. Otho and Vitellius are not the only individuals involved in the chaotic events of 68-70 who may have been recalled: Tacitus' lost account near the end of the *Annals* of the uprising of Iulius Vindex, governor of Gallia Lugdunensis, against Nero in 68 may indeed have been foreshadowed in Book 1, while the historian's description of the Batavian revolt led by Iulius Civilis in *Histories* 4 also shows the entanglement of civil war at home and discontent in the northern provinces. Germanicus' situation in 14 is therefore likely to have triggered comparisons with Vindex and Civilis (there are also other aspects to Civilis' portrayal in the *Histories* that are

⁴⁴ For a fruitful 'virtual history' approach to Tacitus' works, see O'Gorman (2006).

⁴⁵ Dio 55.31.1. See Pettinger (2012) 96 and n. 100, who compares Salvidienus' position in Gaul and efforts to desert to Antony in 40 BC. Indeed, although the discussion here will focus on the future, the mutinies of Rome's civil war past may also have been recalled by the events described in *Annals* 1: see e.g. Chrissanthos (2001). The evocation of the first century BC in the Tiberian hexad will be treated fully in Chapter 3.

mirrored in Tacitus' depictions of non-Roman rebels in the *Annals*: these will be discussed in Chapter 4).⁴⁶ Meanwhile, as governor of upper Germany in 89 Antonius Saturninus seems to have launched an unsuccessful bid for the principate,⁴⁷ and any recollections of this episode in the early second century are likely to have reinforced Tacitus' point about the underlying threat of civil war from the provinces.⁴⁸

Finally, after Domitian's inglorious death in 96, the elderly Nerva took power in circumstances that were not dissimilar to those that surrounded Galba's accession in 69, especially when a praetorian revolt forced the new emperor to execute Domitian's assassins and adopt Trajan. Memories of that event may have added an extra piquancy to Tacitus' depiction of the praetorian insurrection in support of Otho in *Histories* 1, but Trajan's role at that time may also be significant. Although the provincial status of upper Germany had been confirmed in 90, his status as governor and commander of the three legions there was similar to that of Vitellius in 69 – and Germanicus in 14. There is no credible suggestion of any rebellion;⁴⁹ nevertheless, this state of affairs, of which Tacitus and his audience would indubitably have been aware, throws an interesting light on *Histories* 1 and *Annals* 1 and the relationship between them. The mutinies in *Annals* 1 are described in a manner illustrating the disarray that had the potential to occur in the principate but did not do so until 69. Could they have also shown not only what went

⁴⁶ On Vindex see Syme (1958b) 461-3, Hainsworth (1962) and Gallia (2012) 14-21 (who stresses Vindex' association with *libertas*: any parallelism with Germanicus would make the beliefs about the latter reported at 1.33.2 resonate further, though see pp. 70-3 below); on the Batavian revolt see pp. 216-20. See also pp. 240-2 on Gaetulicus' attempted rebellion in AD 39, and Dio 60.15.1-4 on the insurrection of Scribonianus, governor of Dalmatia, against Claudius in 42 (*ad necessitatem belli civilis*, 13.43.2, refers to this).

⁴⁷ Syme (1978) considers the possibility that the insurrection was not a serious revolt but merely the result of over-excitement amongst the troops; cf. Walser (1951) 124-5 and Griffin (2000a) 65-6.

⁴⁸ Presumably it was covered in the *Histories*, possibly in terms that echoed the events of 69. With Saturninus' reported effeminacy (*Epit. De Caesaribus* 11.9; cf. Dio 67.11.4) compare *H.* 1.22.1 on Otho (and 1.62.2 on Vitellius), although all such characterisations may derive from Flavian propaganda.

⁴⁹ On the unlikely possibility of an uprising see Bennett (2001) 46 and 247 n. 20, but cf. Eck (2002) esp. 224-6 for speculation that Trajan was sent to Germany as part of a plan to install him as Nerva's successor, perhaps without the latter's full consent. He also points out the presence of a close associate of Trajan, Pomponius Longinus, as Pannonian governor in 98. See also Griffin (2000b) 84-6.

wrong in 69, but what went right in 98? An emperor was created *alibi quam Romae*, but this did not spark a conflict.⁵⁰

This chain of comparable scenarios reinforces the sense that the Julio-Claudian principate has within it the potential for civil strife and further suggests that the hopes and fears of characters in *Annals* 1 are in a sense justifiable. But in linking Germanicus as a potential civil war contender to a succession of emperors and would-be emperors that spans the entire first century AD, it also looks forward to Book 2. Previous discussions of Germanicus have considered the way in which his actions resonate beyond the narrative present, and he has been seen as imbued with close links to the republican past but also as a figure who looks forward to his imperial descendants and the degeneration they, especially Nero, represent.⁵¹ In Chapter 2 a related but ultimately rather different line will be taken. It will be argued that Germanicus' eastern travels associate him with a number of actual imperial figures, in addition to the would-be rulers he echoes here; the popular views about his republican tendencies will look distinctly unfounded. It will also be suggested that his journey and death can be read as an ambivalent comment on Trajan's activities in the region. The faint parallelism between the two men here in Book 1 appears to be positive in nature, demonstrating how they both remained loyal and just possibly hinting that the Trajanic principate lacks the fundamental weakness of the Julio-Claudian era.⁵² It will be succeeded, however, by a more concrete correspondence that may raise some more unsettling questions.

⁵⁰ See the rather tendentious remarks of Syme (1958b) 14-15.

⁵¹ On the one hand, Pelling (1993) (though note his conclusion that 'Tacitus' characterization of Germanicus is...complex and qualified, just as his attitude to the empire and republic is complex and qualified', 85); on the other e.g. Versnel (1980) 543-51, McCulloch (1984) 67-71, O'Gorman (2000) 48-9 and also Williams (2009).

⁵² Eck (2002) 211-2 discusses the 'official' presentation of Trajan's accession in the sources.

So Tacitus' description of the mutinies in *Annals* 1 makes a point about how from the beginning the principate harbours the potential for implosion in civil war. There is also, however, the notion of 'civil war *within* the principate', the idea that the imperial system itself can be characterised as a form of civil strife. This will be explored at length in later chapters, but at this point it might be argued that the *Histories* show that mutinies can occur as a part of civil war – or, at least, they did in 69 – and so the mutinies in the *Annals* could consequently be taken to indicate that such a conflict is actually happening in Tiberius' principate.⁵³ But they are not directly represented as civil war, apart from at one key moment, at the very end of the mutiny narratives as a whole. Once feelings have cooled amongst the German legionaries, Germanicus' decision to encourage Caecina's troops to mete out their own justice results in a shocking scene termed *diversa omnium, quae umquam accidere, civilium armorum facies* (1.49.1). It is not quite clear whether this chaos is being differentiated from or identified with *omnia civilia arma*,⁵⁴ but 'civil war' serves as appropriate nomenclature, maybe even the only appropriate nomenclature, to describe what is happening.

The soldiers' reaction after this slaughter has occurred confirms its momentary association with civil war. They make known their wish *eundi in hostem...nec aliter posse placari commilitonum manes, quam si pectoribus impiis honesta vulnera accepissent* (1.49.3). This pious desire to atone for wrongs done to fellow Romans, and perhaps for the mutiny more generally, by engaging in an expiatory war with foreigners suggests that they are evoking an inverted version of the concept of *metus hostilis*.⁵⁵ Now that they have seen what civil strife really is, they hope to reverse the progression from foreign conflicts to internal discord that Rome seems to have experienced, and ward off further internecine conflicts by generating a foreign war against the Germans. Their war

⁵³ cf. Ross (1973) and Woodman (1998b) 57 n. 51.

⁵⁴ See Goodyear (1972) 311 *ad loc.*, Ross (1973) 219 and Woodman (2004) 26. cf. Hardie (2010) 14.

⁵⁵ See pp. 28-9.

in Germany will neither be long nor especially successful, however, and the Germans will not turn out to be one-dimensional foreign opponents, while subsequent chapters will show that the threat of civil war has not receded from Rome. Indeed, the troops in Germany are not the only individuals in the Tiberian books who attempt to replace civil war with hostilities against foreigners, but whose efforts prove in vain (see pp. 209-12 and 271-3 below on 3.44.2 and 6.31.1).

d. Tacitus' Germans, and what they mean for Rome

i) Rome's Opposites...?

Although their wider expectations will be disappointed, the legionaries' immediate wish is granted and at 1.49.4 Germanicus begins a campaign against various German tribes.⁵⁶ It should be made clear at this point that Tacitus seems able to differentiate between the Germans and their relations with each other, and to trace their friendly or hostile involvement with the Romans, but that the recurrence of the term *Germani* (and sometimes *Germania*), often applied to a specific group, suggests that much of the time the historian was thinking in general terms of 'Germans'. It therefore seems reasonable to follow this practice. In any case, it will emerge from this discussion that, despite the importance of several individually characterised Germans in the narrative, on many occasions Tacitus sets the Germans as a (loose) single entity against Rome.⁵⁷

The first phase of the Roman offensive (1.50-1) finds its issue in a ruthless attack on the Marsi. A festival means that the Germans' defences are relaxed and the Romans

⁵⁶ In general see Koestermann (1957), Timpe (1968) and Laederich (2001) 31-101.

⁵⁷ This narrative opens and closes with references to *Germani/Germania* (1.50.1, 2.88.2). cf. p. 23 above on how Tacitus' *Germania* considers Germans together and separately, and O'Gorman (1993) 144.

destroy a temple *quod Tanfanae vocabant*, and *non sexus, non aetas* is spared (1.51.1);⁵⁸ the slightly less one-sided defeat of other tribes follows. There is a touch of irony in this instance of Roman efficiency and superiority overcoming the barbarians' careless decadence, for it will not be repeated and subsequently the Germans will not afford the legionaries much chance *oblitterandae seditionis* (1.51.3).⁵⁹ Nevertheless, this opening evokes an image of Romans and Germans as mutually alien and hostile. When the narrative returns to Germany at 1.55, after meeting Segestes (see p. 63 below) Germanicus proceeds to the site of Varus' defeat. Dramatised recollections of what happened in AD 9 vividly stress the divide between the two sides, not least by juxtaposing the Romans' pious burial of their peers with evidence for German savagery such as the *barbarae arae, apud quas tribunos ac primorum ordinum centuriones mactaverant* (1.61.3).⁶⁰

The Germans' character is further illustrated in the first encounters between Roman troops and the forces of Arminius (1.63-68).⁶¹ After a scrappy success at 1.63, a Roman victory is eventually achieved at 1.68.3-4, although it leaves Arminius *integer* (1.68.5). This is only after an a nightmarish series of events that unfolds when a detachment of troops under Caecina is almost slaughtered, however: it looks as if Varus' defeat is going to be replayed, with the reported appearance of his ghost to Caecina (1.65.3) and Arminius' unnerving cry '*en Varus [et] eodemque iterum fato vincitae legiones!*' (1.65.4).⁶² The legionaries have already passed an uncomfortable night, *cum barbari festis epulis, laeto cantu aut truci sonore subiecta vallium ac resultantes saltus*

⁵⁸ *vocabant* often characterises ethnographical contexts (Martin and Woodman (1989) 258 *ad* 4.73.4): the alien status of the Marsi is emphasised. cf. the stress at *Ger.* 43.3-4 on religion as marking difference.

⁵⁹ cf. Levene (2009) 232-7 on the one-sided nature of battles in the *Annals*. He cites Germanicus' later German campaigns as an exception, but see pp. 185-92 below on 4.32-3.

⁶⁰ See also Pagán (1999) and Shannon (2011) 269.

⁶¹ For analysis see Trzaska-Richter (1992) 159-61.

⁶² Germanicus' disappearance from the text in these crucial chapters is striking when compared with Arminius' active presence. Still, as Trzaska-Richter (1992) 169-70 notes (cf. Edelmaier (1964) 116), the stress on Arminius' deviousness and military skill may serve to rehabilitate Varus.

complerent (1.65.1). The division between Romans and Germans is all too clear and the situation of 1.50-1, where Germanicus led a nocturnal attack on the Marsi, has been almost completely reversed (cf. *festam eam Germanis noctem*, 1.50.3).

In describing the plight of Caecina's troops, Tacitus also mentions the Germans' adeptness at exploiting the landscape they inhabit (*contra Cheruscis sueta apud paludes proelia...*, 1.64.2). Alongside the simple fact of opposition to Rome, Germany's 'otherness' and Roman unfamiliarity with it is asserted. Soon afterwards there is alarm back at base about the possibility that *Gallias peti* by the supposedly victorious Germans;⁶³ only Agrippina's intervention is said to have prevented *impositum Rheno pontem solvi* (1.69.1). As the Romans persevere in their efforts to conquer the territory beyond the Rhine, rumours of a German 'invasion' in the opposite direction are met by reasserting the boundary between German and Roman territory and trying to prevent it from being crossed. But the campaign continues and, despite this rather chequered series of events, Tacitus reports the triumphal insignia voted to Caecina and his fellow commanders for their achievements as a conclusion to the *res externae* of AD 15.⁶⁴

Just before the narrative returns to Germany for the year AD 16, in the opening chapters of Book 2, Tacitus accounts for the inclusion of a passage that provides background on Roman involvement with the Parthians and Armenians and the troubled eastern situation by stating that Tiberius hoped *ea specie* to recall Germanicus and send him where he might fall victim to *dolo...et casibus* (2.5.1).⁶⁵ At 2.26.2-4, conversely, shrewdness and experience will seem to influence the emperor's decision (see p. 66

⁶³ Cerialis plays on such notions in his speech to the Gauls at *H.* 4.73.2-3 (cf. p. 220 below), although the German threat to Gaul is a recurrent theme in the *BG* (Trzaska-Richter (1992) 117 n. 245 and Riggsby (2006) 59-71): see pp. 59-60 and n. 67 below on the importance of Caesar's work for this part of the *Annals*. cf. Poignault (2001) 431.

⁶⁴ cf. p. 50 and n. 36 above on how only Caecina's actions are reported.

⁶⁵ See p. 83: Koestermann (1963) 264 *ad loc.* notes the doublet with Tiberius' reported decision at 2.42.1.

below), but all these motives contrast with Germanicus' potentially naive enthusiasm. In response to the previous season's uneven fighting, Germanicus laments that the Germans were helped by local conditions, *silvis paludibus, brevi aestate et praematura hieme* (2.5.3: *silvae* and *paludes* have already been linked as characteristically German obstacles to the Romans at 1.67.2 and 1.68.3.).

Germanicus then announces his intention to travel *per ora et alveos fluminum* (2.5.4) deep into German territory. This seems questionable, given the Germans' evident prowess when fighting on home terrain, but he has a fleet constructed so that his troops can disembark *media in Germania* (2.5.4). In this connection Tacitus comments how the Rhine *apud principium agri Batavi velut in duos amnes dividitur, servatque nomen et violentiam cursus, qua Germaniam praevehitur, donec Oceano miscetur; ad Gallicam ripam latior et placidior adfluens* (2.6.4), and this characterisation of the German channel as violent and the Gallic one as less threatening looks archly emblematic. In *Annals* 1 and 2 Gaul recurs as an implicitly pacified and loyal place (*Galliarum fidem extollit*, 1.34.4), a suitable subject for a census (1.31.2, 2.6.1) and a source of support for Germanicus' military adventures (1.71.2, 2.5.3). When the Gallic revolt breaks out in Book 3 this peaceable state of affairs will be temporarily disturbed,⁶⁶ but here it contrasts with the picture of the Germans as unsubdued and barbarous. Caesar's juxtaposition of tame Gauls and wild Germans in the *BG*, which served to delineate the limits of his own activities in Gaul and justify his failure to undertake substantial operations on the further side of the Rhine, seems to be reproduced.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ cf. Ash (2007) 238 *ad H.* 2.59.2 (Vitellius and the river Arar). Is it significant here that the Rhine splits in Batavian territory? The Batavians hardly feature in the extant *Annals* (cf. 2.8.3) but the account of their rebellion in *H.* 4 stresses both their anti-Roman tendencies and their Roman connections and is echoed in the Tiberian books, not least in the Gallic revolt, on which see pp. 207-20 below.

⁶⁷ For Caesar's emphasis on the Germans' 'otherness' (especially at *BG* 4.1-4 and 6.11-28) see Koutroubas (1972) 122-9, Trzaska-Richter (1992) 126-8, Dench (2005) 52-4, Krebs (2006) 119-32, Riggsby (2006) and Schadee (2008).

Indeed, in the course of Germanicus' renewal of the fighting, which meets with mixed success, the Germans' distinguishing qualities become even clearer. Both commanders' hortatory speeches before the battle of Idistaviso promulgate the idea that the Germans are completely unlike the Romans. Germanicus refers to the German *silvas et saltus* (2.14.2), claiming they will prove as favourable as a more open landscape (his reported words at 2.5.3, quoted above, suggest the opposite). Claiming that the Germans' large shields and spears will impede them in their native territory, he describes their weaponry and habits in colourful ethnographic terms (e.g. *non lorica Germano, non galeam, ne scuta quidem ferro nervove fermata*, 2.14.3).⁶⁸ But despite this the Romans are deep within German lands, in a dominant position. The boundary constituted by the Rhine, he claims, is no longer significant: *propiores iam Albim quam Rhenum neque bellum ultra* (2.14.4).

Germanicus thus outlines the distinctive and apparently inferior nature of the Germans while affirming that he has crossed the Rhine, the key border between Rome and Germany.⁶⁹ The subsequent speech of Arminius presents a different view of the situation. His description of the Roman legionaries, *Varianni exercitus fugacissimos...* (2.15.1), is as scathing as Germanicus' words about the Germans, but in noting their recourse to *avia Oceani* he proclaims that if they are defeated nothing but *inane...ventorum remorumve subsidium* (2.15.2) will be forthcoming. In the battle that follows, his predictions seem to have been proved untrue. The Romans make the German terrain their own,⁷⁰ and Germanicus' victory is warmly hailed: *magna ea victoria neque cruenta nobis fuit* (2.18.1). It appears that the dominance exercised over the Germans at 1.50-1 has been briefly regained. A second engagement, however, then takes place in a

⁶⁸ See Trzaska-Richter (1992) 166-7 on Germanicus' use of *topoi* here.

⁶⁹ He is proud of emulating the achievements of his father Drusus, and Tiberius; does he also claim to outdo Caesar in his campaigns beyond the Rhine? See Pagán (1999) 312, Krebs (2006) 127-9 and n. 67 above.

⁷⁰ The level battlefield (2.16.1) allows the Roman army to be drawn up properly (2.16.3; cf. *Agr.* 35.2-3 on Roman military organisation in a foreign land).

rather more alien landscape, a *locum flumine et silvis clausum, arta intus planitie et umida* (2.19.2). Although the Germans' characteristic weapons and size do appear to hinder them, the Roman success is hardly resounding (2.21.1).⁷¹ Germanicus removes his helmet in an attempt to rouse his men and the battle ends on a muted note: *equites ambigue certavere* (2.21.2).⁷² Nevertheless, a proud inscription commemorating the Romans' achievements, *debellatis inter Rhenum Albiisque nationibus* (2.22.1), is set up.

When Germanicus attempts to convey his men back to their base by sea, however, an enormous storm overwhelms the fleet.⁷³ The unfamiliar and uncontrollable nature of the German landscape is asserted: *quanto violentior cetero mari Oceanus et truculentia caeli praestat Germania, tantum illa clades novitate et magnitudine excessit* (2.24.1). Germanicus may have deemed Germany stable enough for the Romans to operate within it but this final cataclysm shows him to have been mistaken.⁷⁴ Even though – in a neat piece of ring-composition with 1.50-1 – the Marsi (along with the Chatti) are at hand to be soundly beaten at 2.25, Tiberius' requests that Germanicus return to Rome (2.26) are hardly surprising. Much later, the obituary of Arminius, *bello non victus* (2.88.2), confirms Rome's inability to defeat him. The attempts to expand Roman influence in the Germans' lands have ultimately proved futile, and the Romans have seemed unable to understand and adapt themselves to the Germans.

So the Germans' military skills show up the Romans' overconfidence and ignorance and the futility of their imperialistic efforts, and this notion that they demonstrate Rome's limitations may look familiar. At pp. 59-60 above Caesar's

⁷¹ Shannon (2011) 266-9; cf. Goodyear (1981) 110 *ad* 1.64.2 on the typical large size of literary barbarians.

⁷² Germanicus' actions are the converse of those of Arminius, *oblitus faciem suo cruore* (2.17.5; see Pagán (2000) 362-3) but echo Sacrovir at 3.41.3, Corbulo at 13.35.4, and Civilis at *H.* 4.72.2. This seems not to be of special significance here but see pp. 215-20 below on Sacrovir and Civilis, and Ash (2006) for comparison of Germanicus and Corbulo, not always flattering to the former.

⁷³ See Baxter (1972) 264 (though cf. Goodyear (1981) 243 *ad* 2.23-4) on Virgilian echoes here, and note too that *debellatis* at 2.22.1 echoes *debellare* in the context of the Roman imperial 'mission' at *Aen.* 6.853.

⁷⁴ cf. the stress on Agricola's painstaking preparation and good judgement in foreign territory at *Agr.* 18-27. Pagán (1999) 312-3 suggests Germanicus' crossing of the Visurgis is somehow transgressive, and 'unusual things', like the storm, happen afterwards. See also Pognault (2001) and Santoro L'hoir (2006) 93.

influential division between Germans and Gauls, and the implications of this for his presentation of his campaigns, was cited. But another parallel text is Tacitus' own *Germania*, and in particular the views expressed there about the challenge posed by Germany (*tam diu Germania vincitur*, *Ger.* 37.2) and the resistance offered to Rome by *Germanorum libertas* (id. 37.3: the representation of German freedom in the *Annals* will be discussed below). Scholars have seen Tacitus' earlier monograph as expressive of how the Germans had 'marked the limits of Roman imperialism' throughout the first century AD, not least in Domitian's campaigns against them in Tacitus' own lifetime.⁷⁵ This sequence near the beginning of the *Annals* reinforces the impression that these fearsome enemies bring out Roman weakness rather than strength, a further variation on the *metus hostilis* trope: the penitent Roman mutineers who at 1.49.3 hope for absolution certainly will not achieve their goal. But while there is a clear sense that the Germans in the Tiberian books present an intractable obstacle to Rome, Tacitus' portrayal of them demands further examination.

ii)...or Friends of Rome?

Viewed broadly, Germanicus' campaigns strongly suggest that the Germans and Romans are mutually alien. Nevertheless, in *Annals* 1 and 2 the Romans do encounter some German individuals who have formed a connection with Rome. The first is Segestes, the tribal leader who at 1.57-8 requests Roman help in his dispute with Arminius and lists at length the services he has performed for Rome: he delivers a pro-

⁷⁵ See Rives (1999) 52-5 (54 for Domitian, 55 for the quotation), and Straub (1980) 228-30 and Krebs (2010); cf. Woolf (2007). Tacitus does not directly suggest a connection between his works; it seems wiser to see the *Germania* as a *comparandum* than as a text specifically alluded to here; cf. pp. 22-4 and 277.

Roman speech as if schooled in rhetoric.⁷⁶ Indeed, the Romans have already come to Segestes' aid (1.57.3-4), and afterwards he is promised, along with his daughter and her son by Arminius, a *sedem vetere in provincia* (1.58.5).⁷⁷

The second phase of hostilities then sees a quarrel between Arminius and his brother Flavus, *insignis fide et amisso per vulnus oculo paucis ante annis duce Tiberio* (2.9.1), which takes place as they stand on either side of the river Visurgis. The two brothers debate the worth of what Flavus has gained from Roman service (2.9.3) and their own respective principles.⁷⁸ Matters soon degenerate, and the Roman Stertinius has to restrain Flavus *plenum irae armaque et equum poscentem* (2.10.3) against his similarly belligerent brother. Rome's civilising influence on Flavus may need reinforcing,⁷⁹ but a detail is also let slip about Arminius himself: at the end of the exchange it is revealed that he conducted much of the argument in Latin,⁸⁰ since *Romanis in castris ductor popularium meruisset* (2.10.3).⁸¹ There are some other hints of German links with Rome: at 2.13.2 a German *Latinae linguae sciens* appears, and later an allusion is made to Roman trade deep in Suebic territory (2.62.3).

These revelations about the interaction between Germans and Romans, which no doubt reflect the historical situation in the first century AD,⁸² do not negate the Roman-German polarisation of the narrative as a whole, but they suggest that the eye-catching

⁷⁶ See Edelmaier (1964) 94-8 and Sinclair (1993) 20-1; cf. Pagán (2000) 359-60 and Haynes (2003) 15-18.

⁷⁷ Tacitus promises to return to the son (1.58.6; he is dead by 11.16.3): cf. n. 98 below.

⁷⁸ See Pelling (1993) 81 and Tylawsky (2002) 256-7; cf. the Thracians' attitude to their 'Romanised' counterparts at 4.48.3 (p. 225 below). Another critical view of Flavus occurs at 11.16.3 (Keddie (1975) 54).

⁷⁹ Monophthalmism occurs more often in enemies than friends (see Africa (1970) and Moeller (1975), and Plut., *Sert.* 1), although Flavus' injury was acquired in Rome's service (cf. the analogous scene between the similarly disabled (*H.* 4.13.2) Civilis and Cerialis at *H.* 5.26). See also Tylawsky (2002) on rivers serving as boundaries and on one-eyed individuals.

⁸⁰ cf. Jugurtha's use of Latin (*BJ* 101.6) and Ariovistus' knowledge of the Gallic language (*BG* 1.47.2).

⁸¹ Vell. 2.118.2 also notes his Roman service; he is termed *ultra barbarum promptus ingenio* (cf. Maroboduus' characterisation at 2.108.2). See Timpe (1970) 19-49, Sinclair (1993) 17 and Tylawsky (2002) 256.

⁸² Woolf (2007) 208 sees as Tacitus unduly emphasising Roman-German estrangement, not least because of a desire to present Germany as 'Rome's antitype, its opposite as well as its limit'. This is not quite true, although the 'antitype' notion is still important. See pp. 19 above, on 'Romanisation', and 23 on how the *Germania* stresses both the Germans' distance from Rome and their Roman links.

idea that this foreign people delineates the limits of Rome's empire-building is not quite the whole story. This may be further signalled by Tiberius' response to the German king Maroboduus' request for help after his defeat by Arminius (2.63.1: see further pp. 66-8 below). Not mentioning Maroboduus' well-attested Roman connections (Vell. 2.108.2, 109.1), of which it seems highly likely that Tacitus' readers would have been aware, the emperor publicly terms him one of Rome's greatest enemies (*...non Philippum Atheniensibus, non Pyrrhum aut Antiochum populo Romano perinde metuendos fuisse*, 2.63.3) but nevertheless gives his permission for the king to live at Ravenna. The contrast between the emperor's rhetoric and its echoes of Caesarian notions of the fearsome German threat, and his actual decision, which acknowledges the existence of links between Rome and Germany, offers an arch reflection of the text's differing perspectives on Roman-German relations.⁸³

This is important in the context of the Tiberian books as a whole, for hostile encounters between Romans and Germans that end less than successfully for the former feature at either end of Books 1-6: Germanicus' campaigns are matched at 4.72-3 by the Frisian revolt, which the Romans manage to quash only with significant losses and general disgrace.⁸⁴ In the interim, meanwhile, Tacitus narrates a succession of anti-Roman movements undertaken by other foreign peoples who have more substantial links to Rome than the Germans. In Chapter 4 the way in which the Gallic, Thracian and Frisian episodes in particular form a distinct sequence will be discussed in detail: each one encapsulates to a successively greater extent the Romans' inability to understand and

⁸³ Should Tiberius' reported speech be read as ironic? cf. Ash (2013) esp. 442-3 on his potentially satirical voice, although it is intriguing that he seems to echo Tacitus' own words about the Germans at *Ger.* 37.3 (*non Samnis, non Poeni...saepius admonere: quippe regno Arsacis acrior est Germanorum libertas*; cf. p. 277 below). See also Chapter 3 in general on how at least initially he seems to have a shrewd understanding of the differences between past and present (especially compared with the senate, whom he addresses at 2.63.3), and pp. 208-10 on how some Romans' mistaken beliefs about the Gallic threat seem conditioned by Caesar's *BG*.

⁸⁴ Note the Roman brutality at 1.50-1 (see Shannon (2011) 268-9) and, as a trigger for revolt, 4.72.2; cf. n. 89 of Chapter 4.

manage foreigners and also seems to show that the freer a people is, the more successful they are in resisting Rome.

Although the (German) Frisians in Book 4 have more extensive ties with Rome than their counterparts in Books 1 and 2, and do not achieve as much as them, they represent the final stage of this sequence. Accordingly, the narrative of Germanicus' campaigns serves both to introduce this pattern and to act as a contrast to it. The suggestion that, despite their estrangement from Rome, the Germans too have acquired some Roman connections – *dominos et colonias novas* (1.59.6), as Arminius contemptuously puts it – show that they stand at the head of this sequence, while the admission that Arminius, like his brother, had been a member of the Roman army also links him to several foreigners who have previously served with Rome and who will play a key part in anti-Roman resistance in the narrative to come.⁸⁵ Moreover, these connections are matched by deeper mirroring between Romans and Germans: it can be said that both sides' identity has been shaped by their mutual contact (cf. pp. 19-20 above).

e. *Libertas* at Home and Abroad

i) *Metus hostilis* as *metus Romanus*

When Tiberius is made to explain his reasons for recalling Germanicus from Germany, he recalls how he achieved *plura consilio quam vi* there; accordingly, now that

⁸⁵ See further pp. 135-6 and 216 below, and cf. Timpe (1970) 137-40.

Varus has been avenged, the Germans can *internis discordiis relinqui* (2.26.3). Despite Germanicus' suspicions and the earlier note about the emperor's intentions at 2.5.1 (see p. 59 above), this hypothesis is proved correct when the narrative returns to Germany:⁸⁶ *nam discessu Romanorum ac vacui externo metu gentis adsuetudine et tum aemulatione gloriae arma in se verterant* (2.44.2). Tacitus notes that the German troops were not in irregular formation, as was once common, *quippe longa adversum nos militia insueverant sequi signa, subsidiis firmari, dicta imperatorum accipere* (2.45.2). Previously they used their own distinctive weapons (cf. p. 60 above), but now there are *tela Romanis derepta in manibus multorum* (2.45.3). The earlier revelations about Roman influence are capped by this sudden suggestion that fighting Rome has actually wrought a transformation amongst the Germans. They may now be more like their acculturated counterparts later in the text than they were initially: their position at the beginning of the sequence is confirmed.⁸⁷

Of more immediate interest, though, is the wider context of the battle. It occurs after the Romans' withdrawal from Germany, and the struggle is between the autocrat Maroboduus (*regis nomen invisum apud populares*, 2.44.2) and Arminius, said to be fighting *pro libertate* (ibid.). The latter prevails, and this is not the only time that he is cast as a representative of freedom. He is initially introduced as the *turbator Germaniae* (1.55.2); despite the personal reasons that also determine his actions (*super insitam violentiam rapta uxor...*, 1.59.1), he is the staunch opponent of the pro-Roman Segestes and favours *gloria* and *libertas* over *flagitiosa servitus* (1.59.6). Then, as noted earlier, he is set against his brother, at whose rewards for being a so-called Roman slave he laughs. He goes on to accuse Flavus of abandoning *fas patriae, libertatem avitam...* (2.10.1), and at 2.15.3 reminds his men of their choice between freedom and death. After he has

⁸⁶ Pelling (1993) 76, although Gowing (1990) 323-5 suggests the emperor may not be quite truthful here.

⁸⁷ They are differentiated, however, by not having learnt skills fighting for the Romans which they then use against them, unlike certain ex-auxiliaries (see n. 85 above).

successfully defeated Maroboduus' attempts to acquire *regnum*, nothing more is heard of him until his obituary at the end of Book 2, when Tacitus terms him *liberator hau<d> dubie Germaniae* (2.88.2).⁸⁸ But directly beforehand it is disclosed that *regnum adfectans, libertatem popularium adversam habuit...dolo propinquorum cecidit* (ibid.).

Two aspects of this sequence of events in Germany are highly resonant for Rome: the compressed version of German history that Tacitus gives in these chapters, and its most complex character, Arminius. The defeat of Maroboduus, who is then compelled to go into exile, by those who stand for *libertas* finds echoes in Rome's early republican past (cf. the expulsion of Tarquinius Superbus at Livy 1.60, and the opening sentence of Book 2: *liberi iam hinc populi Romani...*). But the conflict occurs after the Romans have departed and left the Germans *vacui externo metu* (2.44.2), and this looks like an example, familiar from Roman history, of what happens when *metus hostilis* is withdrawn.⁸⁹ The Roman soldiers' unsuccessful efforts to re-establish a kind of *metus hostilis* after their mutiny in Germany have already been mentioned, and it has also been noted that the Germans are not quite the polarised opponents of Rome that they previously seemed to be:⁹⁰ this pattern appears not to apply to Rome any more. In any case, the war between Maroboduus and Arminius is over quickly and no lasting damage is mentioned. Although Drusus is sent out as a *paci firmator* (2.46.5), Tacitus notes at 2.44.2 that this was a pretext.

Moreover, the struggle between Maroboduus and Arminius is not the first instance of German civil strife that Tacitus records, but the other cases seem to have similarly lacked serious consequences. Germanicus begins his full campaigns with the hope that

⁸⁸ See Edelmaier (1964) 121-30 and Sinclair (1993) 23-5.

⁸⁹ Goodyear (1981) 330 *ad* 2.44.2 compares Sall., *H.* 1.12M, *remoto metu Punico*, a key passage that makes a comparable point about Rome's decline. See Kapust (2011) 50, and pp. 28-9 above.

⁹⁰ The influence of Caesar's polarising portrayal of the Germans in the *BG* has been made clear, but see also p. 214 below on how that text was the product of a troubled time in Roman internal politics.

dissidere hostem in Arminium ac Segestem (1.55.1) and this turns out to be justified.

Segestes, however, soon disappears from the narrative and this dissension does not impair Arminius' leadership of the resistance to the Romans, or indeed the Germans' ability to repel both foreign and local oppressors. Maroboduus' attempts to create a *regnum* are defeated and then at the very end of Book 2 the *liberator* Arminius himself is said to have been put to death because he too sought to form a *regnum*.⁹¹ The German narrative ends on this note: although the Frisians will feature in Book 4 and individual tribes will play small roles in the later books (see 11.16-20.2; 12.27.2-30; 13.53-7),⁹² the Germans as a whole will not appear again in the extant *Annals*.

The disappearance of *metus hostilis* in Germany, and Maroboduus' fate, establish a basic historical parallelism: the Germans seem briefly to echo key points in earlier Roman history. But after that, divergence is more important than similarity. In contrast with the Sallustian model of destructive strife in Rome following Carthage's fall, the civil wars in Germany apparently do no great harm: the text deals with them concisely and no mention is made of any negative effects. When Arminius turns out to be another would-be autocrat, the Germans oust him as well and remain free. By contrast, from the opening chapter of the *Annals* onwards it is made clear that the Romans did not end the dominance of the ruler who came to power in the aftermath of the late republican civil wars, and the existence of *libertas* in Rome is called into question in the Tiberian books. The Germans seem to present an alternative version of Rome's past, characterised by

⁹¹ Goodyear (1981) 332 *ad* 2.45.2 discusses the possible historical background to this.

⁹² The *Germania* similarly treats the Germans collectively and then as tribes: see n. 38 of the Introduction. At A. 11.19.3 there has been unrest in Germany, involving the Frisians amongst others, and Claudius forbids operations beyond the Rhine to continue, occasioning Corbulo's aphorism '*beatos quondam duces Romanos*' (11.20.1). But the experience of Germanicus does not suggest that a great conquest was stymied.

continuing freedom rather than autocracy, and in which civil war is not the destructive force that it is for Rome.⁹³

Now, Books 1 and 2 of the *Annals* depict efforts to extend the Roman empire by conquering the Germans. The Germans are necessarily concerned with preserving their independence rather than subjecting others, but there is no suggestion that they have similar expansionist plans. By contrast, the rest of the first hexad will show the Romans dealing with the subject peoples they have previously incorporated, but at the same time experiencing a lack of freedom themselves. Tacitus' pattern suggests that a free people that does not seek to rule over others will be able to perpetuate its own freedom, but that those who engage in 'imperialism' will lose their *libertas* and potentially be damaged by civil war. The fates of Maroboduus and Arminius, who try to rule over others, similarly warn against such actions.⁹⁴

Of course this is a schematic reading of the text,⁹⁵ for it would be rash to suggest that within his narrative of Germanicus' campaigns Tacitus is explicitly advancing a theory about late-republican imperialism and its role as a 'cause' of the principate. The *Annals* as a whole also proves that, just as *metus hostilis* cannot be restored, a lack of conquests by the Romans will not reverse this state of affairs.⁹⁶ But the idea that depriving others of their freedom will rebound on itself nicely sets up the depiction of Rome's relations with its subjects in the rest of the Tiberian books. Roman rule will be increasingly resented, even as the situation in Tiberius' Rome and the evident lack of *libertas* there become more acute. The Germans may be 'opposites' of the Romans,

⁹³ The Germans' 'benign' civil wars here contrast with the destructive battle reported at *Ger.* 33, though O'Gorman (1993) 148-9 notes how roles are reversed and the focus returns to Roman civil strife at *Ger.* 37.6.

⁹⁴ cf. n. 55 of the Introduction.

⁹⁵ Tacitus does not show Rome's historical conquests happening; they must be inferred. Nor does he suggest this is a universal law. Rome's subjects cannot have lost their freedom by subduing others.

⁹⁶ cf. pp. 9-10 on imperialism under the principate, and pp. 189-91 below on 4.32-3.

showing where the limits of Roman expansionism lie, but Tacitus' presentation of their recent history makes a point about the implications of that expansionism for Rome.

In Chapter 4 the links between Roman oppression at home and abroad will be considered again, but the implications for Roman *libertas* of the portrayal of Arminius himself must be examined here. Like the Germans in general, although the text depicts his opposition to the Romans, their leader nevertheless reflects Rome in certain respects.

ii) Arminius: *libertas* and *regnum*...and *imperium*

Scholars have already identified a link between Arminius and Rome by noting that in Books 1 and 2 he and his interaction with others are depicted in terms that mirror his enemy Germanicus.⁹⁷ Both leaders are presented in the context of their families and, despite being close to their immediate relatives,⁹⁸ they have a more troubled relationship with an uncle. Inguiomerus' resentment of his nephew, mentioned at 2.45.1, echoes Tiberius' attitude towards Germanicus, and the unpopular and manipulative Maroboduus, Arminius' opponent, has also been compared to the emperor.⁹⁹ Moreover, both Germanicus and Arminius are linked to the pursuit of *libertas*. At 1.33.2 Tacitus notes how the popular expectation that the elder Drusus would restore *libertas* had been transferred to his son Germanicus, and similar sentiments are reported at 2.82.2 and 3.4.1 (see pp. 138-9 below), while Arminius' repeated association with German freedom has already been set out (see pp. 24-6 above on the range of meanings that *libertas* can possess).

⁹⁷ See especially Pelling (1993) 79-81, and also Edelmaier (1964).

⁹⁸ cf. O'Gorman (2000) 72-3 on Agrippina and Arminius' wife. Both men also have young sons (cf. 1.41.2 and p. 49 above). Arminius' son was allegedly mistreated *ludibrio* (1.58.6; cf. n. 77 above and Sinclair (1995) 30-1); Tacitus twice characterises Caligula's German campaigns as *ludibria* (*Ger.* 37.4; *H.* 4.15.2).

⁹⁹ See Pelling (1993) 80; cf. McCulloch (1984) 91-101 on treacherous uncles and noble nephews.

Finally, Arminius' death *dolo propinquorum* (2.88.2) echoes one version of the circumstances in which Germanicus dies a few chapters beforehand at 2.72.2.¹⁰⁰ The possibility that Piso was involved is raised at 2.69.3 and refuted only at 3.14.1-2 (cf. 2.73.2), and Tiberius was also said at 2.5.1 to want to expose Germanicus *dolo*. Now, it was shown above that at 2.88.2 Tacitus also focuses on two apparently divergent aspects of Arminius' biography, revealing that at the end of his life he tried to create a *regnum* over the Germans, but ultimately acclaiming him as *liberator hau<d> dubie Germaniae*. This dichotomy accordingly presents two ways of reading Arminius' counterpart Germanicus and developing the parallelism between them. A consideration of the concluding chapter 2.88 will now lead to a final summary of the key themes that have emerged in this discussion.

The narrative of the *Annals* does not explicitly suggest that Germanicus ever did anything to dash the popular belief that he would uphold *libertas* and restore the republic: he has indeed been seen by some commentators as representing hopes that the principate could have been something other than what it became, hopes that were dashed by his premature death.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, Arminius' obituary comes at the end of Book 2, in which Germanicus' voyage to the east is recounted in detail. In Chapter 2 it will be argued that, just as his position as the commander of a mutinous army in Germany at the time of Tiberius' accession associated him with various other imperial figures, his eastern journey can be seen in similar terms. It will be shown that, as Germanicus' travels proceed, he seems reminiscent of proto-autocratic individuals from the late-republican past, and at the same time he looks towards his imperial successors and the future of the imperial system. He is clearly a man of the principate, and this implies that those who thought that he represented the potential for *libertas* are mistaken. Conversely, in Tacitus'

¹⁰⁰ See Goodyear (1981) 447 *ad* 2.88.1 on how Arminius' demise is brought forward (cf. Straub (1980) 224-5), and pp. 87-8 for how *dolo propinquorum* echoes the deaths of numerous imperial figures.

¹⁰¹ See n. 118 of Chapter 2 for idealising views of Germanicus.

final reference to Arminius, the contribution of the free German to *libertas* and to the continuing independence of his people wins out over his attempt to make himself a king.

Nevertheless, the fact that Arminius seeks *regnum* hints at the monarchical character of a putative principate of his Roman analogue Germanicus, whose wider characterisation in Books 1 and 2 connects him to autocratic figures rather than to *libertas*.¹⁰² This heralds the incremental revelation in the Tiberian books as a whole that the principate is not merely an autocratic regime behind a republican-style façade (see Chapter 3) but also, specifically, a *regnum*. At the beginning of the text, Tacitus excludes this term as a description of the system that Augustus established (*non regno tamen neque dictatura, sed principis nomine constitutam rem publicam*, 1.9.5), but the arch nature of this precise specification will gradually become clear. The parallelism at 2.88 between Arminius and Germanicus, and also the latter's obituary at 2.73.2-3 (see pp. 121-7 below), suggest that the principate can be termed a *regnum*, and it will also be seen that in Book 2 the possibility of a wider parallelism between Rome and the Parthian monarchy is introduced. As the hexad draws to a close with Book 6 and Tiberius' reign becomes nakedly tyrannical, further correspondences with Parthia will confirm that the Romans are indeed subject to *regnum*; looking ahead, the text shows that this will continue to be the case under Tiberius' successors.

For now, this reading of the obituary confirms what the broader German trajectory showed about the failure of *libertas* in Rome. It vindicates Arminius' status as an opponent of the Romans who, despite their relative weakness and propensity for civil war, represent the curtailment of freedom abroad and at home. But the obituary also

¹⁰² Note Wirszubski (1950) 5: when *libertas* is used in the sense of republican government, 'the opposite...is *regnum* which, if used in its proper sense, invariably implies absolute monarchy.' Benario (1964) 102-6 introduces the idea that in the *Annals* the idea that the principate is a *regnum* becomes more insistent.

offers a broader perspective on the principate and on the relationship between Rome's past and present.¹⁰³ The historian introduces this final chapter of Book 2 by mentioning his discovery that the emperor had rejected a German offer to poison Arminius on the grounds that *non fraude neque occultis, sed palam et armatum populum Romanum hostes suos ulcisci. qua gloria aequabat se Tiberius priscis imperatoribus...* (2.88.1). After explaining the circumstances of Arminius' actual death, Tacitus ends by emphasising the German's achievement in not challenging *primordia populi Romani, sicut alii reges ducesque, sed florentissimum imperium* (2.88.2); nevertheless, he has not received sufficient recognition in Rome because *dum vetera extollimus recentium incuriosi* (2.88.3).

Tacitus appears to present Tiberius' principled stance as an echo of the distant past, but then he goes on to castigate Romans for fetishising *vetera* at the expense of more recent history.¹⁰⁴ *Annals* 2 therefore culminates by referring to a tendency to privilege the old over the new that has already featured in Tacitus' representations of Roman encounters with the Germans in *Annals* 1 and 2. At 1.49.3 Germanicus' troops, scarred by their brief experience of a kind of civil war, tried to return to a time in which Romans fought against foreign foes rather than each other. Later, once the German resistance had prevented the fulfilment of this and the Germans themselves had begun to engage in further internal conflicts of their own, Tiberius is said to have proclaimed that Maroboduus had been a threat that was equivalent to some of the great enemies that Rome had faced during the republic (*alii reges ducesque*, 2.63.3; these included Pyrrhus, who also features at 2.88.1). It was suggested, however, that his words are not to be taken entirely seriously. Similarly, Tacitus' presentation of the emperor's statement at 2.88.1 seems tinged with satire: in the text Tiberius' preferred mode of foreign policy is

¹⁰³ See Straub (1980) 224 on book-endings.

¹⁰⁴ *extollimus...incuriosi*: does Tacitus fail to exclude himself, or is the *Annals* rejoinder enough?

diplomatic and calculated, rather than reliant on open warfare (see p. 66), and in Book 6 in particular it will transpire that this is a distinctive Julio-Claudian practice (pp. 267-70). As an *imperator* under the principate, Tiberius is clearly unlike the *prisci imperatores* he supposedly emulates here.¹⁰⁵

To look back in this way and to imagine that the past can simply be reanimated in the present is futile, as Tacitus' sharp criticism of the Roman habit of doing so suggests. Tiberius seems to realise this, but the legionaries do not and, as the hexad continues, the Romans as a whole will not become any less ignorant. Chapter 3 will examine the tendency of the senate in particular to retreat into the past, seemingly under the deceptive influence of the principate's republican characteristics, and this initially contrasts with the emperor's appreciation of present realities. In due course, however, he will prove ignorant of the paradoxical relevance of what happened during the first century BC for his own principate, and he will also seem to lose his former awareness of the continuing threat to Rome from civil war. By Book 6, that threat will be all but realised, and the narrative will also look to the turbulent future of the dynasty and its eventual termination in further strife. The sentiments of the soldiers who wish to fight Germans, and Tiberius' less than sincere references to the same idea, accordingly look forward to themes that will gain in prominence and confirm the truth of Tacitus' characterisation of Romans as *recentium incuriosi*.

It may not be surprising, however, that contact with the Germans has induced characters in *Annals* 1 and 2 to look backwards rather than forwards, as the Germans who appear in these books evoke the Roman past in several ways. German history is shown to

¹⁰⁵ See p. 165 below on the evolution of the term '*imperator*' under the principate. *palam et armatum* (see Goodyear (1981) 446 *ad loc.* and Sinclair (1995) 25-6) echoes Arminius' comparison of his own and Roman fighting methods at 1.59.3. His complaint seems justified, and the echo hardly reflects well on Tiberius' less convincing act at 2.88.1. See also Straub (1980) 224-7. The gulf between the Roman past and present is heightened when Arminius is said to be *proeliis ambiguus, bello non victus* (2.88.2), a trope applied elsewhere to republican Rome, as Goodyear (1981) 448 *ad loc.* notes.

mirror Roman history and indeed it comes close to replaying the Roman transition from republic to empire via civil war, but with some very important differences. The German story focuses attention on how the Romans may once have been like the Germans, and on the historical developments that caused their paths to diverge and their respective relationships with *libertas* to evolve. The Germans' 'benign' civil conflicts and their success in deposing autocratic leaders contrast with Rome's vicissitudes in the late republic and the accession of Augustus as the first *princeps*. Furthermore, despite his attempts to make himself king, Arminius' status as a hero of freedom inverts the role played by Germanicus, who is innocent of any wrongdoing but who nevertheless symbolises Rome's autocratic future and propensity for internal conflict. Indeed, it is hard to read Tacitus' final reference to Rome's *florentissimum imperium* (2.88.2) as entirely lacking in irony:¹⁰⁶ the Germans, as well as indirectly illustrating imperial Rome's flaws, directly make clear the Romans' military limitations. The rest of the *Annals* will do little to challenge the impression that the Roman *imperium* over Romans and others is hardly flourishing.

¹⁰⁶ Compare the much-discussed *urgentibus imperii fatis* at *Ger.* 33.2: is Tacitus' outlook on Rome's *imperium* negative or positive there? See Rives (1999) 258-60 *ad loc.*

Chapter 2

Germanicus in the East

a. Introduction

i) Parthia, Armenia, Civil War and Trajan

In the previous chapter it was argued that the mutinies and Germanicus' role in them looked forward to what happened in AD 69 and even beyond, illustrating the potential for civil war to break out in the fragile principate, while Tacitus' portrayal of the Germans served to reflect the role of civil strife and the absence of *libertas* in Rome. Germanicus and his activities abroad will also feature heavily in this chapter, but the focus will be on the east and in particular on the Roman interaction with Parthians and Armenians that plays a key part in *Annals* 2. A proportion of the material to be examined precedes the last section of Book 2's German narrative, which featured in Chapter 1, but a strictly linear reading of Books 1 and 2 is not intended here. Similar themes recur in the northern and eastern strands of this early phase of the *Annals*.

This chapter will further explore the notion that the principate is an institution with close historical links to civil war. At the outset, developments in Parthia and Armenia at the beginning of Book 2 will be shown to mirror recent events in Rome. Then Chapter 1's reading of Germanicus will be developed: his resemblance to his grandfather Antony becomes more apparent as he heads east, but he looks reminiscent of other imperial figures too, and this generates a specific sense of continuity between the late republic and the principate. But although Germanicus appears to be right in believing that the civil wars are over, he is insensible to the threat of further strife. The book ends with a

brief instance of such conflict, initiated by another imperial representative, that echoes the past but also looks forward, once again, to the *Histories*. *Annals* 1 and 2 begin and end by evoking Tacitus' earlier work and illustrating how the potential for the wars of AD 69 is contained within the Julio-Claudian principate.

Trajan's eastern campaigns of the second decade of the second century AD are also likely to have made the presence of Parthia and Parthians in Book 2 especially resonant for the original readers of the *Annals*. This chapter will ask whether a link can be made between the voyage of Germanicus and Trajan. Moreover, it will also identify an incipient parallelism between Rome and Parthia in the text, which will be treated in more detail in Chapter 5.

The first half of the discussion will focus on the opening of Book 2, which reports recent events in Parthia (2.1-2) and Armenia (2.3-4) in two succinct summaries. Rather like the more diffuse account of events in Germany after the Roman withdrawal, both overviews reflect the course of Roman history in critical terms, but these eastern peoples have more directly in common with Rome than their northern counterparts. In Parthia, familiar Roman themes of internal conflict and autocracy feature in a way that makes the Parthians look like the Romans, but there is also an important difference. Meanwhile, the situation in Armenia resembles various flashpoints in Rome's history in the first century AD. The account also encompasses Roman involvement in Armenia, beginning with Mark Antony's deceitful treatment of an Armenian king. The presentation of this act echoes references elsewhere in the text to other Romans' similar behaviour.

This notion that the past, present and future are interlinked creates a conceptual framework for Germanicus' voyage in the east, in which he visits a number of sites before dying in Antioch (2.53-61, 69-81: the narrative will be dealt with in stages, each

introduced by a short summary). Beginning with his unscheduled visit to Actium, the behaviour of Germanicus himself makes him look rather like Mark Antony, and this suggests why others see him as a source of conflict. His actions, however, also reflect those of Augustus, Julius Caesar and other Romans of their era, and this hints at the points of contact between late republic and principate. He also mirrors future imperial figures, this time not so much potential usurpers as his own descendants and potentially Trajan himself. The trajectory he follows, an expansive voyage in the east followed by his death there, looks rather like what happened when that emperor sought to conquer Parthia.

The *Annals*' relationship to these contemporary events cannot be ascertained definitively. Nevertheless, it will be worth speculating that Germanicus may be intended as a kind of cautionary figure, particularly as his obituary and its mention of Alexander the Great also appears to have Trajanic overtones, and other details in the narrative hint that attempting the conquest of Parthia may be an unwise move. Nevertheless, the brief 'civil war' initiated by Germanicus' rival Piso draws attention back to the ever-present possibility of such strife in the Julio-Claudian principate, and its eventual end. The idealised view of Germanicus found in his obituary, moreover, reveals some truths about the nature of the principate itself.

ii) Rome and Parthia: a Short History

It has already been noted that, like most of the other foreigners in the Tiberian books, the Parthians in *Annals* 1-6 have not received a great deal of critical attention.¹ This is perhaps especially surprising, however, given that 'Parthia was unique among the lands bordering the Roman empire in that it was a large kingdom with a long and distinctive tradition of civilization, coherent government, and domination over subject peoples'.² Moreover, as this survey will now show, Roman attitudes towards the Parthians in the early part of the imperial era have been discussed at some length.

After Crassus' defeat at Carrhae in 53 BC and Julius Caesar's reputed plan at the time of his death to wage war on the Parthians (Suet., *Div. Iul.* 44.3), there is evidence for sporadic Parthian involvement in the subsequent civil wars.³ As emperor, however, Augustus pursued a diplomatic rather than an aggressive approach towards Parthia, which initially culminated in the return of Crassus' standards in 20 BC (Dio 54.8.2-3). Later the Parthian king Phraates dispatched some of his sons to Rome as 'hostages': at *RG* 32.2 Augustus presents this event as an indication of Parthian submission to Rome, but other sources seem aware that it was a politic decision on Phraates' part.⁴ Later came the meeting in AD 1 between Augustus' grandson Gaius and Phraataces, Phraates' successor, on the Euphrates (Vell. 2.101). Diplomatic relations between Rome and Parthia subsequently continued until the early years of the second century: as *Annals* 13-15 show, during Nero's reign Armenia became a flashpoint as first the Parthians and then the

¹ See pp. 7-8 above, and pp. 256-75 for their rather different role in Book 6, which some scholars have discussed.

² Campbell (1993) 212.

³ See Isaac (1990) 29.

⁴ Not least Tacitus himself at 2.1.2; see further Lerouge (2007) 112-4.

Romans (commanded by Corbulo) installed a king there, but a peaceful settlement was eventually reached (see 15.26-31 and 16.23.2).⁵

To attempt to plot against this backdrop the ways in which the Parthians were depicted by Roman artists and authors in the same period would be beyond the scope of the discussion. But it is worth noting that, although in the Augustan era representations of Parthians submissively returning Crassus' standards are matched by depictions of Rome as a dominant world power capable of an eastern conquest 'demanded' by contemporary poets,⁶ it has been argued that there was another strand in Augustan discourse about the Parthians. This was the notion that Parthia was equivalent in might to Rome but occupied a separate sphere; another world, in fact, of which the existence was no threat to Roman dominance within the *orbis Romanus*. Moreover, attempting its conquest would risk exposing Romans to degenerate oriental influences: Augustus' prudent policy was thereby justified.⁷

Whatever its exact origins, the idea that Rome and Parthia are separate but parallel powers is a minor but recurrent theme (without the implication of Parthian decadence, however) in a number of texts from the Augustan era and later. Velleius' report of Gaius' meeting with Phraataces terms it an encounter between *duo inter se eminentissima imperiorum et hominum...capita* (2.101.2) while Strabo, summarising recent Parthian history, notes that the Parthians have extended their dominions to such an extent ὥστε ἀντίπαλοι τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις τρόπον τινὰ γεγόνασι κατὰ μέγεθος τῆς ἀρχῆς (11.9.2; cf. 11.6.4). Then the account of the Parthians in Justin's epitome of Trogus begins by informing readers that *Parthi, penes quos uelut divisione orbis cum Romanis facta nunc*

⁵ See Campbell (1993) 220-8 on the Augustan era, and 229-34 on the rest of the century (see pp. 9 above, for studies of the Parthians in the later books, and 267-9 below).

⁶ Rich (1998), Schneider (1998) 97-9 and Lerouge (2007) 105-10 and 115-18, though cf. Schneider (2007).

⁷ Sonnabend (1986) 200-21; Rahim Shayegan (2004) 290-2 suggests that the mock Battle of Salamis of 2 BC (Dio 55.10.7) represented the replacement of the Alexander-esque motif of world conquest with the idea of 'containment', with Romans as Athenians and Parthians as Persians. See too Rawson (1975) 150.

Orientis imperium est, Scytharum exules fuere (41.1.1). Later, Pliny the Elder's geographical overview of the east refers to *duo imperia summa Romanorum Parthorumque* (NH 5.88; cf. Jos., AJ 18.46), and attention has been drawn to a number of episodes in the later books of the *Annals* itself.⁸

Now, these views do not suggest that a monolithic vision of Roman-Parthian 'equality' prevailed, and in any case each needs to be seen in its textual context.⁹ Still, the passages appear to assume that readers will be familiar with the idea to which they refer, and do not presuppose disagreement. So it seems reasonable to conclude that over the course of the first century AD a correspondence between the Roman and Parthian empires was perceived by at least some authors: in an era in which Roman-Parthian relations were marked by a kind of diplomatic equilibrium, it seems to have been felt that Rome and Parthia were separate but comparable entities. That equilibrium endured until 113, when Trajan annexed Armenia and allowed the death of Parthamasiris, whom the Parthians had nominated as Armenian king, in dubious circumstances. He continued into Mesopotamia, captured Ctesiphon and reached the Persian Gulf before revolts in his wake drew him back; coin issues marking submissive Parthians, however, suggest that back in Rome his successes were celebrated with an aggressive pride.¹⁰ He died at Selinus in 117.¹¹ After Trajan's death, Hadrian undertook a retrenchment, re-establishing the Euphrates' status as a boundary.

As will be shown in due course, the chronological relationship between Trajan's campaigns and the *Annals*' production cannot be determined exactly, but it is significant

⁸ 12.10.2, 13.37.4, 15.13.2: see Lerouge (2007) 144-5. Schneider (2007) 82 n. 40 also cites *alio ex orbe* at 2.2.2; cf. too n. 16 below). Each instance is focalised to characters with a partisan perspective but does seem to draw on a pre-existing idea. cf. Syme (1958b) 494. See also Lerouge's suggestion (307) that Tacitus' contention at *Ger.* 37.3 that *Germanorum libertas* is more threatening than *regnum Arsacis* was necessary as the Parthians were then considered Rome's main rivals (and p. 277 below).

⁹ Brunt (1990b) 458 suggests that Trogus' text reflects his epitomator Justin's views here (for the relationship between them see Levene (2010) 295-7). Lerouge (2007) 120-2 considers the possible motives of Strabo, Trogus and Velleius in these passages.

¹⁰ See Strack (1931) 219-25, Schneider (1998) 100-2 and Landskron (2005) 117-20

¹¹ Lepper (1948), Lightfoot (1990) and Campbell (1993) 234-5 discuss the campaigns.

that the Tiberian books seem to suggest that a cautious approach to Parthia may be desirable. Moreover, later in the hexad the idea that Rome and Parthia are in some way equivalent will recur, but with a twist.

b. Parthia and Armenia, Mirrors of Roman History: 2.1-2, 3-4

i) Parthia: *alio ex orbe* (2.2.2)?

The ostensible purpose of Tacitus' summaries of recent events in Parthia and Armenia at 2.1-2 and 3-4 is to account for Germanicus' recall from Germany (*Tiberio haud ingratum accidit turbari res Orientis, ut ea specie Germanicum suetis legionibus abstraheret novisque provinciis impositum dolo simul et casibus obiectaret*, 2.5.1). Nevertheless, the matters worthy of his attention are summarised anew at 2.41.5-42.1 and his departure is reported only at 2.53.1.¹² The survey has also been seen as highlighting the failures of Augustan foreign policy and heralding a pervasive theme in the *Annals*, Roman failure to deploy client kings properly.¹³ This is plausible, but these dense passages seem to have a broader resonance as well: they introduce the question of historical Roman successes and failures in the east which prepares readers both for events in the book to come and the potential Trajanic overtones of the narrative. They also suggest a subtle connection between Rome and Parthia and contain critical echoes of Rome that reflect several of the hexad's key themes.

¹² Koestermann (1963) 264 *ad* 2.5.1 also notes the doublet with 2.42.1, *amoliri iuvenem specie honoris statuit*.

¹³ See Gowing (1990) 317-20 esp. 319 (cf. Tylawsky (2002) 254-5). Is Tacitus also countering the *RG*'s account of why Parthian hostages were sent to Rome? cf. Haverfield (1912) 197-9, Urban (1979) and n. 4 above.

First, the Parthians. Tacitus reports how they rejected their new monarch Vonones. He had been sent to Rome as a hostage by his father Phraates, *haud perinde nostri metu quam fidei popularium diffisus*, despite his own victories over *exercitus ducesque Romanos* (2.1.2; cf. p. 80 above). Vonones was eventually summoned back after Phraates' death had led to *internas caedes*. At first, *accepere barbari laetantes, ut ferme ad nova imperia* (2.2.1), but then criticism began: *degeneravisse Parthos; petitum alio ex orbe regem, hostium artibus infectum...ubi illam gloriam trucidantium Crassum, exturbantium Antonium, si mancipium Caesaris, tot per annos servitutem perpessum, Parthis imperitet?* (2.2.2).

Chapter 1 showed that later in Book 2 the Germans, having defeated the Roman threat, begin to fight each other. Here, at the beginning of that book and in smaller compass, the Parthians experience that same sequence of external success followed by internal conflict, triggered by the elimination of *metus hostilis*.¹⁴ Moreover, the discord of Phraates' reign flares up again after his death, and is only resolved by the accession of another king. The idea of domestic turmoil, interspersed with autocratic rule and resolved by one individual's rise to power, is familiar to readers of the *Annals*, not least from the seminal survey of the republican civil wars at 1.1.1.¹⁵ A parallelism between Rome and Parthia as troubled monarchies is therefore suggested: this may reflect the pre-existing historiographical trope discussed above, but the specific points of resemblance draw attention to Roman imperial themes of civil war and autocracy. The resultant link between Vonones and Augustus is hardly flattering to the latter and although the Parthians are not free, unlike the Germans, at least they do not decline from freedom to autocracy as the Romans do. Then the Parthians' response to their new king reverses

¹⁴ 2.1.2 denies that Phraates felt *nostri metus*: cf. how the Germans are said to be *vacui externo metu* at 2.44.2. cf. pp. 271-3 below for the recurrence of civil war and a lack of *metus hostilis* in Parthia in Book 6.

¹⁵ See also pp. 147-50 below on 3.28.2-3. With the barbarians' initial joy at their *novum imperium* cf. how Augustus *militem donis, populum annona, cunctos dulcedine otii pellexit* (1.2.1): note the generalising *ut ferme* (2.2.1).

eastern stereotypes and further characterises the Roman principate. Their view that the accession of a king who is *alio ex orbe* (2.2.2) signifies their decline looks like an eloquent judgement on Rome, and an alarming reversal of the republican *topos* that contact with the east corrupts,¹⁶ especially since they go on to mention Parthian successes against Roman armies. Their very opposition to Vonones, however, contrasts with Roman acceptance of Augustus.

Furthermore, the Parthians are outraged to be ruled by a *mancipium Caesaris* who has endured lengthy *servitus* in Rome (2.2.2). *mancipium* recurs in Tacitus' oeuvre as a term with rhetorical or metaphorical application for particular foreign subordinates of Rome.¹⁷ Accordingly, its use of an individual supposedly honoured by Rome, who is said to have in fact been 'enslaved', looks forward to the end of Book 2, where the principate is characterised via Arminius' obituary as a kind of *regnum* that does not harbour *libertas* (see pp. 70-3 above).¹⁸ Tacitus then adds that the Parthians' resentment of Vonones was greater because he was *diversus a maiorum institutis, raro venatu, segni equorum cura* (2.2.3); he also rode in a litter and disdained traditional banquets, while his Greek retinue and excessive domestic thrift drew derision.¹⁹ Moreover, other seemingly more positive attributes were also scorned: *prompti aditus, obvia comitas...* (2.2.4). The paradoxical idea that Rome is now a corrupting force in the east continues, but the Parthians now seem to lament current events from a consciously archaising viewpoint,²⁰ insisting on *maiorum instituta* in a way that makes them sound like old-fashioned Romans.²¹

¹⁶ See e.g. Plb. 31.25.2-7 (cf. *BJ* 8.1 on Jugurtha's corruption by Rome, discussed at pp. 20-1 above).

Sonnabend (1986) 219-20 considers *alio ex orbe* in the context of Augustan attitudes; cf. pp. 81-2 above.

¹⁷ *Agr.* 31.2; *H.* 4.14.2; *A.* 14.31.1 and 15.1.3; cf. *H.* 2.57.2. See Lavan (2013) 73-123.

¹⁸ *servitus* is regularly used in Tacitus to describe Rome rule over others (see Gerber and Greef 1480-1). It is applied, not always by the narrator, to the principate (sometimes under a specific *princeps*) at *Agr.* 2.3, 3.3; *H.* 2.76.2; *A.* 1.46.3 and, with reference to the senate, 3.65.3. cf. Andrade (2012) 460-2.

¹⁹ The stress here on the Parthians' robust values is not consistently maintained in the text (though cf. 6.43.2), but it seems to draw on the hard 'Scythian' strand, which apparently co-existed with a soft 'Persian' strand, in the Graeco-Roman tradition about them (see Lerouge (2007) 173-272, 303-5).

²⁰ cf. O'Gorman (1993) 147-9 on Romans as 'easterners' and foreigners as 'early Romans'. The Parthians say they have *degeneravisse* (2.2.2; see indeed Asheri et al. (2007) 150-1 *ad Hdt.* 1.99.1 on the

So the Parthians, who within two chapters have mirrored Roman history directly, shown a livelier response to their new ruler than the Romans did to the principate, and been scathing about the actual effects of Roman influence, now seem to be almost more Roman than the Romans themselves. But Tacitus then suggests they may not be competent critics at all, noting that *ignotae Parthis virtutes, nova vitia* (2.2.4),²² and *quia ipsorum moribus aliena, perinde odium pravis et honestis* (2.2.4). Nevertheless, the Parthians' response to Vonones' Roman links and indeed the subtler negative points about Rome made at 2.1-2 echo themes raised elsewhere in the hexad: it seems unlikely that they are simply negated here. This rather odd coda may be a reminder of Parthia's distance and difference. It will be a critical mirror and model for the principate rather than a literal counterpart of Rome, and Chapter 5 will show that the longer Parthian narrative in Book 6 offers a similar mixture of continuities and contrasts. But does the Parthians' hostile incomprehension of alien habits reflect back on Rome too? At this stage in Book 2 the Romans are proving unable to conquer the Germans on their own terrain; as the hexad advances, their inability to understand others and rule them well will become more apparent.

longstanding eastern practice of royal inaccessibility, which Vonones does not follow) but this seems ironically appropriate to Rome too, recalling Maternus' words about republican *libertas* at *Dial.* 27.3 (cf. too *Ger.* 42.1 and 45.6).

²¹ Tiberius is said at 4.58.1 to have kept Greek companions (see e.g. Pliny, *NH* 29.7.14 and Plut., *Cato Maior* 23.1 on Cato's dislike of Greeks, and cf. Walser (1951) 73-4), but more clearly the reference to *comitas* echoes Germanicus' characterisation at 1.33.2. See n. 32 of Chapter 1 on that quality as very much an imperial virtue.

²² The syntax of *novae Parthis virtutes...* is ambiguous: does it refer to *prompti aditus...* or is it a more general remark? The former seems more likely: see Koestermann (1963) 261 *ad loc.* and Woodman (2004) 42, and n. 20 above on how remoteness was a traditional attribute of monarchs in the east.

ii) Another Eastern Kingdom: Armenia

The unpopular Vonones is challenged by the Arsacid Artabanus.²³ After an initial defeat the latter *reparat vires regnoque potitur* (2.3.1),²⁴ and Vonones flees to Armenia. This triggers a survey of recent Armenian history. The kingdom is said to have been *inter...Parthorum et Romanas opes infida ob scelus Antonii* (2.3.1);²⁵ Antony's betrayal of king Artavasdes meant that his son Artaxias was hostile to Rome, but on his death Tigranes was selected by Augustus and installed by Tiberius (2.3.2). When his reign proved short Augustus attempted to introduce new rulers – another Artavasdes and then Ariobarzanes, who was chosen by Gaius Caesar (2.4.1) – but further turmoil resulted and eventually Vonones became king (2.4.2). When Artabanus continued to pose a threat, however, the Roman governor of Syria withdrew Vonones into safe custody, *manente luxu et regio nomine* (2.4.3), and Tacitus ends the overview with a forward reference to the sequel to this (cf. p. 91 below). Like 2.1-2, 2.3-4 serves as a mirror of Rome, but now that the bare nature of the principate has been sketched in the Parthian passage, the next two chapters illuminate aspects of the regime in more detail.

Artaxias, son of the king deceived by Antony,²⁶ is said to have died *per dolum propinquorum* (2.3.2); this verbally foreshadows Arminius' death at 2.88.2, which in turn echoes a prevalent interpretation of Germanicus' demise at 2.72.2 (see pp. 114-15 below). Later in Book 2 Germanicus will be linked to several imperial predecessors and successors; here, this nexus of connections highlights how the rumour about him echoes

²³ Gowing (1990) 318-9 shows that Tacitus obscures how Vonones ruled successfully for some time (and does not attribute the Parthian reaction to stereotypical fickleness, unlike Jos. *AJ* 18.46-7); cf. Allen (2006) 228-9.

²⁴ If Rome is 'like' Parthia, does *regno... potitur* suggest that the principate is a *regnum*? See further pp. 70-3 and 264-6. The phrase echoes *rerum potiri*, recurrently used in the *Annals* of Roman imperial rule and in particular an emperor recently come to power (see e.g. 1.5.4, 33.2; 4.71.1; 6.11.2 with Syme (1958b) 412).

²⁵ This attribution of blame to Antony is 'most implausibl[e]' (Goodyear (1981) 194 *ad loc.*).

²⁶ cf. too the deaths of the younger Drusus (4.3.2-5, 8.1-3) and Britannicus (13.15.3-5).

the involvement or alleged involvement of *propinqui* in the death of nearly every emperor in the *Annals* (Augustus: 1.5.1, 4; Tiberius: 6.50.5; Caligula: cf. Suet., *Cal.* 58; Claudius: 12.67, and see *dolo intellecto* at 12.66.2; Nero is different, but note the Pisonian conspiracy, described at 15.48-71).²⁷ Ariobarzanes is favoured for his *insignem corporis formam et praeclarum animum* (2.4.1), just like Germanicus, whose *decor* is praised along with less tangible attributes at 2.13.1 (cf. 1.33.2), but the Armenians subsequently *haud toleravere* Ariobarzanes' children (2.4.2). This sharply prefigures how Germanicus' descendants Caligula and Nero will fare as emperors.²⁸ Caligula's current popularity has already been noted at 1.41.2, and admiration of Germanicus is now at its height.

The Armenians' story, however, also seems to characterise Rome more broadly. Like the Parthians, they experience civil war that is resolved by a ruler's accession, but this time the emphasis is not so much on the process – there is no sense of the role of *metus hostilis* – as the frequency with which such strife occurs. Instead of echoing the principate's foundational moment, they illuminate its earlier origins and its subsequent trajectory. After Artaxias comes a series of kings who follow each other in quick succession, with conflict intervening in several cases. The sequence begins with Tigranes: *nec Tigrani diuturnum imperium fuit neque liberis eius* (2.3.2).

This survey echoes in both form and content the survey of historical change in Rome over time with which Book 1 of the *Annals* opens (1.1.1): in the detail just quoted there seems to be a reminiscence of *neque decemviralis potestas...neque tribunorum militum consulare ius diu valuit* (1.1.1).²⁹ Armenian history replays the chaotic late republican era in particular, stressing the ingrained Roman inclination towards civil war

²⁷ He was *memoria patris nobis infensus* (2.3.2), which may also recall Augustus' real or feigned *pietas erga parentem* (1.9.3, 10.1). Julius Caesar was indeed another victim of a *dolus propinquorum*.

²⁸ Ariobarzanes' death is *fortuita* (2.4.2): as Germanicus' ultimately seems to be (see 3.14.1-2). See also pp. 244-6 below on how the imperial family's future deterioration is foreshadowed at the end of the first hexad.

²⁹ cf. too *non Cinnae, non Sullae longa dominatio* (1.1.1). Goodyear (1972) 92 ad 1.1.1 notes that *neque...neque* is common in the Tiberian hexad but this verbal parallel is surely supported by the thematic ones. For a detailed analysis of 1.1 see Witte (1963) 3-14, especially 14 n.1.

and characterising a period that is repeatedly evoked in the Tiberian books (see especially Chapter 3). As in Parthia, Vonones takes the role of the first *princeps*: the Armenians, left *incerti solutique et magis sine domino quam in libertate* (2.4.2), accept him as their new king. The confusion suggested by *incerti solutique* matches the earlier statement that Augustus took control when everything was *discordiis civilibus fessa* (1.1.1);³⁰ the Armenians' condition *sine domino* recalls the *dominationes* mentioned in the opening lines of the *Annals*.

Vonones' new position as *dominus* would hint that the principate as an institution can also be characterised as a *dominatio*, but the idea of being *magis sine domino quam in libertate* can also be applied to key flashpoints of Roman imperial history beyond Augustus.³¹ After Caligula's assassination in 41, attempts to 'restore the republic' were briefly made, but it proved impossible to reclaim the *libertas* certain senators sought and Claudius soon became emperor. Nero's death in 68 was followed by civil war but no regime change appears to have been attempted.³² So the Armenians' characterisation makes them look like Romans not only of the late republic, but also of the first century AD. These oblique reflections of Roman history stress the prevalence of civil conflict in Rome's past, and how it led up to the principate, but they also focus attention on the theme of 'civil war within the principate' by evoking troubled points within post-republican history.

The Armenians, then, resemble the Romans in a rather different way from the Parthians. Parthia and Rome seemed to have followed similar historical courses, and this parallelism highlighted suggestive differences that characterised the principate in various

³⁰ See *cuncta...nomine principis sub imperium accepit* (1.1.1) and *profugum Vononem in regnum accipiunt* (2.4.2): Augustus' active acceptance of power is undercut by the Armenians' weary submission.

³¹ cf. *subsidia dominationi*, 1.3.1, and Benario (1964) esp. 103-6. cf. also Hartog (1988) 324 on 'barbarians' (Egyptians and Asians) in Herodotus being unable to live without kings; see n. 63 of Chapter 5.

³² For a discussion of what happened in 41 (and 68) see Low (forthcoming); cf. pp. 280-2 below.

negative ways. The Armenians, meanwhile, do not look so directly like Rome, but several aspects of their recent history illuminate aspects of republican and imperial history, and look forward to the events later in the *Annals*. In each case the correspondence only lasts for two chapters – at which point Vonones ceases to be ruler, unlike his ‘counterpart’ Augustus – but it has set the tone for the narrative to come.

iii) The *species* of the Principate

The surveys of Parthian and Armenian history are also differentiated by the fact that Rome is said to have played a much greater role in the latter, not least via Augustus’ attempts to install Armenian kings. These meet with little success: Augustan foreign policy in this area looks rather misguided.³³ This conclusion may echo Rome’s other difficulties with foreigners in the hexad and indeed Tiberius’ successors’ problematic interventions in Parthia (pp. 267-70 below), but it also contrasts with Germanicus’ actions later in Book 2, when the Armenian narrative broken off at 2.4.3 is picked up and he oversees the accession of the eminently suitable Zeno as king (2.56.2-3). In the east, at any rate, Germanicus shows good judgement with dealing with non-Romans. His actions are distinctively unlike Trajan’s treatment of a candidate for the Armenian throne in 113. This divergence will be analysed further below, but it is worth noting now that Tacitus ends his Armenian survey by reporting Artabanus’ continued pressure on Vonones and Silanus’ removal of the latter from Armenia: *si nos <tr>a vi defenderetur, bellum adversus Parthos sumendum erat* (2.4.3). The implication seems to be that direct war between Rome and Parthia is not to be countenanced, at least under Tiberius. The echoes

³³ cf. n. 13 above.

of Trajan in Germanicus may focus attention on what happens when a subsequent emperor takes a different approach.

The first reported Roman involvement in Armenia, however, is not Augustus' diplomatic manoeuvring but Antony's treatment of Artavasdes, whom *specie amicitiae inlectum, dein catenis oneratum, postremo interfecerat* (2.3.1).³⁴ Within Book 2 this exploitation of an eastern ruler has been compared to Germanicus' later removal of Vonones from Syria to Cilicia, which was a response *non modo precibus Artabani, sed contumeliae Pisonis* (2.58.2; the Parthian will die in dubious circumstances at 2.68).³⁵ This parallel heralds the associations that Germanicus' journey into the east will trigger, but Antony is not the only individual to whom Germanicus will be linked. He evokes a whole series of historical figures from the late republican past onwards; the *species amicitiae* Antony offered Artavasdes here fulfils a similar function on a smaller scale.

The phrase *species amicitiae* has already been used in the report of critical opinions about Augustus in the *Annals'* opening chapters: *sed Pompeium imagine pacis, sed Lepidum specie amicitiae deceptos* (1.10.3; see too the further mention of *Antonium...inlectum*). Then, shortly after referring to Antony's actions, Tacitus explains that Tiberius was not displeased by the unsettled eastern situation as he would be able to recall Germanicus *ea specie* (2.5.1), and later reference will be made to the latter's summons *specie honoris* (2.42.1). This is in accordance with Tiberius' presentation as an adherent of *dissimulatio*,³⁶ but the proximate verbal parallel is striking. These echoes play down Antony's role as the defeated party at Actium, hinting at points of contact between

³⁴ Citing Artavasdes' own treachery (Dio 49.25.5) would detract from his 'victim' status spoiling the paradigm established here; or is Tacitus following 'Augustan propaganda' (Goodyear (1981) 194 *ad loc.*)?

³⁵ Gowing (1990) 326 n. 39; there is also Vonones' detention *manente luxu et regio nomine* (2.4.3) at the hands of Germanicus' associate (2.43.2) Creticus Silanus. Rutledge (1998) 150 suggests that Trajan's treatment of Parthamasiris could also be seen reflected here: see pp. 103-4 below.

³⁶ See n. 25 of Chapter 1: on 2.5.1 and 42.1 see n. 12 above.

him and the victorious dynasty, and this idea will soon recur.³⁷ But it also draws attention to a progression: Antony deceived a foreign king, Augustus tricked fellow Romans and Tiberius deceived a member of his own family.³⁸ By comparison Antony comes out reasonably well, while the actions of Augustus and Tiberius indicate the violence and deception at the heart of the principate. This will become even more apparent as the Tiberian books advance, and lesser figures employ a *species amicitiae* in very dark contexts (Sejanus' associates with Agrippina at 4.54.1, and Latinius Latiaris with Titius Sabinus at 4.68.4). By contrast, when the Parthian king Artabanus acts against the disloyal Abdus *specie amicitiae* at 6.32.2, the latter is a comparatively deserving victim (see p. 261 below). Once again, events in the east suggest what is wrong in Rome.

c. Germanicus goes East: 2.53-61, 69-81

i) A Journey through Space and Time

Like the mutiny narratives in *Annals* 1, Germanicus' voyage to the east in Book 2 begins with a threatened conflict between Romans. His behaviour is again unimpeachable and the threat is not realised; however, the account of his travels concludes – after his death – with a brief but apparently real civil war. The initial encounter between him and Piso is reminiscent of the late republican wars from which the principate emerged, but what happens at the end of Book 2 looks more to the strife of 69. As in Book 1, the

³⁷ It may also hint that, to foreigners, all Romans look similar: cf. 1.2.2 and Williams (2009) 127.

³⁸ For the idea that Roman deception of others was acceptable but not the reverse, see Wheeler (1988) 16 and cf. Ash (2006) 361. Indeed, there is no direct criticism for Rhescuporis' entrapment, sanctioned by Tiberius, at 2.67.1 (see Koestermann (1963) 262 *ad* 2.3.1 and note *specie honoris*) but see pp. 201-4 below for the wider context. Agricola also receives an Irish prince *specie amicitiae* (*Agr.* 24.3). Unsurprisingly there is no hint of disapproval, but does this suggest such action was acceptable abroad?

continued potential for civil war harboured in the principate is illustrated, and the end of the dynasty prefigured.

The events described between these two episodes, however, link Germanicus to various figures who span the period from the republican past to Tacitus' own era. In voyaging from Italy to the east, via various key sites including Athens and Egypt, Germanicus is reminiscent of Mark Antony (cf. Plut., *Ant.* 23-4 for such a journey; specific points of contact will be discussed below). This suggests why others may consider him a potential source of dissent. This connection to Antony must also, however, be considered alongside Germanicus' travels' resemblance to the actions of a range of individuals in the east: Augustus, Caesar and other leading Romans of the late republic and early principate.³⁹ The series of overlapping links suggests that late republican and imperial history can be seen as a continuum, especially as the pre-imperial figures who feature are hardly 'typical' republicans. The resulting sense that two historical periods that are apparently sharply demarcated have much in common heralds how the late republic's particular relevance to the principate will become clear in the central books of the hexad (see Chapter 3).

Links to Alexander the Great are also made in Germanicus' portrayal. These may reflect his own propensities,⁴⁰ but seem more to highlight the overarching links between key Roman individuals. They also suggest the 'presence' in the narrative of another figure: Trajan. This contemporary aspect is heightened when Germanicus reaches Armenia and displays a more judicious approach to foreign policy in the region than Trajan. All these identifications seem to come together when Germanicus reaches Egypt:

³⁹ cf. Malissard (1990) 334, Spencer (2002) 191 and Kraus (2009) 110. cf. also n. 37 above: the foreign context may create a perspective that underplays differences between the various Romans who have been in the east.

⁴⁰ Like other leading Romans, Germanicus may well have sought to emulate Alexander: see e.g. Aalders (1961), Goodyear (1981) 372-6 *ad* 2.59.1 and Santoro L'hoir (2006) 203, as well as n. 60 below. But Tacitus does not stress this, and the theme serves more to maintain his association with other figures: cf. Spencer (2002) 192.

his status as a tourist recalls those Romans who went before him, not least Antony. But his actions also look ahead, as his sojourn in Egypt also seems to prefigure the civil wars of 69, for that threat to the principate is never far away. Moreover, the Egyptian episode also encourages further reflection about Trajan, and one passage seems to be making a point about the inadvisability of taking on Parthia.

Germanicus' death in Antioch at the end of his eastern journey may indeed be a 'warning' that has some relevance for Trajan. Within his obituary the Alexander-esque elements in his portrayal recur, suggesting how he is and yet is not like Trajan, but also they also set the seal on the way in which his travels evoke a series of proto-imperial and imperial figures. Nevertheless, this continuity is offset by the civil war waged by Gnaeus Piso once Germanicus is dead. Unlike the forestalled hostilities between the two men with which the eastern narrative began, this conflict sets the tone for the civil war within the Tiberian principate to come, and once again looks ahead to what will happen in 69.

There has been speculation about whether Germanicus actually tried to mount a challenge against Tiberius when he was in the east, to what extent Piso may have been intended to act as a restraining force on him, and how the account of Piso's trial at 3.12-19 may be related to events in Book 2. The discovery of the *senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre* has of course provided an important new perspective on these last two questions.⁴¹ But as in Chapter 1, the focus will be on how Tacitus chose to construct his narrative. The evidence for what may really have happened is inconclusive and there is nothing in the text that proves Germanicus' actual intentions were treasonous. Similarly, there is no way of determining if and how he consciously chose to emulate the Romans who had preceded him in the eastern Mediterranean and to whom Tacitus links his

⁴¹ Koestermann (1958) and McCulloch (1984) 83-90 discuss the possibility that Germanicus' intentions were not innocent; for the *SCPP* see Damon (1999) and Talbert (1999).

actions.⁴² Indeed, the text rarely enunciates explicitly how his actions echo those of his predecessors and successors; in this respect, it is highly allusive. So, in order to form a coherent reading, this analysis will draw on other information from sources of which it seems likely that Tacitus and his audience were aware.⁴³

The following discussion will analyse the narrative that describes Germanicus' voyage, his eventual death and its aftermath; the text is so dense that it seems best to offer a short summary of each section before proceeding to more detailed comments. Broad and probably unanswerable questions about why Germanicus took this route and why Tacitus chose to single out various details will not be broached directly;⁴⁴ instead, it will be shown how the accretion of detail and allusion contributes to Germanicus' polyvalent status.

ii) Greece, the Black Sea and Asia Minor: 2.53-5

Germanicus' travels begin when, after a visit to Drusus in Dalmatia, he takes up his consulship for AD 18, with Tiberius as colleague, at Nicopolis (2.53.1). Next he proceeds to Actium (2.53.2) and thence to Athens (2.53.3).⁴⁵ Afterwards he makes for Lesbos before venturing up the Dardanelles and into the mouth of the Black Sea, both because of his own antiquarian interests and to settle internal problems in the provinces there (2.54.1). Returning south, he is prevented by the wind from landing at Samothrace

⁴² See also n. 4 of Chapter 1.

⁴³ cf. the central thesis of Gissel (2001), that Germanicus' travels construct a series of implicit allusions to Alexander that readers would have picked up, although cf. n. 40 above.

⁴⁴ Witness the *aporia* of Goodyear (1981) 352-3 *ad* 2.53.1-54.4. Questa (1957) and Koestermann (1958) are general studies that in practice focus on certain strands; see also n. 86 below.

⁴⁵ The practical details of his travels are obscure, but Cicero's overland journey from Actium to Athens to Cilicia offers clues (see Purcell (1984) 74 n. 13; cf. [5].10.3, Casson (1974) 254-6 and Birley (2000) 245-6).

but then goes to Troy (2.54.2). He continues to Colophon and its oracle (2.54.3). Tacitus then describes the visit to Athens of Piso, who has set out after Germanicus (2.55.1-2). They then meet at sea near Rhodes and Germanicus helps Piso when a storm puts his ships at risk (2.55.3), even though the latter is hostile to him. Then, on reaching his province, Syria, Piso is said to have begun winning the favour of his troops (2.55.5-6).

Germanicus' first halt, which permits his assumption of his consulship at Nicopolis, is presumably formal and planned. By contrast, his visit to Actium during a pause to refit his storm-damaged ships, where he views the *sacratas ab Augusto manubias castraque Antonii cum recordatione maiorum suorum* (2.53.2), looks less premeditated and possibly even accidental.⁴⁶ At this prominent moment at the beginning of his voyage he remembers not just Augustus but also the wars he fought to establish his status as creator of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, and the man he defeated. Tacitus underlines the point by recalling his own earlier statement (made at 2.43.5) about Germanicus' *avunculus Augustus, avus Antonius* (2.53.2), and hailing the *magna...imago tristium laetorumque* (ibid.) at Actium.

When Germanicus proceeds from Augustus' foundation Nicopolis (see Dio 51.1.3) to Actium, he seems to move backwards in time, from Augustus' victory in the civil wars to a point at which both antagonists are still equal. Moreover, the spontaneous halt at Actium suggests that he cannot help following in Antony's footsteps. As his voyage goes on, he will display more obvious links to Antony and at times will seem to emulate his grandfather, but the implications of this are complex. The Actian visit is not presented as a mere lament for Antony but as an appreciation of the two strands in

⁴⁶ Gissel (1990) 291; cf. Shannon (2012) 75.

Germanicus' ancestry; the two rivals now have descendants in common.⁴⁷ The current heir to the principate acknowledges his relationship to his grandfather, who now has a place in the new system.⁴⁸ This echoes the presentation at 2.3-4 of Antony's actions in Armenia as a model for (although also a contrast to) the behaviour of other imperial individuals. Antony was implied to be not so much a defeated victim as a foundational figure of the principate, who also foreshadowed its future degeneration.

Indeed, Germanicus embodies the resolution of past oppositions, and the continuities that exist between past and present – but others see him as a threat to political stability. In Book 1 Tiberius feared he might mount the challenge for the throne that his soldiers urged on him, and this possibility recurs as Germanicus' voyage in Book 2 unfolds. The emperor's continuing fears and his alleged wish to expose Germanicus to danger have already been signalled (see pp. 58-9 above on 2.5.1, and cf. p. 83), and his decision to replace Germanicus' friend Creticus Silanus with Gnaeus Piso as governor of Syria is also reported (2.43.2). At this point Tacitus terms Piso *ingenio violentum...insita ferocia a patre Pisone* (ibid.), suggesting that for him the civil wars continue to matter; he has been seen by many scholars as a kind of relic of the republic.⁴⁹ It is then reported that *nec dubium habebat se delectum, qui Syriae imponeretur ad spes Germanici coercendas. credidere quidam data et a Tiberio occulta mandata* (2.43.4).

It is thus established at the outset that Piso believes he is adhering to Tiberius' wishes in aiming to restrain Germanicus, but although the narrative makes clear that Tiberius is not fond of the latter, Tacitus does not fully endorse this belief. Germanicus' Antonian tendencies will cause him to be seen as a threatening figure who has the

⁴⁷ cf. Plut., *Ant.* 87 with the comments of Pelling (1988) 323-5 *ad loc.* Tacitus refers to a *magna...imago tristium laetorumque*, but does not define the *tristia* and *laeta* exactly or suggest that one group prevails over the other. See O'Gorman (2000) 62-5 on the phrase's multiple resonances.

⁴⁸ Note the bland and alliterative *avum M. Antonium, avunculum Augustum* (2.43.5) and then *avunculus Augustus, avus Antonius* (2.53.2): does the differing order imply that it does not matter who is named first?

⁴⁹ McCulloch (1984) 77-8 and Pelling (1993) 83-4. O'Gorman (2006) 291-2 disagrees: see further below.

potential to reignite the civil wars of the late republic by Piso, who appears to be imbued with the values of that earlier era.⁵⁰ But Germanicus is no second Antony. His visit to Egypt – and Tiberius’ reaction – will hint once more at another source of instability within the principate, one which lies in the future rather than the past,⁵¹ and Piso’s efforts to ward off the ‘Antonian’ threat will, paradoxically, illustrate this.

This development starts to become clear when Germanicus reaches Athens where, deigning *ut uno lictore uteretur*, he is enthusiastically received (2.53.3), just as Antony had once enjoyed a relaxed visit there.⁵² Tacitus is silent about this connection and the city’s subsequent lack of favour with Augustus (see Dio 54.7.2-3), which perhaps reflects how Germanicus appears to consider that looking like his grandfather is not a matter for controversy; it is not even clear that his emulation of Antony is deliberate. When Piso reaches the city, however, he criticises his counterpart because *conluviem illam nationum comitate nimia coluisset*, and points out that the Athenians had been *Mithridatis adversus Sullam, Antonii adversus divum Augustum socios* (2.55.1).⁵³ His implication that old antagonisms are still live, and old opponents still worthy of censure, is thus contrasted with Germanicus’ blithe likeness to Antony. Piso seems to imply that the civil war has not in fact ended, and his anti-Athenian stance and anger at the Hellenophile Germanicus even make him come close to resembling a new Augustus who is now continuing hostilities against Antony.

⁵⁰ Kraus (2009) 112 suggests that Germanicus has ‘civil war in his genes’.

⁵¹ cf. the odd mixture of harmony (between Germanicus and Drusus, but also Plancia and Livia) and resentment (Piso of Germanicus, Plancia of Tiberius and his offspring, Livilla of Agrippina) noted at 2.43.3-6.

⁵² See Questa (1957) 298-300 on the possibility that Tacitus may be trying to save Germanicus’ dignity here. On Antony in Athens see App., *BC* 5.76, Plut., *Ant.* 33.7, Geagan (1979) 377-9 and Habicht (1997) 60-5. Trajan also halted there on his way east (Dio 68.17.2): Roman travellers often stopped in Athens on their way east (Birley (2000) 245-6 and n. 45 above), but see also p. 106 below on Trajan.

⁵³ cf. Pelling (1993) 75-6: Piso does not sound entirely unreasonable.

Expectations are raised that an aggressive encounter between the two men will ensue,⁵⁴ but Germanicus' good nature means that he actually assists his colleague at sea: *sed tanta mansuetudine agebat...* (2.55.3).⁵⁵ As during the German mutiny, he turns down an opportunity to engage in a conflict between Romans, and his refusal to respond to Piso's belligerence makes sense after his visits to Actium and Athens. The enmity between Augustus and Antony has been resolved, as he shows in his own person; Actium is over and there are no naval battles left to fight. Piso, however, continues the struggle by another means. He leaves Germanicus trailing (*linquit Germanicum praevenitque*, 2.55.4) and reaches Syria, where he begins to win over his new troops *largitione, ambitu, infimos manipularium iuvando* (2.55.5). There is nothing in the text to prove that this move is inherently self-aggrandising and not a conscientious attempt to curb Germanicus' own influence amongst the soldiers by increasing Piso's own sway. Nevertheless, it evokes less the prospect of further civil war along late-republican lines and more of a proleptic image of the conflicts described in the *Histories*, which have already been anticipated in *Annals* 1.⁵⁶ As the narrative advances, this pattern will be repeated until a real war, which in turn looks forward to 69, breaks out for a short time.

Indeed, Piso's single-mindedness contrasts sharply with Germanicus' meandering route and antiquarian interests. These are made clear when, before Piso has reached Athens, Germanicus heads to Perinthus and Byzantium and then *Propontidis angustias et*

⁵⁴ In a different context, the senate fear *ne consulari obtinente Asiam aemulatio inter pares et ex eo impedimentum oreretur* (2.47.4), which at this point seems briefly to attribute to them a late-republican outlook. cf. Pompey's dispatch to Asia in 66 BC against Mithridates (cf. Cic., *leg. Man.*), and Plut., *Ant.* 23.1 for the grant of the east to Antony himself. See also McCulloch (1984) 83.

⁵⁵ Like the *comitas* to which Piso disparagingly refers at 2.55.1 (see n. 32 of Chapter 1 and n. 21 above), *mansuetudo* seems to have become a key imperial virtue, associated not least with Trajan (see Versnel (1980) 561 and cf. Wallace-Hadrill (1982) 41-4). cf. also p. 123 below.

⁵⁶ His indulgence of his troops, especially the more unscrupulous and suggestible, recalls events at 1.16.2-3 and 1.31.4; cf. the somewhat disingenuous criticism of acting *largitione et ambitu* mentioned at *H.* 1.17.2. cf. how Plancina's co-operation (2.55.6) also echoes 1.69.4, Tiberius' suspicions about Agrippina's 'treasonous' actions in Gaul; it will be implied in Book 3 that the two women acted in a not dissimilar way (see p. 152 below).

os Ponticum...cupidine veteres locos et fama celebratos noscendi (2.54.1). But his voyage is not described only in terms of civil war echoes: at this point his journey starts to evoke more than just the Actian past.⁵⁷ After his northern detour he makes for Asia, *a<ditto I>lio quaeque ibi varietate fortunae et nostri origine veneranda* (2.54.2). His interest in antiquities and *varietas fortunae* will recur in Egypt (see p. 107 below), but the narrative's apparently cursory reference to the historical irony of Troy's fall and Rome's rise,⁵⁸ which evokes a sense of change over time and the relationship of the distant past and the present day, also matches the broadening perspective of his travels.

Germanicus' visit to Troy associates him with other Romans who had made a similar halt, notably Julius Caesar and Augustus, who had also made much of Rome's connections to Troy via the Iulii.⁵⁹ In that it precedes a journey further east it also links him to Alexander, who had been a famous visitor on his way to Persia (Arr. *Anab.* 1.12.1), and whom Caesar and Augustus themselves – and other important figures – had emulated.⁶⁰ Tacitus does not make the point explicit by likening Germanicus himself to Alexander here or imparting any positive or negative qualities to the latter; that will come when others' assessments of Germanicus are cited in his obituary (pp. 124-7 below).⁶¹ Nevertheless, if the echo of Alexander's visit is felt here, it may trigger further recollection of other individuals often juxtaposed with Caesar and Augustus, like Pompey and Mark Antony, who are not recorded as visiting Troy but are nevertheless known for

⁵⁷ Magie (1950) 497-8 and 1356-7 lists epigraphic evidence for Germanicus in this region. See also Vell. 2.101.3 on the author's travels there (*Achaia Asiaque et omnibus ad Orientem provinciis et ore atque utroque maris Pontici latere*), just after the eyewitness report of the meeting between Augustus' grandson Gaius and Phraataces (2.101.1-2). Woodman (1977) 127 *ad loc.* is not convinced that Velleius made this trip with Gaius, but if the latter did go to those places, Germanicus would be echoing him too.

⁵⁸ Goodyear (1981) 357-8 *ad loc.* See also Shannon (2012) 77.

⁵⁹ See Strabo 13.1.27 (who also mentions Sulla's visit; the late-republican connections multiply) and Lucan 9.964-99 for Caesar at Troy, and Rose (1995) 38 for Augustus, with Vermeule (1995). Erskine (2001) 17-30 and 245-53 discusses Rome and Troy in the early empire.

⁶⁰ See Isager (1993) on the Alexander-imitation of Pompey, Caesar, Antony and (after Actium) Augustus, and also Spencer (2002) esp. 165-203; see too Krebs (2006) 127-9 and Vout (2013) 67.

⁶¹ But Germanicus' *cupido* (2.54.1) may echo Alexander's *pothos* (Lehmann (1971) 26 and Gissel (2001) 291).

imitating Alexander.⁶² The indirect evocation of Alexander may also suggest Trajan, who seems to have viewed his Parthian campaigns in an Alexander-esque light.⁶³ For the moment, this is all that he and Germanicus have in common, but soon further aspects to their connection will emerge.

So Germanicus' presence at Troy creates a nexus of memories that continue to stress his dual connection to his ancestors Augustus and Antony but also associate him with other figures in the late republic. This furthers the sense that the differences of the civil wars are no longer meaningful, but it also has important implications for Germanicus' status as a 'would-be' republican, already challenged in the previous chapter (see pp. 72-3). Antony, Augustus, Caesar and Pompey all at least began their careers under the republic, but in their individualism and inclination towards autocracy, embodied in many cases by their operations in the east, none can be seen as indicative of the *libertas* with which Germanicus was hopefully linked at 1.33.2. This aspect of Germanicus' portrayal subverts the divide between the republican past and the imperial present, suggesting that he is part of an autocratic sequence that spans both periods: again, his obituary will confirm this.⁶⁴

The Trojan visit also looks forwards in time. At 12.58.1 the young Nero makes a case for the Ilians to be exempted from taxes, citing Rome's ancient links to Troy *aliaque haud procul fabula ve<te>ra*. Germanicus has been seen as foreshadowing his grandson in other ways, with obvious implications for his supposedly republican credentials, and that association is furthered here: with *ve<te>ra* cf. *veteres locos* (2.54.1).⁶⁵ Moreover, there is an additional resonance to this stage of his travels. On leaving Troy he visits

⁶² Pompey and Mark Antony are strongly associated with the eastern Mediterranean: cf. also n. 54 above.

⁶³ Dio 68.29.1, 30.1; cf. Longden (1931) 29, Lightfoot (1990) 125 and Laederich (2001) 355.

⁶⁴ cf. Flower (2010) esp. 135-53, who challenges the monolithic conception of the 'republic' and suggests that after c. 60 BC republican politics ceased to function, not least because of the activities of powerful individuals. See also Pelling (1993) 79.

⁶⁵ On Germanicus and Nero see McCulloch (1984) 67-71 and Santoro L'hoir (2006) 202. Nero (and Caligula) also indulged in Alexander-imitation (Lehmann (1971) 36 and Isager (1993) 81).

Colophon, where the oracle predicts for him a *maturum exitium*, or *exitum* (2.54.4).⁶⁶

Alexander's famous visit to the oracle of Ammon (Arrian, *Anab.* 3.3-4) may be recollected and this also links Germanicus to Julius Caesar at the temple of Hercules at Cadiz (Suet., *Div. Iul.* 7: he sees a statue of Alexander and then consults the oracle).

Germanicus' halt at Colophon, however, also looks forwards to the *Histories*: to Titus at the oracle of Venus at Paphos (*H.* 2.2.2-4.2) and Vespasian at the oracle of Serapis in Alexandria (*H.* 4.82.1-2; cf. too the latter's visit to Carmel at *H.* 2.78.3-4).⁶⁷ Once again Germanicus is linked to key figures from the civil wars to come. This connection to Vespasian and Titus, one stage further on from his resemblance to the defeated pretenders Otho and Vitellius in Book 1,⁶⁸ suggests there is potential not for a replay of Actium, but rather a premature outbreak of the events of 69. This idea will soon recur, but it is significant now that Germanicus' future – and past – counterparts receive oracles that promise success, while he himself is given ominous news that seems to predict his forthcoming death. His portrayal illustrates the threat to the principate in the east, as also in the north, but in neither case will it come from him personally.

iii) Armenia and Cyrrus: 2.56-8

Piso's attempts to win over his troops (2.55.5-6) give way to an account of Germanicus' activities in Armenia. As was reported at 2.4.2-3, the Armenians now lack a ruler, but the son of the Pontic king Polemo, Zeno, is a popular choice. Germanicus oversees his coronation at Artaxata (2.56.3). Once various provincial reorganisations

⁶⁶ See Goodyear (1981) 360 *ad loc.*

⁶⁷ cf. the formulaic *cupido adeundi* at *H.* 2.2.2 and 4.82.1 with *cupido* at *A.* 2.54.1. See Shannon (2012) 78-9.

⁶⁸ But it is hard to see the losers being incorporated, as Antony was amongst the Julio-Claudians.

have been completed (2.56.4), the focus shifts to the continuing tension between Germanicus and Piso, who meet at Cyrrus (2.57.2). After some unpleasantness Piso takes to avoiding Germanicus but is unsparing in his criticisms of his behaviour at a banquet (2.57.4). Ambassadors from the Parthian king then arrive, asking that Vonones, still in custody (cf. 2.4.2), be removed from Syria (2.58.1). Germanicus arranges this (2.58.2).

The new king Zeno's familiarity with *instituta et cultum Armeniorum* (2.56.2; cf. 2.2.3 on how the Parthian Vonones was *diversus a maiorum institutis*) bodes well, and other sources confirm that his reign was long.⁶⁹ It was suggested above that the favour Germanicus shows to this eminently suitable candidate contrasts with the less successful efforts of earlier Romans, especially Augustus, to impose monarchs on the Armenians. Germanicus is once again linked to his predecessors but, in this respect at least, he seems to surpass them: Augustus' apparent incompetence and Antony's deception (2.3.1) have been succeeded by adept diplomacy. But the chronological sequence does not end here. The notion that Germanicus looks forward to Nero has already been mentioned, and Zeno's installation may well be a foretaste of Nero's coronation of Tiridates in Rome in AD 66.⁷⁰

A comparable but rather different occasion, however, may also be evoked: the beginning of Trajan's Parthian campaigns in 113, and the emperor's denial of the Armenian king Parthamasiris' claims to his throne. Dio describes the Roman reception of the king, the nephew and nominee of the Parthian monarch Osroes; after a show of defiance Parthamasiris came to Trajan's camp, expecting to be crowned and have his position confirmed, but when he removed his diadem the Roman soldiers acclaimed Trajan as *imperator* (68.19.3-5). Parthamasiris was allowed to leave unharmed (68.20.4)

⁶⁹ See Goodyear (1981) 364-5 *ad* 2.56.2 and Gowing (1990) 325-6.

⁷⁰ See Questa (1957) 306, and Dio 63.1.2-7.1 (cf. 15.30.2-31 and 16.23.2). Germanicus does not match all Nero's excesses: the former oversees an eastern coronation in the east, the latter at Rome: see p. 269.

but it seems that subsequently he was killed in dubious circumstances rather similar to Vonones' reported death at 2.68.⁷¹

It has already been suggested that Tacitus' introductory remarks about Parthia and Armenia at 2.1-4 would have put his readership in mind of Trajan's activities in the region around the time of the *Annals*' composition, and that the Alexander-esque overtones of Germanicus' visit to Troy may have called Trajan, amongst others, to mind. The inverted similarity between Germanicus' treatment of Zeno and Trajan's actions towards Parthamasiris, followed by Vonones' suggestive death, herald the emergence of a new interpretative possibility. Germanicus' mission is very different in character from Trajan's eastern campaigns, but it will now be argued that they can be read in parallel.⁷² When Germanicus reaches Egypt the wider implications of this correspondence will become clearer and the related issue of the *Annals*' dating will be considered, but in the meantime Tacitus' account of the winter sojourn in Cyrrus marks a stage in the development of relations between Parthia and Rome in the text, and of Germanicus' multi-faceted role.

He and Piso meet *apud hiberna decimae legionis* (2.57.2): does the military context again evoke the impression that they are opponents in war, as they almost were at 2.55.3? This time, however, the role of Germanicus' *amici accendendis offensionibus callidi* (2.57.2) is emphasised and he proceeds to make a speech *qualem ira et dissimulatio gignit* (2.57.3).⁷³ But he does not take any direct action and the situation

⁷¹ Lepper (1948) 7, and see Rutledge (1998) 149 and Gissel (2001) 292. Although 'death while trying to escape' is hardly an unusual trope, Vonones' death also echoes Rhescuporis', which precedes it (2.67.3; see p. 201 below).

⁷² The idea that Germanicus and Trajan can be linked seems to originate with Michel (1966) 125 (cf. too Borszák (1969) 599), but he sees this as flattering to Trajan. Antony had also led an unsuccessful Parthian campaign: see Plut., *Ant.* 50.1-2 (Artavasdes was apparently key to its failure) and Osgood (2006) 303-5.

⁷³ *dissimulatio* recalls Tiberius (cf. n. 25 of Chapter 1 and note that the latter's *ira et simulatio* on Rhodes – in the east – are mentioned at 1.4.4). Piso and Germanicus meet at the winter quarters of the tenth legion; would Tacitus' readers have recalled that it had been raised by Caesar against the Gauls and, after subsequently fighting for Antony, dishonourably discharged by Augustus for insubordination in 29 BC? See Keppie (1981) 369, Dando-Collins (2002) and Suet. *Div. Aug.* 24.2.

comes to a head at a banquet *apud regem Nabataeorum* (2.57.4):⁷⁴ Germanicus and Agrippina are offered weighty gold crowns, in contrast with the lighter ones received by their entourage, and Piso is fiercely critical, saying that *principis Romani, non Parthi regis filio eas epulas dari....multa in luxum addidit* (ibid.).

One way of reading this criticism is to see it as a further indication of Piso's strong disapproval of Germanicus' resemblance to Antony, against which he is presumably continuing to take measures. Germanicus' actions do seem to echo his grandfather's failure to behave with due Roman dignity in the east: this happened in Athens and will happen again in Egypt.⁷⁵ But the autocratic associations of the banquet prefigure Germanicus' obituary, where he is hailed as an autocrat, as well. In Book 6, moreover, the close resemblance of Rome under Tiberius to an eastern autocracy will be revealed.

Piso's own role as Germanicus' antagonist, however, is presented in rather different terms in the sequel to this scene. An embassy from the Parthian king Artabanus arrives; his representatives, stressing the *amicitiam ac foedus* between Rome and Parthia, propose a renewed agreement. They invite Germanicus *ut ripam Euphratis accederet* (2.58.1). Germanicus greets them politely, speaking *de societate Romanorum Parthorumque magnifice, de adventu regis et cultu sui cum decore ac modestia* (2.58.2),⁷⁶ but does not respond directly to their invitation. The episode ends on a slightly sour note with a belated reference to the fact that Vonones had won over Piso and Plancina with gifts: it is revealed that Piso too has been subject to eastern influences, despite his

⁷⁴ In 106 the kingdom of the Nabataean Arabs was annexed and turned into a Roman province (Dio 68.14.5; see Millar (1993) 92-3). cf. p. 110 below for the possible relevance of this to the *Annals'* dating.

⁷⁵ Is the atmosphere of the donations of Alexandria (Plut., *Ant.* 54.4-9: cf. the golden thrones at 54.6), which Germanicus will soon reach, echoed? Offering such gifts was doubtless good diplomacy (Goodyear (1981) 369-70 *ad loc.*) but, as Andrade (2012) 468 notes, the scene may also recall Caesar's refusal of a crown in 44 BC (Cic., *Phil.* 2.85, 87). Germanicus apparently did not refuse, though Tacitus is not explicit. Rawson (1975), on Roman ambivalence about royalty, is a useful commentary on this episode.

⁷⁶ Again, the proposed meeting looks forwards and backwards within the principate, as Goodyear (1981) 371 *ad loc.* notes: back to Gaius' encounter with Phraataces (Vell. 2.101.1; cf. n. 57 above) and forward to L. Vitellius, sent to meet Artabanus just after Tiberius' death (cf. p. 268 below).

complaints about Germanicus. In turn Germanicus' removal of the deposed king to Cilicia was a means of spiting him and Plancina as well as a courtesy to Artabanus (2.58.2). Unlike in Athens, Piso does not play Augustus to Germanicus' orientalising Antony here. In due course, he will initiate a new kind of conflict between Romans in the east that looks to the future rather than the past.⁷⁷

Nevertheless, this open-ended conclusion to the Parthian narrative strand in *Annals* 2 sets up another potential parallel with Tacitus' time of writing. Germanicus' diplomatic rejoinder to the Parthians contrasts with Trajan's blunt rebuff of an embassy from Osroes while in Athens on his way east (Dio 68.17.2-3). As with Zeno's installation, Germanicus' apparently well-judged manoeuvre shows up what happened in 113. Moreover, his decision not to go to the Euphrates is the inverse of Trajan's crossing of the river on his way to Ctesiphon (Dio 68.28.1-2). Germanicus' diplomacy may once again evoke Trajan's rejection of *societas Romanorum Parthorumque*, and suggest the former's actions may serve as subtle commentary on the latter's campaigns.

iv) Egypt: 2.59-61

The beginning of AD 19 coincides with Germanicus' entry into Egypt *cognoscendae antiquitatis* (2.59.1), although concern for the province is his pretext. His opening of the granaries and generally relaxed behaviour win him popular favour.⁷⁸ Tiberius, however, is displeased, primarily because Germanicus has gone to Egypt without his permission, something against which Augustus had taken measures (2.59.2-

⁷⁷See Andrade (2012) 465-8.

⁷⁸On P Oxy 2435 and P Berol, see Goodyear (1981) 373-6 *ad* 2.59.1, who notes how the former shows Germanicus expressing a desire to emulate Alexander, but cf. n. 60 above for the conventional nature of this.

3). Nevertheless, Germanicus undertakes a tour of sites along the Nile (2.60-1): the remains of Thebes (2.60.2-4) and the inscriptions there that commemorate the extent of Ramses' empire seem to have been especially striking.

Germanicus' desire *cognoscendae antiquitatis* (2.59.1) looks like another manifestation of the historical interests displayed at 2.54.1, just as his subsequent encounter with the remains of the old Egyptian empire at 2.60.3-4 will echo his earlier contemplation of Troy as a symbol of the vicissitudes of fortune over time (2.54.2). But the revelation that this real reason was kept hidden (*cura provinciae praetendebatur*, 2.59.1) strikes an unsettling note, linking him to the worse, dissimulatory aspects of the principate, as happened at 2.57.3 (see p. 104 above).⁷⁹ Then Tacitus notes that Germanicus *multa...in vulgus grata usurpavit* by lowering grain prices (2.59.1). The causal subjunctive of *favorem militum quaesivisset* (1.52.1; see p. 44 above) that gave Tiberius' reasons for suspecting Germanicus has been replaced by an authorial indicative reporting the consequences of the latter's action. In enabling the distribution of cheap grain he may look like a populist politician from the last years of the republic, but grain shortages and consequent discontent occurred under the principate too, and they feature in the Tiberian books on several occasions.⁸⁰

The reference to Germanicus' ostentatiously 'off-duty' behaviour, said to have been adopted *P. Scipionis aemulatione* (who had done the same in Sicily *flagrante adhuc Poenorum bello*, 2.59.1), also generates complex associations that mingle the past with the present. Scipio is of course no simple republican hero, and the echoes of his speech at

⁷⁹ See nn. 25 of Chapter 1 and 73 above, and cf. *Suebi praetendebantur* (2.44.2) for a similar – not damning, but disquieting, and note the (?) exculpating passive – act of pretence. Suetonius (*Tib.* 52.2) mentions only the motive of relieving famine (see Goodyear (1981) 372-3 *ad loc.*). Shannon (2012) 79-80 discusses Germanicus' ineptness in concealing an apolitical motive with a political one.

⁸⁰ See pp. 157 and 249. Garnsey (1988) 198-224 discusses late republican and early imperial grain provision.

Livy 28.27-9 in Germanicus' address to his troops during the German mutiny, at 1.42-3, have been read as implying continuities between Scipio and future commanders like Caesar and Augustus.⁸¹ Germanicus' actions draw together proto-imperial figures from the past, as does the fact that once more he looks rather like Mark Antony here. The Egyptian, in particular the Alexandrian, setting and the casual bearing he adopts during his visit are both clearly paralleled by events in Antony's story.⁸² Again, Germanicus seems to assume that the antagonism of the civil wars no longer matters: there is nothing that suggests that this stance is provocative or even deliberate. Nevertheless, Tacitus reports that Tiberius was mildly irked by reports of Germanicus' informal bearing but greatly disturbed *quod contra instituta Augusti non sponte principis Alexandriam introisset* (2.59.2); Augustus is said to have stipulated this *ne fame urgeret Italiam, quisquis eam provinciam claustraque terrae ac maris...insedisset* (2.59.3).

The stress on these rules about entering Egypt are a reminder of who won the civil wars and hence the right to make them: Germanicus' apparent emulation of Antony is confirmed to pose no threat. But Antony is not mentioned by name here. This may well be because an obvious extrapolation can be made from the suggestive details about Germanicus' behaviour, but the hiatus leaves the passage open to additional interpretations,⁸³ and Tacitus' own *Histories* show how Alexandria was a key location during the civil wars of 69. While Vitellius reigned in Rome, Vespasian was proclaimed emperor in Alexandria in July of that year (*H.* 2.79), and he is later said to have envisaged

⁸¹ See Hardie (2010) 15-17, *pace* Pelling (1993) 74 and Kelly (2010) 223-4.

⁸² Questa (1957) 309 and Spencer (2002) 191. See Plut., *Ant.* 28-9 and App., *BC* 5.11. Like Athens, Alexandria was visited by Augustus after the civil wars (see Suet., *Div. Aug.* 17.4-18.1 and Dio 51.16.3-5), but the Antonian association dominates. App., *BC* 5.76 links Antony's actions in Athens and Alexandria.

⁸³ Gissel (2001) 293-4 notes that Alexandria is named as Germanicus' destination only at this belated point: does this foreground its more general association with Roman conflicts? See too App., *BC* 2.89 on the ulterior purpose (the conquest of Egypt) of Caesar's sojourn in Alexandria, and the troubling, more recent precedent set by Cornelius Gallus in Egypt (Dio 53.23.5-7).

blockading Rome from there, *ut fracto Vitellii exercitu Urbem quoque externae opis indigam fame urgeret* (*H.* 3.48.3; *fame urgeret* recurs at *A.* 2.59.3).⁸⁴

So, just as in the mutinies in Book 1, Tiberius seems to possess foreknowledge of the chaos that will ensue when the Julio-Claudian dynasty comes to an end. Germanicus' presence in Alexandria presages a future scenario, but also a nightmare that could come true in the present. Once again, though, the emperor's fears are mistimed: there is no indication that Germanicus poses a real threat on either occasion. This time, moreover, there is a twist. While these events are going on in Egypt, Piso, who believes he is doing Tiberius' bidding and who seems convinced that Germanicus is dangerous because he resembles Mark Antony, is presumably continuing to curry favour with his troops. At the end of Book 2 Piso's efforts will culminate in hostilities that make it look as if the wars of 69 are indeed beginning early.⁸⁵

Once this theme of future conflict has been evoked, however, it gives way to an account of the Nile cruise undertaken by the oblivious Germanicus.⁸⁶ This echoes Julius Caesar's progress along the river with Cleopatra: again, a key Roman figure's visits to the east and Egypt in particular are recalled.⁸⁷ But the main focus of this section is not on the journey itself but rather on Germanicus' halt at *veterum Thebarum magna vestigia* (2.60.2) and the inscriptions in *litterae Aegyptiae* that he views there (2.60.3). A priest explains that these set out the forces once under Ramses' sway, the extent of his

⁸⁴ See Henrichs (1968) esp. 51-4 on Vespasian in Alexandria. His visit to the oracle of Serapis there has already linked him to Germanicus – see p. 102 above – and note how his visit to the oracle at Carmel at *H.* 2.78.3-4 directly precedes his imperial proclamation. In general, cf. Woodman (2006b) 181-2.

⁸⁵ From now on Tiberius will seem less alive to the internal threats to his principate: see especially pp. 228-9 and 240-2 below.

⁸⁶ The exact sequence of visits defies obvious elucidation: see Questa (1957) 308-13, Gissel (2001) 294-5 and Kelly (2010). For Roman tourism in Egypt in general see Casson (1974) 257-61.

⁸⁷ Suet. *Div. Iul.* 52.1; see Questa (1957) 313, Hillard (2002) and Spencer (2002) 191. Moreover, does *visit veterum Thebarum magna vestigia* (2.60.2) vaguely echo *Caesaris uisens monimenta magni* (Cat. 11.10)? In Book 1 Germanicus followed Caesar in the north; cf. n. 69 of Chapter 1 and Krebs (2006) 128-9 and n.76.

dominions and the tribute his subjects paid, *haud minus magnifica quam nunc vi Parthorum aut potentia Romana iubentur* (2.60.4). Then, after proceeding to *alia miracula*, notably the statue of Memnon (2.61.1), Germanicus reaches *Elephantinen et Syenen, claustra olim Romani imperii, quod nunc rubrum ad mare patescit* (2.61.2).

2.60.4 and 2.61.1 are part of a notorious crux with implications for the *Annals*' dating. It has been argued that Tacitus' initial acclamation of the great and – and, implicitly, equivalent – power of Parthia and Rome at 2.60.4 could have been valid only before Trajan's campaigns against Parthia, which began in 113 or, just possibly, after his death in August 117, when the failure of his efforts had become manifest and Hadrian's retrenchment was in prospect. The subsequent detail about the empire currently extending *rubrum ad mare* (2.61.1), however, threatens to contradict this. *rubrum mare* could refer to the modern Red Sea, and hence to the annexation of Arabia in 106; in that case this part of the *Annals* could have been completed at any time before Trajan's campaigns were substantially underway and there is no inconsistency.⁸⁸ But if the term is to be applied to the Persian Gulf and hence to Trajan's conquest of lower Mesopotamia, a view that in itself seems more convincing,⁸⁹ mention of the *vis Parthorum* in the aftermath of the campaigns has been considered rather odd.⁹⁰ An attempt has been made to reconcile the two passages by arguing that in one area of lower Mesopotamia Roman influence was maintained after Trajan's departure, while the possibility of later insertion or deliberate

⁸⁸ See Goodyear (1981) 387-93 *ad* 2.61.2 and Bowersock (1993) 4-5, who adduce relevant parallels for *rubrum mare* (cf. n. 74 above for Arabia), but a linguistic case can also be made for the other usage. As elsewhere in Tacitus, *patesco* seems to have no special inceptive force: see Gerber and Greef (1903) 1070.

⁸⁹ Syme (1958b) 768-70 and Birley (2000) 44. The latter's argument is cogent but his failure to acknowledge the existence of 2.60.4 and other ambiguous passages (see n. 92 below) is disappointing.

⁹⁰ *vis* and *potentia* are several times coupled by Tacitus in what appears to be a hendiadys (*Dial.* 19.5, *Ger.* 42.2, *H.* 2.39.1, 3.11.4) and it is not clear that their use here of Parthia and Rome respectively is a mark of anything other than *variatio*; see Koestermann (1963) 369 *ad loc.*

anachronism has been suggested, but no universally acceptable solution has been reached.⁹¹

More generally, while Tacitus' *Histories* seem to have been complete by 109 or 110, which thus gives a probable *terminus post quem* for the composition of the *Annals*, there has been no agreement on the latter work's exact dating, not least as it has proved impossible to account for all apparent contemporary references in the narrative in a way that ensures they are mutually consistent.⁹² The sections of the text that report eastern affairs are ostensibly unhelpful: despite his regular inclusion of material on Armenia and Parthia in the narrative, Tacitus makes no reference anywhere to Trajan's activities in the east, and in any case modern knowledge of them is itself far from ample.⁹³ This discussion has already raised the possibility, however, that Germanicus can be seen as an analogue to Trajan: some of the similarities between the two men have been inverted ones, but a reading of the central panel of *Annals* 2 leaves an impression of a charismatic Roman figure who completes a voyage in the east, intervening at the very fringes of the empire, before coming to grief there.

Suggestive though it may be, this parallelism between Germanicus and Trajan can offer no firm evidence about the dating of the text. The fact that there are aspects of Germanicus' portrayal that potentially illuminate Trajan's activities does not prove that the *Annals* was composed with a knowledge of how the latter's campaigns turned out,

⁹¹ Potter (1991) esp. 287-9, examines evidence that appears to show that Mesene, a kingdom close to the Persian Gulf, was a Roman client state in the years after Trajan's conquests; so it may not then have been inaccurate to state that Rome's *imperium* extended that far. See again Syme (1958b) 769-70 and Goodyear (1981) 389-70 *ad* 2.61.2 for speculation about anachronism and insertions, and Laederich (2001) 373-7.

⁹² On dating in general see Potter (1991), Bowersock (1993), Rutledge (1998) and Birley (2000). In this connection Syme (1958b) 769-70 and Goodyear (1981) 389-70 *ad* 2.61.2 also cite 2.56.1, where Armenia is said to be *nostris provinciis...praetenta*, and 4.5.2, a reference to friendly kingdoms protected from Parthia by *magnitudine nostra*, as passages that may have contemporary relevance.

⁹³ Woodman (2009c) 41; Lightfoot (1990) 115. Laederich (2001) 377 suggests that, if Tacitus had wanted to make an explicit allusion to Trajan's victories at 2.61.2, his phrasing there would have been less ambiguous. At 378-95, however, sidestepping the question of the text's dating, he argues that echoes of a wide range of episodes in Trajan's campaigns can be discerned in the eastern narratives in the later books of the *Annals*, but this approach seems somewhat tendentious.

and in addition it can hardly be assumed that the reports of events in the east that were sent back to Rome at this time were either punctual or accurate in all details.

Nevertheless, this uncertainty does not necessarily detract from the reading of Book 2 advanced here: provided that the idea of a war in the east was at least under discussion when the narrative was being composed – which appears probable – it is not necessary to posit a definite dating for this part of the *Annals*, or assume that Trajan's campaigns had reached a particular stage, to consider how the presentation of Germanicus in Book 2 may have been imbued with relevance for the contemporary emperor.

The textual correspondence between Germanicus and Trajan that has been posited may reflect Tacitus' definite knowledge of the emperor's death and the failure of his conquests, but the parallelism could also have been influenced by a general impression of how the on-going campaigns were proceeding, or merely by a conviction held prior to Trajan's departure that such an policy was unlikely to turn out well and that a different approach to the Parthians would be preferable. Alternatively, it cannot be excluded that the evocation of a correspondence between the two figures implies that the Dacian conqueror Trajan was likely to fare better than Germanicus, who has already proved incapable of full success against the Germans, in the east. Nevertheless, passages in Book 2 that seem to hint at the undesirability of a direct confrontation between Rome and Parthia have already been identified (see pp. 90-1 and 106 above on 2.4.3 and 58.2), and in the hexad's final book Tacitus will appear to endorse a non-aggressive approach to Parthia and Armenia, at least in the case of Tiberius, who has a sure diplomatic touch: the eastern episode in *Annals* 6 seems not to recommend that open war be waged in the east by anyone (see p. 270 below). It has also been argued previously, on the basis of the entire *Annals*, that Tacitus favoured the use of diplomacy rather than open warfare in this

context.⁹⁴ It will be shown below, finally, that it is possible to see Germanicus' demise near the end of the book as setting a seal on the correspondence and confirming what Trajan had brought on himself.

Finally, what of the juxtaposition of 2.60.4 and 2.61.2? If ...*quod nunc rubrum ad mare patescit* (2.61.2) does indeed take Trajan's conquests into account, its inclusion just as Germanicus is penetrating deeper and deeper into Egypt in a rather Trajanic manner would be suggestive in itself. The appeal to the rather familiar notion of Roman-Parthian equivalence (see pp. 81-2 above) that precedes it may have seemed paradoxical in the light of contemporary efforts at conquest in the east, but then the suspicion or knowledge that Rome's enlarged *imperium* would not last long may have evoked further irony. But if the reference to the empire's extent was a later insertion, or did not mean the Persian Gulf at all, the possibility that Book 2 was written before or after (as well as during) Trajan's campaigns remains open. Either way, an appeal to the duality of *vis Parthorum aut potentia Romana* would have been a reminder of the theme of equivalence between the two powers that has already been introduced and will eventually culminate, in a manner not at all flattering to Rome, in Book 6. Tacitus' evocation of this idea comes at the end of the inscription detailing Ramses' erstwhile power, which is now represented by mere *vestigia*. This seems to be a vivid indication of the fragility of empires, a theme already signalled by Germanicus' response to Troy at 2.54.2 (see p. 100 above), and it is hard not to see at least general relevance to Rome here.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ See Ehrhardt (1998) 305-6, citing the earlier work of Syme (1958b) 493-7, who stresses Trajan's fate but also considers Tacitus' reports of Tiberius' successful diplomatic strategy, and Koestermann (1968) 173 *ad* 15.6.4. In Chapter 5 it will be shown that Tiberius' diplomacy in Book 6 is juxtaposed with real 'civil war within the principate', and is thus bound up with the failure of *metus hostilis*. But while Tacitus' attitude to Trajan's principate is unclear, it seems unlikely that he saw it as untroubled and so a suitable basis for foreign conquests: see pp. 9-10 and 31-3 above, and 199-200 below.

⁹⁵ *pace* Kelly (2010) 226; see O'Gorman (2000) 113-4, who suggests the inscription's translation is so complete that 'the final comparison with Parthia and Rome acquires the status of part of the inscription itself' (114).

v) Death in Antioch: 2.69-81

After an interlude describing events in Rome and Thrace,⁹⁶ the text's focus returns to Germanicus, who arrives in Syria to find that Piso has disregarded the measures he put in place there, but then falls ill (2.69.1-2). As his condition worsens, he becomes convinced that Piso has poisoned him; Piso remains in the vicinity of the province (2.69.3-70). After calling upon his family and friends to avenge him, Germanicus dies (2.71-72.1). As an interim governor of Syria is appointed (2.74), Piso is said to have rejoiced at Germanicus' death and takes aggressive measures that Germanicus' friends counter. There is, however, a brief battle, although Piso's lack of support ultimately tells against him. He is granted a safe passage to Rome (2.78-81), where the response to Germanicus' demise and the posthumous honours granted to him are reported (2.82-3).

. At Last, Another War

The sequence of uneasy meetings between Germanicus and Piso continues when Germanicus discovers that his arrangements for Syria *abolita vel in contrarium versa...hinc graves in Pisonem contumeliae, nec minus acerba quae ab illo in Caesarem temptabantur* (2.69.1). But, despite being inclined to believe that his rival is responsible for his illness (2.69.4), his stance still seems essentially pacific. Germanicus is convinced that Piso is working *ut provinciam, ut legiones solus habeat* (2.70.1) and accordingly renounces his friendship, but although he entreats his friends to avenge the *acerbitates*

⁹⁶ See pp. 64 above, on events in Rome, and 200-4 below on the Thracian narrative (as well as n. 40 of Chapter 4 for comment on the text of 2.62-7).

and *insidiae* to which he has been subjected (2.71.1), he urges them to seek legal recourse rather than undertake direct counter-measures: *erit vobis locus querendi apud senatum, invocandi leges* (2.71.2).

This is not the first time that Germanicus has refused to take belligerent action against fellow Romans. When in Book 1 the German mutineers spoke of making him emperor instead of Tiberius, he turned them down in horror (1.35.4); more recently, he showed *mansuetudo* (2.55.3) in helping Piso and then seemed oblivious to the latter's activities amongst the troops in Syria. Now, as Germanicus lies dying, as well as continuing to avoid direct action he enjoins Agrippina – openly, at least – to curb her passionate nature (2.72.1). Before he calls on his friends to take legal action in Rome, his only definite move against Piso is to renounce his friendship. The story that he ordered him to leave Syria is not confirmed (2.70.2), and in any case his rival needs no telling: *nec Piso moratus ultra naves solvit, moderabaturque cursui quo propius regrederetur, si mors Germanici Syriam aperuisset* (ibid.).

After Germanicus' death, the results of his inaction become clear. Piso and Plancina evince joy (2.75.2), and then centurions arrive with the news that *prompta illi legionum studia* (2.76.1). The efforts that Piso initiated at 2.55.5, directly after his rescue by Germanicus, to win the personal loyalty of the Syrian troops have evidently not been in vain. The talk now turns explicitly to civil strife. Piso's son, Marcus Piso, urges him to return to Rome, as the enthusiasm of the soldiers is unlikely to last and in any case the opposition of Sentius, who is now responsible for Syria, would lead to *civile bellum* (2.76.3). Domitius Celer, however, is of the opposite view (*si quid hostile ingruat, quem iustius arma oppositurum, <quam> qui legati auctoritatem et propria mandata*

acceperit?,⁹⁷ 2.77.1). He refers to the *Caesaris favor, sed in occulto* (2.77.3) enjoyed by Piso who, *promptus ferocibus*, now writes to the emperor accusing his rival of *luxus et superbiae; seque pulsum, ut locus rebus novis patefieret, curam exercitus eadem fide qua tenuerit repetivisse* (2.78.1; cf. 2.57.4). Even as he alleges that Germanicus has been pursuing *res novae*, he himself carries on preparing for war: *concurrentes desertores per manipulos componit, armat lixas* (2.78.2).

Sentius, meanwhile, orders him *ne castra corruptoribus, ne provinciam bello temptet* and proclaims that *rem publicam armis peti* (2.79.2-3). Events are moving very quickly indeed. Piso occupies a stronghold in Cilicia and forms a makeshift legion, protesting that Sentius is keeping him out of Syria unlawfully; he is sure that the Syrian legionaries will not hold firm when they see him, whom they once called their *parens* and who now has right and might on his side (2.80.2). When battle is joined with soldiers loyal to Germanicus under the command of Domitius Celer, however, Piso's men are soon overcome: *non animus, non spes, ne tela quidem nisi agrestia aut subitum <in> usum properata* (2.80.3). He makes a final attempt to win over Celer's troops to his cause: *modo semet adfliciendo, modo singulos nomine ciens, praemiis vocans seditionem coeptabat* (2.81.1). He succeeds in persuading the standard-bearer of the sixth legion to join him – but then Celer orders the attack to be renewed and instruments to be played, in order to 'drown out Piso's dangerously persuasive oratory' (2.81.2),⁹⁸ and Piso surrenders.

He is permitted a safe passage back to Rome (2.81.3), after an episode that is characterised by several individuals as civil strife; he himself is perceived as a threat to the state (*rem publicam armis peti*, 2.79.3). Tacitus does not explicitly say that what happened was a civil war, but the characters in the text refer to the hostilities between

⁹⁷ The idea that Piso and not Sentius should defend Syria seems to imply that *quid hostile* means an external threat (of what kind, it is not clear) but the possibility heightens the sense of looming conflict.

⁹⁸ Goodyear (1981) 430 *ad loc.*

imperial representatives in those terms.⁹⁹ For a short time, the potential for real civil conflict under the principate is realised. What are the implications of this? First, it confirms that Tiberius may not have been altogether wrong to consider Germanicus a disruptive figure. As noted above, he seems to have avoided doing anything to forestall the measures taken by Piso to establish a power base of his own. On earlier occasions his conciliatory nature prevented war, but what happens when he dies confirms that this failure to act was positively culpable.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, while it is clear that he is not planning to engage in revolutionary behaviour, he is still a potential trigger for conflict, whether he is being viewed by German mutineers as a possible alternative *princeps* or considered a dangerous element that Piso must suppress.

This combination of patent innocence with the capacity to generate strife is in evidence as Germanicus dies. He asks his friends to report his fate *patri ac fratri* (2.71.1) and then commends his wife to the Roman people as *divi Augusti neptem* (2.71.4). Although Tiberius and Drusus will indeed play a part in ensuring that Piso is brought to justice (see 3.8.2), this is perhaps a surprising request given the *metum ex Tiberio* Germanicus is also believed to be secretly harbouring (2.72.1).¹⁰¹ Indeed, soon his reference to Agrippina will be picked up by Tiberius' anger at her popular support, which acclaims her as *solum Augusti sanguinem* (3.4.2). As the hexad continues, it will be clear that she has not heeded her husband's advice.¹⁰² Relations between her and the emperor will deteriorate and she will ultimately be accused of waging a civil war by Sejanus, although the text will strongly suggest that he himself is a significant trigger of the virtual

⁹⁹ cf. p. 55 above on 1.49.1: it is not clear if what happens is like *civilia arma* or not, but 'civil war' nevertheless seems to be somehow applicable to the situation.

¹⁰⁰ Note too how at 2.79.1 Agrippina's and Piso's ships avoid each other *mutua formidine* (cf. the earlier episode at 2.55.3), when a more aggressive move could conceivably have checked Piso. Is Agrippina's uncharacteristic restraint influenced by Germanicus' final words to her at 2.72.1?

¹⁰¹ Does this suggest imperial dissimulation? cf. n. 73 above.

¹⁰² Or were the *alia secreta* (2.72.1) uncharacteristically and inadvisably forceful?

conflict in the principate.¹⁰³ So Germanicus seems unaware of the mere possibility of civil strife – but he cannot help being associated with it. Does this reflect the Julio-Claudian principate itself, an institution that was established when a series of civil conflicts came to an end, but which will eventually come to an end in chaos? The idea that Germanicus in some sense stands for the imperial system will come into focus when his obituary is considered below. Nevertheless, there is an obvious irony in the fact that his rival Piso has ultimately become the more plausible civil war contender. As a dangerously independent figure with a base in the eastern Mediterranean, Piso himself now rather recalls Antony in a way that transcends Germanicus' more superficial (and unconscious) similarities to his grandfather. Piso's republican credentials and indeed his father's history of opposition to Augustus have acquired renewed relevance.¹⁰⁴

On the other hand, Germanicus' voyage has shown that Antony now seems to have been integrated into the principate. Piso's resemblance to him may threaten to subvert this, but Piso's actions do not just echo the past – they also look forward to future turmoil, and to a particular set of events reported by Tacitus elsewhere. As the earlier discussion of Germanicus' visit to Egypt showed, the latter's behaviour was clearly reminiscent of his grandfather's experiences, but Tiberius' fears and the precautions taken about Egypt by Augustus were referred to in more general terms. Not only that, but the *Histories'* portrayal of Vespasian's role in the east as an imperial candidate in AD 69 was echoed. Now, at the end of the eastern narrative in *Annals* 2, Piso's position also evokes that of the Flavians in the *Histories*.

At the beginning of *Histories* 2, after Otho's departure north against Vitellius has been reported in the final chapter of Book 1, the narrative's geographical focus shifts.

Tacitus reports that in the *longa concordia quietus Oriens* civil war was brewing. *namque*

¹⁰³ *saevienti fortunae* (2.72.1) is recalled in Sejanus' introduction at 4.1.1, and see p. 171 below.

¹⁰⁴ See O'Gorman (2006) 289-91 for Tacitus' implications of Piso's suitability as alternative *princeps* (and 291 n. 23 for Plancina's role in this).

olim validissima inter se civium arma in Italia Galliave viribus Occidentis coepta; et Pompeio, Cassio, Bruto, Antonio, quos omnis trans mare secutum est civile bellum, haud prosperi exitus fuerant (H. 2.6.1). Of course, this sweeping statement proves the ultimate insignificance of Piso's war, even as it draws several late-republican figures together in the way that Germanicus does, but the broader notion that the east has hitherto untapped potential to be a source of Roman civil strife sets up a possible parallelism between *Histories* 2 and *Annals* 2. This is comparable to what was shown in Chapter 1, that echoes of the military unrest described in *Histories* 1 feature in Tacitus' depiction of the German and Pannonian mutinies in *Annals* 1.

Both Piso and Vespasian have loyal sons whose roles in their fathers' operations are in certain respects comparable. Marcus Piso urges his father to return to Rome and clear his name (A. 2.76.2), and later the emperor's sympathy towards him will be apparent (A. 3.17.1, 18.1), while *Histories* 2 begins with a report of Titus' dispatch to Rome on his father Vespasian's behalf, allegedly to pay his respects to Galba (H. 2.1.1). Both men thus serve as a conduit between their father and the reigning emperor.¹⁰⁵ Titus' journey, however, is interrupted at Corinth by a report of Galba's death; he turns back and *oram Achaiae et Asiae ac laeva maris praevectus, Rhodum et Cyprum " insulas, inde Syriam audentioribus spatiis petebat* (H. 2.2.2). Piso has already made a similar journey (A. 2.55.3-5: he catches Germanicus near Rhodes) on his way to Syria, and at A. 2.79 he undertakes another coastal voyage with the same destination.

Titus' visit to the oracle at Paphos is then reported (H. 2.2.2-4.2; cf. p. 102 above). Vespasian, meanwhile, is still in Judaea, while his former rival Mucianus is governor of Syria.¹⁰⁶ It is said that *tribuni centurionesque et vulgus militum industria licentia, per*

¹⁰⁵ Though cf. Ash (2007) 75-6 ad 2.1.2.

¹⁰⁶ Their decision to put aside their disagreements in the interests of *communis utilitas* (H. 2.5.2) and their subsequent success hint at a possible alternative *Annals* 2: what if Germanicus and Piso had co-operated...?

virtutes per voluptates...adsciscebantur (*H.* 2.5.2). The generals' methods share something with Piso's at *A.* 2.55.5 (cf. there *licentiam in urbibus...ut sermone vulgi parens legionum haberetur*). Nevertheless, Vespasian's and Mucianus' willingness to let Otho and Vitellius fight it out (*H.* 2.7.1) contrasts with Piso's hurried efforts to claim Syria. Their support is made clear when the narrative returns to the east at *H.* 2.74, and the troops who hail Vespasian as *imperator* and address him as *Caesar* and *Augustus* (*H.* 2.80.1) will prove more reliable than those who are said to have termed Piso *parens legionum* at *A.* 2.55.5 (cf. *A.* 2.80.2).

So it seems plausible that a reader familiar with the *Histories* may, on reaching the end of *Annals* 2, have detected echoes of the atmosphere and setting of *Histories* 2.¹⁰⁷ As in the case of the mutinies, the correspondences are allusive rather than exact, and also draw attention to what did not happen under Tiberius: Vespasian seeks to become emperor and succeeds, while Piso's intentions remain unclear and his efforts soon come to nothing. A comparison with his better-prepared analogues in *Histories* 2 suggests how ill-advised his actions were.¹⁰⁸ But the presence of the wars of AD 69 was felt at the beginning of *Annals* 1, and now at the end of *Annals* 2 these conflicts recur. Indeed, the way in which Otho's departure to fight Vitellius in the north at the end of *Histories* 1 is succeeded by the shift to the east at the start of the following book is mirrored in the movement in *Annals* 1 and 2 from Germanicus' activities in Germany to his and Piso's presence in the eastern Mediterranean. In these books Tacitus' descriptions of Germans, Parthians and Armenians act as a reminder of the importance of civil war in Roman history, but the specific threat to the principate from civil strife is dramatised at the

¹⁰⁷ Note too Mucianus' presence at Antioch (*H.* 2.78.4, 80.2), site of Germanicus' death at *A.* 2.73, and cf. Andrade (2012), which discusses themes common to *H.* 2 and *A.* 2.

¹⁰⁸ Still, note how the possibility that he could have been a willing imperial candidate is raised at *A.* 1.13.3: see the comments of O'Gorman (2006) 291-2, who links this with his actions at the end of Book 2. Andrade (2012) 463-9 views both Germanicus and Piso as proto-eastern despots (cf. p. 265-6 below).

beginning and end of this two-book opening to the hexad; subsequently, the presence of civil war in Rome itself will start to come to the fore.

During the mutinies the possibility of civil conflict breaking out in the principate was merely evoked; on the contrary, at the end of *Annals* 2 real civil strife actually breaks out for a short time. Piso proves more dangerous than Germanicus, just as Vespasian surpassed Otho and Vitellius. Tiberius, who believed mistakenly that Germanicus would engage in revolution, is now shown to have been even more wrong in sending out Piso to the east. Even though he allows Piso to be eliminated when he returns to Rome, as the hexad goes on the emperor will appear increasingly blind to the prospect of civil strife of another kind unfolding in Rome itself. Not only is the end of the Julio-Claudian dynasty foreshadowed by Piso's civil war, but the principate's fundamental instability is confirmed.

. Concluding Thoughts: Germanicus' Obituary

After Germanicus' death at 2.72.2, Tacitus states that there was widespread mourning for him locally and by *exterae nationes regesque: tanta illi comitas in socios, mansuetudo in hostes...cum magnitudinem et gravitatem summae fortunae retineret, invidiam et adrogantiam effugerat* (2.72.2). The reference to his funeral then frames an explanation of how *et erant qui formam aetatem genus mortis...magni Alexandri fatis adaequarent* (2.73.1): they noted the similarities between the two men, pointed out the personal qualities in which Germanicus seemed to surpass Alexander, and lamented how if he had lived longer and attained more power he might have come closer to equalling Alexander's military achievements (2.73.1-3).

For two chapters, the looming confrontation between Piso and Germanicus' friends is forgotten (until *praetuleritne veneficii signa, parum constitit*, 2.73.4, when the debate over whether Germanicus was poisoned recurs). The obituary defers consideration of Germanicus' innocence and culpability in a Roman context by focusing on the foreign reaction to his demise. This picture of provincials and non-citizens in anguish at the loss of an individual who was known for his personable and gentle nature feels very far away from the tense relationships between Romans that have featured in Book 2 as a whole and which are especially acute at this point. The contemporary imperial regime, troubled as it is by provincial revolts (see Chapter 4), and the civil wars of the past and future seem irrelevant. Indeed, foreign and not Roman mourners are cited at 2.72.2, and the comparison between Germanicus and Alexander the Great that constitutes the second half of the obituary seems to be attributed to people in the east.¹⁰⁹ So what kind of a view does this passage, which seems to suspend the main Roman narrative of Book 2, offer of Germanicus?

Those who grieved for Germanicus are initially said to have praised his *comitas in socios, mansuetudo in hostes* (2.72.2), his awe-inspiring bearing and the fact that, despite his high position, he *invidiam et adrogantiam effugerat* (2.72.2). Now, although Tacitus does not entirely distance himself from this assessment (note the indicative *effugerat*), the narrative as a whole does not offer direct support to all its details. The *mansuetudo in hostes* acclaimed here is hardly in evidence in Germanicus' dealings with the Germans (cf. p. 57 above); more immediately, he has certainly incurred others' *invidia*, and his behaviour at 2.57-8 at least could have been construed as *adrogantia*.¹¹⁰ But it is notable that, in dwelling on Germanicus' friendliness and openness but also his ability to impress

¹⁰⁹ cf. Malissard (1990) 331 and Syme (1958b) 315 and 771: *et erant qui* (2.73.1) appears to refer to the local response at Antioch without suggesting that Roman opinions are being cited. See also below. The *funus, sine imaginibus et pompa* (ibid.), is distinctively un-Roman (cf. Flower (1996) 91-127).

¹¹⁰ On *mansuetudo* see Goodyear (1981) 415 *ad loc.* and n. 55 above. See also nn. 21 above and 32 of Chapter 1 on the status of *comitas* as an imperial, and potentially ambiguous, virtue.

others, the eastern mourners – not surprisingly – stress the attributes that have been in evidence on his oriental travels. In the course of them he has not slaughtered mercilessly, as he did when fighting the Germans, but he has shown *mansuetudo* to his rival Piso (see 2.55.3), despite their later disagreements, behaved affably in Athens and Alexandria, and also dined with the Nabataean king and received a Parthian embassy in suitable style.

So the foreigners lament the disappearance of qualities that Germanicus has displayed to them in particular, and which have also marked him out from some other Romans in the east. It has already been observed that his installation of Zeno and his treatment of the Parthian embassy demonstrate a well-judged, courteous approach to eastern diplomacy that seems not to have been deployed by his ancestors Augustus and Antony (whom he nevertheless resembled in other ways), as the survey of their less successful involvement at 2.3-4 showed. The warm feelings Germanicus elicits at his death also contrast with Tiberius' detached and rather impersonal approach to foreign affairs (see p. 66 above, while his successful eastern involvement in Book 6 is achieved via intermediaries: see p. 274). This sense of thousands mourning for one man is also far removed from the awkward relationship between emperor and senators in Rome (the emperor's attitude to similar demonstrations of grief in Rome will be made very clear at 3.3-7). Finally, there is Trajan: it has already been suggested that Tacitus' readers may have seen inverted reflections of decisions made by him in Book 2's reports of Germanicus' diplomacy. Now there is potentially a direct parallelism, as both men ultimately come to grief in the east. If contemporary readers of the *Annals* were aware of the emperor's death at Selinus in AD 117 and its attendant circumstances (Dio 68.33.2-3),¹¹¹ Germanicus' demise in Antioch would have reinforced the sense that the east could be a dangerous place for leading Romans, but there may also have been a piquant contrast

¹¹¹ cf. Syme (1958b) 771 on Antioch and Selinus.

between the sorrow felt locally for the latter and the instability and rebellions that Trajan had left in his wake (Dio 68.29.4-32.3).¹¹²

Unlike other leading Romans, Germanicus seems at home in the east; its inhabitants respond by acclaiming him as a kind of benign autocrat. It has already been suggested here that he looks backwards and forwards in imperial history, but does this posthumous characterisation not so much link him to other Romans as foreshadow how by the end of the Tiberian books the principate will look like an eastern-style autocracy? Some scholars have indeed suggested that in *Annals* 2 he increasingly resembles a Hellenistic king – or else a near-eastern despot.¹¹³ What easterners now perceive as the glamorous exercise of supreme power will become oppression and loss of freedom back in Rome.¹¹⁴

It was shown at the beginning of this chapter that the Parthians and Armenians at the opening of Book 2 serve as an unfavourable mirror of Rome and its recent history. The impression of the principate now evoked by eastern peoples at the other end of the narrative is also critical, although it bypasses the Roman propensity for civil war in favour of fundamental questions about the nature of the imperial system.¹¹⁵ The same is true of the comparison to Alexander the Great that immediately follows (2.73.1-3). There has been much speculation about the role of this passage, for which Tacitus appears not to

¹¹² Gissel (2001) 279) links the impact of Trajan's death and a concomitant sense of the empire reaching its limits to the portrayal of Germanicus.

¹¹³ See McCulloch (1984) 67-72 and Andrade (2012) esp. 463-9.

¹¹⁴ Note *praepeditus...sit...Germanias servitio premere* (2.73.2). Those who compare Germanicus to Alexander seem unmoved by the prospect of German freedom being lost – just as the unfree Romans of the principate are in general insensible to their own state? See also pp. 87-8 above on how the Armenian ruler Ariobarzanes, like Germanicus, enjoyed initial popularity but died leaving less welcome descendants (2.4.1).

¹¹⁵ Indeed, at 2.2.4 the Parthians' discrimination of others was ultimately called into question, and see n. 37 above on foreign inability to distinguish between Romans abroad, although that is not quite what happens here.

take responsibility.¹¹⁶ The appearance of Alexander recalls a theme that featured earlier in the narrative: the sense that Germanicus' travels echoed Alexander's movements, either directly or via some of his leading Roman peers. The comparison itself, however, appears rather naive.

Its authors note some practical similarities between Germanicus and Alexander (both were noble and handsome and died young, supposedly at the hands of those close to them) and compliment Germanicus for having surpassed Alexander in various not especially illuminating ways (he was more restrained and had a more orderly family life). Such superficial resemblances are hardly impressive. They then account Germanicus *neque minus proeliatorem*, even though he lacked *temeritas* and was prevented from enslaving the Germans (2.73.2).¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, *quod si solus arbiter rerum, si iure et nomine regio fuisset, tanto promptius adsecuturum gloriam militiae, quantum clementia temperantia, ceteris bonis artibus praestitisset* (2.73.3). Some studies have seen this final thought as an acclamation of an idealised emperor who never was. The unfulfilled conditionals cast Germanicus, it has been argued, as an alternative ruler who possessed high moral standards, military prowess and a talent for popular rule, and whose death marks the elimination of a path that the principate could have followed.¹¹⁸ But *Annals* 1 and 2 do not suggest that Germanicus would have been a different kind of *princeps*. Although he never becomes emperor, he is deeply embedded within the imperial system. His actions and his ancestry, to which his eastern voyage in particular draws attention, link him to past and future emperors and would-be emperors.

¹¹⁶ e.g. Borszák (1969) 588-9, Goodyear (1981) 416-8 *ad loc.*, Malissard (1990) and Gissel (2001) esp. 286. It seems wisest to assume that Tacitus is distancing himself from (Williams (2009) 128), and developing for his own purposes, an idea that was part of the tradition (Spencer (2002) 192).

¹¹⁷ See Gissel (2001) 288-9; at 299 he points out that a solely military assessment would have been absurd.

¹¹⁸ Malissard (1990) *passim* and Gissel (2001) 300-1; cf. Spencer (2002) 193, with the key nuance that prior knowledge of Germanicus' death means that 'his paradigmatic status as perfect prince is compromised from the start, and that if imperial perfection is only possible through him, then the perfect ruler can never exist'.

Moreover, in the first part of the obituary the foreign mourners acclaimed Germanicus for populist yet autocratic qualities that would look very different in Rome; now, those who compare Germanicus to Alexander bemoan the fact that he did not become a *solus arbiter rerum* and attain the *nomen regium*. Once again, the ‘un-Roman’ perspective of foreigners suggests uncomfortable truths about the principate. In the east, sole rule and royal titles attract admiration, and Alexander seems to be a figure of universal admiration. For the Romans, on the other hand, the principate is emphatically not meant to be seen as a *regnum*, or a system that openly acknowledges the emperor’s possession of sole power (cf. *cuncta...nomine principis sub imperium accepit*, 1.1.1, and 1.9.5, discussed at p. 72 above), while Alexander is potentially more ambivalent, a military genius whom leading Romans may wish to emulate, but also a proto-autocrat who was altered by his eastern experiences.¹¹⁹ Chapter 1 showed, however, that the portrayal of the Germans and Arminius hints at the lack of *libertas* in contemporary Rome: the conclusion of Arminius’ story at the very end of Book 2 also suggests that as *princeps* Germanicus would have presided over a *regnum*.¹²⁰ Here, a few chapters earlier, the eastern mourners underline this from their own perspective. The reported belief that Germanicus could have restored *libertas* (see 1.33.2, 2.82.2) is confirmed as hollow.¹²¹

The unfulfilled expectations of those who lament the death of Germanicus evoke what is perhaps a more acute picture of the Julio-Claudian principate than they mean to. In any case, their understanding of Rome jars with the presentation of the imperial system in the *Annals*. They state that if Germanicus had achieved greater power, *tanto promptius adsecuturum gloriam militiae, quantum clementia temperantia, ceteris bonis artibus*

¹¹⁹ Gissel (2001) 281-5, Morello (2002) esp. 80-3 and Spencer (2002) 165-203.

¹²⁰ On *nomen regium* see Questa (1957) 317-20 for a reminder that Tacitus never uses *regius* in a positive manner in a Roman context, and Andrade (2012) 466, who notes the phrase is also applied to Vonones at 2.4.3; cf. n. 64 of Chapter 5, and pp. 263-6 on the principate as an eastern-style *regnum* in Book 6 and beyond.

¹²¹ See Borszák (1970) 288 and McCulloch (1984) 87-8, as well as Gissel (2001) 301.

praestitisset (2.73.3): if he had become *princeps*, he would have maintained his admirable pacific qualities and won greater fame in war. But the text of Book 2, and Tacitus' work as a whole, show that this is not true: emperors are not mild and merciful but inscrutable and cruel, and there is nothing in Germanicus' portrayal or pedigree to prove that, had he held office, he by contrast would have shown *clementia* and *temperantia* and other such virtues.¹²²

Furthermore, there are few opportunities to win glory in war under the Julio-Claudian principate. Germanicus' fortunes against the Germans were mixed, and they look ahead to how in the rest of the hexad Roman commanders will struggle against provincial revolts. Even though the historical fact of Rome's control of the empire – itself a bar to the accumulation of great military distinction – will in due course be acknowledged,¹²³ the hexad will conclude with a reminder that *metus hostilis* no longer operates in Rome. At that point Romans are beginning to shed Roman blood: civil war is a constant possibility under the principate and a more important focus of Roman energies. There is no way back, moreover: events in the east described in Book 6 show that diplomacy and containment work better under the principate than aggression and conquest, and Tacitus hints that this seems to be true of Trajan's time as well as the Julio-Claudian era.

¹²² In the surviving *Annals* Tacitus attributes *temperantia* to no emperor. See Martin and Woodman (1989) 167 *ad* 4.31.2 on the ambiguities of Tiberian *clementia*, and Keitel (1978) 467-8 on Claudius' attempts to claim it for himself. Nero too seems not to have heeded Seneca's *De Clementia* (cf. 15.35.3).

¹²³ See pp. 9-10 above and 236-9 below.

Chapter 3

The ‘Long Book 3’

a. Introduction

i) Tacfarinas and Jugurtha, Sejanus and Catiline

It is well recognised by historians that Augustus retained many republican forms and political offices as he consolidated his position in Rome after Antony’s defeat at Actium.¹ Previous historiographical studies of *Annals* 3, meanwhile, have suggested that this book keeps looking back into Roman history,² via various excurses and a general sense of retrospective, but also because of the obituaries that feature in it for the first time in the *Annals*. Moreover, Tacitus seems to take advantage of the absence of any one dominant figure to explore the relationship between emperor and senate in detail.³ It will now be argued that the historian’s stress on the past, especially the late republic, in Book 3 is a reaction to the appropriation of republican forms by Augustus, and indeed by the principate as a whole. Chapter 2 drew attention to links between late republican and early imperial history, and key individuals of each era; this chapter will discuss further continuities and discontinuities between the past and the Tiberian present.

The discussion will treat not just Book 3 itself but the ‘long Book 3’,⁴ defined as chapters 2.52-4.26. This portion of the text is enclosed by the episodes of fighting against the north African rebel Tacfarinas (2.52, 3.20-1, 3.73-4 and 4.23-6): the north African

¹ See e.g. Syme (1939) 313-48 and Eder (1993) 97-120

² Sage (1991) 3407-15; cf. Woodman and Martin (1996) 375-6 *ad* 3.52-76.

³ See Syme (1977), esp. 247-52, Martin (1990) 1518-19, 1533 and Sage (1991) 3409. On obituaries specifically, cf. Gingras (1992) 242, as well as Syme (1958a).

⁴ Compare the ‘long sixteenth century’ of Braudel (1972). This approach will not discount the book-divisions, which are likely to have determined to some extent Tacitus’ conception of his work (cf. Higbie (2010) 16-29), but it offers one way of tracing underlying themes in the text.

strand thus spans the central books of the first hexad in a way that none of the other foreign episodes does in Books 2, 3 and 4 (these will be discussed separately in Chapter 4).⁵ This is one key reason for analysing the fighting with Tacfarinas in the context of the narrative in which it is embedded, separately from the other foreign passages; the north African sections are also linked to events in Rome more than those other passages. Furthermore, it has been observed that in the north African narrative the literary and historical past is strongly evoked in a number of ways, and with reference to a particular late-republican text, Sallust's *Bellum Jugurthinum*:⁶ the use of Sallust will be an important theme in the following analysis.

This chapter will consider how, by means of his presentation of the past and its relationship to the imperial present, Tacitus constructs a critical perspective on the 'republican façade' created by Augustus. Individuals in the text, especially senators, apparently view the republic as an epoch to which events in the present may be usefully compared; it is as if they have been influenced by the early emperors' efforts to make the principate look like the republican system. At the beginning of the 'long Book 3', Tacitus seems to endorse Romans' beliefs that in some respects there is no great divide between early republican history and the present day, but as the narrative advances, it becomes clear that they are mistaken.

In his narration of events in Tiberian Rome, particularly those involving the senate, the historian proceeds to echo historiographical depictions of episodes from the successively more recent past. This serves not to support the senators' perception that there are similarities between the late republic and the present day; instead, it highlights how detached they are. Conversely, Tacitus shows that there are indeed some continuities

⁵ Books 2, 3 and 4 all contain Thracian material but, as will be seen, it does not form a continuous narrative.

⁶ See Syme (1979b) 223 (cf. Martin (1990) 1539) and Woodman and Martin (1996) 206 *ad* 3.21.2.

between past and present, but they are not those which the senators believe they have identified, and the nature of these unwelcome continuities will shortly become clear. There is a clear divide between the partial vision of the characters in the text, and the historian's more holistic view. Moreover, the senate proves unable to participate in those functions of government that the principate permits it, even as its members cling to other aspects of republican history.

Tacitus achieves these effects by alluding to his predecessor Sallust in particular. The latter has of course been 'present' in the *Annals* from its opening words onwards,⁷ but now repeated reminiscences of his works are found. Within the 'long Book 3' there are two chains of allusions, one to the *Bellum Jugurthinum* and one to the *Bellum Catilinae*, and they each form a Sallustian 'meta-narrative' within the main Tacitean narrative. In his descriptions of the fighting against Tacfarinas, Tacitus refers to Sallust's account of the comparable war against Jugurtha in the *Bellum Jugurthinum*. Initially the references to that text do not seem to provide an especially appropriate framework for warfare under the principate, but at length Sallust's and Tacitus' narratives reach a closer alignment, and Tacfarinas is in fact defeated in a manner that brings more credit to Rome than the death of Jugurtha did.

This reasonably positive progression, however, is entwined with echoes of Sallust's other monograph, the *Bellum Catilinae*; these form a narrative of civil war and turmoil in Rome that matches the 'war in north Africa' thematic strand. Tacitus' evocations of the *BC* in his account of events in Rome in Book 3 serve to highlight the senate's inability to play a role in government under the empire. Moreover, although the emperor seems somewhat more attuned to the differences between past and present, both he and the senators are unaware of the looming threat posed by Sejanus, who at the

⁷ See Goodyear (1972) 89 *ad* 1.1.1 (the echo of *BC* 6.1).

beginning of Book 4 will be formally introduced with clear reference to Sallust's Catiline: the overarching relevance of the *BC* to Tiberian Rome is devastatingly revealed. This can be seen as the culmination of the 'Catilinarian' narrative in the text, and it is followed a few chapters later by the climax of the 'Jugurthine' thread, with the conclusion of the war against Tacfarinas. Both Sallust's monographs, however, can also be read as looking forward to the further civil strife that would ensue in the first century BC, and this wider perspective is now transferred to Tacitus' narrative. In the *Annals*, Sejanus' open presence marks the beginning of a virtual 'civil war within the principate'. Moreover, as has already been shown in the previous two chapters, the Tiberian books also look forward to the events of AD 69: metaphorical civil war will be due course be succeeded by real conflict.

ii) *Tamquam vetere re publica* (1.7.3)⁸

So the republican past is certainly relevant to the Julio-Claudian principate, but not in the way that Augustus intended it to be. Two further – and linked – themes in the 'long Book 3' underline this: Tiberius' habit of following his predecessor's precedents, and the treatment of the term '*res publica*'. As the commentators note, Tiberius' emulation of procedures that Augustus had established is a recurrent trope in Book 3 itself. This stance is well attested in other sources, but Tacitus stresses one particular aspect: Tiberius' eagerness to appoint individuals to assist him, just as Augustus singled

⁸ See Woodman (1998b) 67-9 on this passage; however it is punctuated, it still draws a contrast between the old republic and the imperial era.

out such men as Maecenas, Sallustius Crispus and indeed Tiberius himself.⁹ On more than one occasion in Book 3, Tiberius' reliance on helpers of this kind is noted, and attention is drawn to the Augustan precedent for this, but these passages also seem to look forwards to the beginning of Book 4, where the dominant influence of Sejanus, Tiberius' *socius laborum* (4.2.3), is finally asserted. Imitation of Augustan practices is thus implied to have created the conditions that contributed to Sejanus' rise: the potential for civil war within the principate is shown to have been present from the very beginning.

It is not in Book 3 of the *Annals*, however, that Tiberius' desire to share his rule with others is referred to for the first time. As discussed in Chapter 1, Tacitus' account of his accession depicted him hesitating – or appearing to hesitate – and apparently keen to delegate some of his power to members of the senate. It was also shown that interpretations of the passage in question have been more and less favourable to the emperor (see pp. 41-2 above and n. 11 of Chapter 1). Tiberius' principate more generally has also been viewed in differing ways: some scholars, as well as drawing attention to a discernible interest in the republican past evinced in the Tiberian era, not least in historiographical works of the period, have argued that the emperor not only tried to involve the senate in government but even mooted a form of regime change.¹⁰ Others, however, have seen Tiberius' apparent reluctance to rule as a studied act, a *recusatio* that was originated by Augustus with his attempted 'resignation' in 27 BC (see Dio 53.5.4) and in time became a kind of imperial ritual.¹¹

But while the true character of Tiberius' apparent nostalgia for the republic will never be known, from the perspective of the early second century AD his principate

⁹ On Augustan emulation by Tiberius in general see Woodman and Martin (1996) 10-11, while Brunt (1984) 425 n. 7 has an extensive list of relevant passages; on Tiberius' use of helpers see Woodman (1998e) 158-9.

¹⁰ Gowing (2005) discusses the possibility of a restoration at 31-2 and n. 6 (see also Kampff (1963) and Woodman (1998b) 56-69), and the prevailing culture under Tiberius at 28-66.

¹¹ Brunt (1984) 424-6; cf. Wallace-Hadrill (1982) 36-8, Jakobsen and Cotton (1985) 501-3 and Bellemore (2013) 86-9.

represented the continuation of the institution that Augustus had established and indeed confirmed its hereditary nature.¹² It will therefore be argued in this chapter that in the ‘long Book 3’ Tacitus enacts the gradual revelation that the principate, despite its republican look, was not republican in nature: it was therefore founded on an essential hypocrisy.¹³ One important index of this is how the definition of ‘*res publica*’ is treated in this section of the text. The view that Augustus claimed to have restored the *res publica*, in the sense of bringing back the republican system, has generally fallen out of favour,¹⁴ and it seems to be the case that in the early imperial texts ‘*res publica*’ generally signifies ‘the state’. Still, it has been acknowledged that in certain passages, not least in Tacitus’ work, it can refer to ‘the republic’, i.e. the pre-imperial political system.¹⁵ It will be shown below that this ambiguity is exploited in two episodes that frame the ‘long Book 3’. In the initial chapters of the *Annals*, Tacitus asserts that the *res publica*, the republic, is no more, and when at the beginning of Book 3 the partisans of Germanicus threaten to dispute this, Tiberius corrects them by asserting that the *res publica* is not a finite institution. Early in Book 4, however, he repeats this point – but shortly afterwards the term recurs with reference to the actual republic, even as the disappearance of that system and Tiberius’ hypocrisy are made clear.

Here and elsewhere Tacitus points out the emperor’s duplicity, a quality which seems to characterise the principate as a whole. This does not mean, however, that the characters are represented as mere ciphers and not historical actors. As will be seen,

¹² cf. Syme (1958b) 369 and Vout (2013) 61.

¹³ This is close to what Griffin (1995), esp. 37-44, argues, but with rather different emphases; cf. also Ginsburg (1981) on Tacitus’ use of a republican-style historiographical framework to structure his imperial history.

¹⁴ On ‘*res publica restituta*’, see Millar (1973) 63-4, Judge (1974) and Mackie (1986) 331-2 (also Hurlet and Mineo (2009)), though cf. Griffin (1995) 36 n. 8.

¹⁵ See Millar (1973) 63 and Mackie (1986) 328-9; cf. Lind (1986) 46-51. Gowing (2005) 4-5, however, suggests that the expression’s meaning shifted from ‘the republic’ to ‘the principate’ over the course of Augustus’ and perhaps Tiberius’ reigns. This seems impossible to verify, but it does nicely match the argument here about Tacitus’ treatment of ‘*res publica*’. cf. Gallia (2012) 28-32 on how ‘*libertas*’ similarly could be used in more than one way under the principate, and pp. 24-8 above.

despite the recurrent emphasis on Tiberius' dissimulation, he seems as unaware as anyone of the true relevance of Sallust's portrayal of the late republic to his own time, and to Sejanus in particular. Moreover, it is not suggested that, in offering the senate a role in decision-making, he has consciously undertaken to promote the 'Augustan façade' in a cynical way. Conversely, when the senators fail to respond and indeed seem to take refuge in the past, it does look as if they have interpreted that façade too literally, and believe wrongly that the principate has not entailed great change, but they are also guilty of a clear dereliction of duty as legislators and judges.¹⁶ Their apathy increases as the influence of the efficient Sejanus becomes greater.

b. In Africa bellum (2.52.1): the Power and the Glory

At the point when Germanicus is about to head east, Tacitus closes his narrative of AD 17 by summarising the *coeptum in Africa bellum* (2.52.1) waged by a Numidian named Tacfarinas,¹⁷ an ex-auxiliary turned deserter who had begun to gather local nomads to engage in pillaging. He has served *in castris Romanis*, but was now arming some of his men *Romanum in modum* and keeping them in a camp *ut...disciplina et imperiis suesceret* (2.52.1-2).¹⁸

This detail looks familiar. First, the notion of a former auxiliary taking on Rome recalls Arminius, whose Roman service has quite recently been disclosed (2.10.3; see pp. 63-4). Moreover, while there was no sign that the latter's Germans had been taught

¹⁶ cf. Griffin (1995) 57: 'Tacitus [would not] have thought of transferring responsibility for men's conduct to the political system, however much he disliked that system'.

¹⁷ Tacitus does not note that local warfare had occurred sporadically in the area under Augustus (see Goodyear (1981) 348 *ad* 2.52; also Ginsburg (1981) 46); at 4.23-6 there is no hint that the Musulamii would cause further trouble in the region under Claudius (see again Goodyear). See also the survey of Laederich (2001) 265-80.

¹⁸ On *disciplina* as a component of the Roman military ethos see Phang (2008), esp. 79-80 and 287-8.

Roman tactics (2.45.2 makes a different point; cf. p. 66 above), in north Africa Tacfarinas appears to be deploying what he learnt as an auxiliary for anti-Roman purposes. It may appear that he will be an even greater threat to Rome than his German counterpart.¹⁹ The introduction to Tacfarinas also evokes another key figure in Roman historiography, Jugurtha, who was also Numidian and similarly served with the Romans before becoming their enemy (see especially *BJ* 7.2-9.2).

So it may well appear that drawn-out and potentially unsuccessful warfare similar to the campaigns of Germanicus that Tacitus has just described (see Chapter 1), or to Sallust's narrative of the Jugurthine war, is about to ensue. At this stage, however, the threat posed by Tacfarinas comes to nothing. The proconsul of Africa, Furius Camillus, leads a force against the rebels. Despite Tacitus' earlier stress on their Roman-style training, it is feared that they may not have the courage to stand and fight; they manage this but little else (*fusi Numidae*, 2.52.4). Moreover, as in Arminius' case, Tacfarinas' links to Rome are not referred to again, although it will be shown in due course that when he appears for the last time the sentiments he expresses link him to other 'Romanised' rebels in the narrative. His forces will subsequently fare better, but this is not directly attributed to their leader's Roman connections: Tacitus seems to have eschewed the rather banal irony of Romans being challenged by techniques they had taught to others.²⁰ But this time the Roman military tradition is upheld, and indeed the easy victory serves as a refreshing contrast to Germanicus' uneven achievements against the Germans. This is heightened by references to Camillus' shrewd appraisal of the situation: *nihil aeque*

¹⁹ Tacitus does not say that Tacfarinas had been an auxiliary commander, as Arminius had been. If he was not (Saddington (1982) 37 and 223 n. 33), the affront he presents to Rome is perhaps all the greater. Pelling (1993) 82 suggests he is 'a sort of moral heir but a shabby one' of Arminius, but although Tacfarinas lays claim to *libertas* only belatedly (see pp. 172-3 below), his relationship with it is less ambiguous than that of Arminius.

²⁰ cf. Whittaker (2009) 198-9.

cavebatur quam ne bellum metu eluderent (2.52.3).²¹ Accordingly, *multos...post annos Furio nomini partum decus militiae. nam post illum recipitorem urbis filiumque eius Camillum penes alias familias imperatoria laus fuerat* (2.52.4-5): Camillus' actions hark back to the fourth century and in particular the defeat of the Gauls, after they had sacked Rome, by Marcus Furius Camillus in 390 (see especially Livy 5.49).

It is easy to point out how the emperor's intervention (*Tiberius res gestas apud senatum celebravit*, 2.52.5) and the senate's decree of *triumphalia insignia* rather than a true triumph, to say nothing of the fact that this did no harm to Camillus *ob modestiam vitae* (*ibid.*),²² undermine the sense that the past has come back to life with this victory. It is also hard not to read the comment that *penes alias familias imperatoria laus fuerat* (*ibid.*) as an arch allusion to the current omnipresence of the *domus Augusta*. In any case, it will become clear that Camillus' victory did not have an especially long-lasting effect. Nevertheless, it is significant that a generalised, if not generic, republican past is cited here,²³ apparently by author and characters alike (the explanation about the Camilli is in the narrator's voice, but *eo pronior* Tiberius commemorated what Camillus had achieved). It is still possible to talk about the Tiberian present, and to celebrate unalloyed military success, with that era as the point of reference.

²¹ Obligingly, *nec Tacfarinas pugnam detrectavit* (2.52.4): the Roman victory is easy but not too easy.

²² This seems to presage a future in which such honours will cause trouble; cf. too 1.80 and 2.26.5. For Tiberius' ambiguous *modestia*, see p. 203 below on Rhescuporis.

²³ This may be reflected by Tacitus' apparent confusion of the son of the victorious general of 390 with his grandson, and his failure to mention other distinguished members of the family (Goodyear (1981) 351 *ad loc.*). See also Cornell (1990) 306-7 on the distorted historiographical tradition concerning Marcus Furius Camillus.

c. The End of the Beginning?

i) Nil opus vetustioribus exemplis (3.6.3)?

When the fighting in north Africa has been concluded, the narrative returns to Germanicus in the east and his travels, his death and its aftermath (which were discussed in Chapter 2) before the focus shifts to the initial response in Rome (2.82-7). After the obituary of Arminius at 2.88 (see pp. 70-3 above), Book 3 immediately takes up Germanicus' story, beginning with Agrippina and her family's return to Italy at the beginning of AD 20. A link between the two books is therefore established (the consuls for the year are only mentioned at 3.2.3: *iam enim magistratum occeperant*) that is resolved only when Piso's trial and Tacitus' reflections on it are finally concluded at 3.19.2, but the demise of Germanicus has also been seen as a significant watershed that marks the end of a putative first phase of the *Annals*.²⁴ So the first section of Book 3 looks transitional, including elements of both closure and continuity, and it will now be suggested that the reaction to Germanicus' death back at Rome demonstrates how the relationship of the Tiberian present to the past is beginning to change.

The progress of the ashes through Italy is followed by reports of popular talk in Rome that *concidisse rem publicam, nihil spei reliquum*; people made these claims *promptius apertiusque, quam ut meminisse imperitantium crederes* (3.4.1);²⁵ the general idolisation of Agrippina is said particularly to rile the emperor. Comparisons were made between the failure to give Germanicus a funeral in the city and the *honora et magnifica* (3.5.1) granted to his father Drusus by Augustus in 9 BC. As a result, the emperor

²⁴ Continuity: McCulloch (1984) 143-7 and Gingras (1992) 243-4; watershed: Malissard (1990) 337-8 and Gissel (2001) 300-1 (but see n. 118 of Chapter 2 above on their readings of Germanicus' obituary).

²⁵ The Campus Martius is filled with *miles cum armis, sine insignibus magistratus, populus per tribus* (3.4.1). Does this echo *senatus milesque et populus* (1.7.2; see Goodyear (1972) 139 *ad loc.*)?

remonstrates with the populace, admonishing them for their excessive grief (3.6). Gingras argues that the reference to the elder Drusus and to his status as Germanicus' father is a reminder of the latter's reported republican tendencies, which were linked to his son's popularity at 1.33.2 (*Drusi magna apud populum Romanum memoria, credebaturque, si rerum potius foret, libertatem redditurus; unde in Germanicum favor et spes eadem*). She goes on to suggest that the dramatised recollections of his obsequies illustrate the transition from the republic to the principate: although the event retained some features of a traditional republican funeral, with its display of Julian and Claudian *imagines* it nevertheless made clear that Rome was ruled by one family alone. Accordingly it may be concluded that Tacitus is implicitly contrasting Augustus' sham republic with Tiberius' open tyranny, which denies Germanicus official commemoration of any kind.²⁶

Then comes the emperor's response, in which he points out that no other distinguished Roman had been mourned to such an extent: *non...eadem decora principibus viris et imperatori populo quae modicis domibus aut civitatibus* (3.6.1). Moderation and restraint are required, of the kind that Julius Caesar and Augustus showed when they suffered personal losses: *nil opus vetustioribus exemplis*, as the Roman people had previously suffered *clades exercituum* and other such disasters and borne them with equanimity, for *principes mortales, rem publicam aeternam esse* (3.6.3). Once again, it is easy to read this edict as a patent demonstration of how things are different under the principate. Although Tiberius begins with vague references to past events, his shift to the specific precedents established by two foundational imperial figures is telling.

His return to the distant past is qualified by *nil opus...*, and the brief survey of previous reverses that follows leads into a *sententia* about the eternal nature of the *res*

²⁶ Gingras (1992) 245-8, and cf. Moles (1998/2011) 148-9. Gingras points out that at 247 that *cuncta a maioribus reperta aut quae posteris invenerint* (3.5.1) seems to exemplify Augustus' fusion of tradition and innovation: is it in fact an echo of *RG* 8.5? cf. Haverfield (1912) 197-9 and n. 13 of Chapter 2.

publica in comparison with its members. It has been argued by Sinclair, who sees an allusion to Cicero's *Pro Marcello* at 3.6.3 (cf. *doleo...cum res publica immortalis esse debeat, eam in unius mortalis anima consistere, Marc. 22*), that the emperor's words 'co-opt Cicero's dignified Republican sentiments in order to assert the stability of the Principate as an institution whose legitimacy lies beyond the limitations of any one individual'; the public cry that *concidisse rem publicam* is thus answered.²⁷

The idea that the popular memories of the elder Drusus' funeral exemplify the form that the Augustan principate took is compelling. Nevertheless, that does not mean that the elder Drusus and his alleged republicanism are to be read in an unambiguous way. The reference to his family relationship with Germanicus may well trigger recollection of the key passage 1.33.2 but, as Chapters 1 and 2 have already shown, in the *Annals* Germanicus is not portrayed as an individual at all likely to 'restore the republic'.²⁸ The elder Drusus, and the aura given him here (cf. too Suet., *Tib.* 50.1), may appear to contrast with this, but it is hard to justify sparing him the reservations applied to his son. The elder Drusus had similarly died before he had the opportunity to bring about the political change that, as in Germanicus' case, people believed that he intended (see *credebatur* at 1.33.2, which Tacitus neither challenges nor endorses).

Drusus had been born amid the civil wars in which the 'proto-imperial' republicans with whom Germanicus was linked in Book 2 fought; the alleged details about the response to his death (*defletum in foro, laudatum pro rostris*, 3.5.1) emphasise locations that ostensibly stand for republican politics but which by the mid-first century

²⁷ Sinclair (1995) 100-1 (cf. Gowing (2005) 40 and n. 27, and 64, on the same process in Velleius), and Woodman and Martin (1996) 109 *ad loc.*

²⁸ See Goodyear (1972) 251-2 *ad* 1.33.2 for some salutary remarks on this stance, and pp. 280-2 below.

BC had become the backdrop for civil violence and successive power struggles.²⁹ As in the case of Germanicus, Tacitus hints that those who saw the elder Drusus as an anachronistic figure who might have brought about a return to the republic were deluded. The belief that *concidisse rem publicam* (3.4.1) is immediately answered by Tiberius' declaration that *rem publicam aeternam esse* (3.6.3), which can be seen as an attempt to elide republic and principate by subsuming both into Roman history as a whole, but Tacitus has already asked *quotus quisque reliquus, qui rem publicam vidisset?* (1.3.7).³⁰

Meanwhile, the emperor is far from sympathetic in these chapters, and it is hard not to read his pronouncements as affirming the permanence of the principate and the imperial family, but his words about Roman history are also worthy of note. When Tacfarinas was defeated at 2.52, comparisons were made between Camillus' success and victories won by his distant ancestors. In Tiberius' edict at 3.6, however, the republican past in general is initially referred to in a cursory manner (*multos inlustrium Romanorum*, 3.6.1), and in urging his audience to follow the example of Julius Caesar and Augustus he cites very recent precedents. *nil opus vetustioribus exemplis* seems to make the point about the distant past's lack of relevance explicit – but the emperor then apparently contradicts himself, asserting that the Roman people had previously endured *clades exercituum, interitum ducum, funditus amissas nobiles familias* (3.6.3). In fact, though, all such happenings can be paralleled in the Tiberian books. This suggestion of rather unwelcome overlap between past and present further undermines the belief that the elder Drusus and then Germanicus would have turned the republic back into the principate.

²⁹ See Plut., *Ant.* 20.2 for how Cicero's head and right hand were placed on the rostra (cf. Sen., *Suas.* 6.26). The details included here are absent from Dio's account of Drusus' death (Woodman and Martin (1996) 100 *ad loc.*).

³⁰ cf. p. 134 above. At 1.3.7 *res publica* refers to the republic (and cf. too 1.7.3, though see n. 8 above) and at 3.6.3 to the state itself. 3.4.1 is ambiguous: do the mourners believe that republicanism, or Rome, is finished? Either way, their pessimism is mistimed: the republic is clearly long gone, but destructive 'civil war within the principate' (cf. 4.1.2, *deum ira in rem Romanam*) has not begun, and the wars of 69 are still far off.

There is a potential continuity between the two eras, but not in the way that is popularly expected.³¹ Nor does it take the form that Augustus sought to suggest that it did.

In any case, the idea expressed at 2.52 that glorious republican history is directly linked to the present day is now challenged, for Tiberius' dismissive words about the distant past initially suggest that this attitude will not stand up. His affirmed adherence to Augustan (and Caesarian) precedent, however, establishes a theme that will become more problematic as the narrative proceeds.³² Furthermore, this episode of mourning as a whole focuses on the distant past and on the triumviral and early imperial periods, and there is nothing on what happened in between. The next phase of fighting in Africa and the 'Sallustian' strand to Book 3 that begins there will now 'correct' this by introducing specific past narratives from this intermediary period, which have a rather uncomfortable resonance for the Tiberian present.

ii) An Old War is Renewed

After the 'false annalistic closure' to the narrative of Piso's trial and its aftermath that is offered by Vipsania's death (3.19.2-3), the narrative returns to Africa:

Tacfarinas...bellum in Africa renovat (3.20.1). The sense of closure evoked at 2.52.4-5 is immediately annulled. Moreover, while in that earlier passage both Arminius and Jugurtha seemed to be potential analogues for Tacfarinas, this expression creates a direct link with Sallust, as it occurs at *BJ* 36.1 and 54.5. In fact Tacfarinas seems to be

³¹ See pp. 189-91 below on 4.32-3, where instances of *clades exercituum*, *interitum ducum* under Tiberius are cited and similar continuities discussed; for examples of *funditus amissas nobiles familias*, see e.g. 1.2.1 and 2.37.5.

³² As Woodman and Martin (1996) 108 *ad loc.* note, *ereptis nepotibus* may have had 'uncomfortable resonances' for Tiberius: another awkward continuity between past and present is evoked.

‘renewing’ not only his own hostilities but – in a more metatextual sense – Jugurtha’s war, and this impression is maintained in the narrative.³³

The Roman commander Decrius, in attempting *ut copiam pugnae in aperto faceret* (3.20.2), seeks not only to repeat the success achieved by Camillus at 2.52.3-4 but also to force on the Numidians what Jugurtha had once sought to avoid (cf. *neque ab hoste copiam pugnandi fieri*, *BJ* 52.3, and cf. 56.1 and 82.1). Tacfarinas has become more wily, however, and his tactics (*inritum fessumque Romanum impune ludificabatur*, 3.21.4) recall Jugurtha’s actions at an earlier point in the *BJ*: in the *Annals*, *ubi instaretur cedens* (3.21.4) appears to echo *cedere instanti* (*BJ* 36.2).³⁴ Still, the Numidians are repulsed from a Roman fort *cui Thala nomen* (3.21.2). It is unclear whether this is the homonymous site where Jugurtha kept his treasures and his children (*BJ* 75.1), which was captured by Marius (*BJ* 76.2-6),³⁵ but this is the first reference in Tacitus’ north African narrative to a place attested elsewhere and it seems likely that it constitutes a glancing allusion to the *BJ*.

The past according to which the fighting against Tacfarinas is characterised has changed and is now defined more specifically: it is no longer the fourth century evoked at 2.52.5, but rather a particular historian’s account of warfare of the late second century BC. Nevertheless, while each side’s actions recall the events of the *BJ*, neither Romans nor Numidians follow the actions described in the earlier work to their full advantage. In Sallust, Marius’ capture of Thala is a memorable act, a real blow to Jugurtha, while Tacfarinas’ attack on its equivalent – note the reversal – is unsuccessful. The narrative is in any case more focused on the bravery of the *gregarius miles* Helvius Rufus (3.21.3). Nor do the verbal parallels in the *Annals* mean that Tacitus’ narrative flows in the same

³³ For the quotation see Gingras (1992) 244. Woodman and Martin (1996) 201-2 *ad loc.* discuss the exact implications of *renovat*, noting that Sallust uses it of the Romans, not Jugurtha.

³⁴ See Woodman and Martin (1996) 204 and 207-8 *ad locc* on these parallels.

³⁵ Woodman and Martin (1996) 206 *ad loc.*

way as that of his predecessor, even in small compass (cf. also n. 33 above). The actions of Decrius achieve nothing and, although Jugurtha successfully avoids a pitched battle, he is then hampered by the booty he has acquired (3.21.4).³⁶

The actions of the two Roman commanders, Decrius and his superior Apronius, also seem to reflect a problematic relationship between the present and the precedents of the past. When Decrius' men prove unable to hold out against their opponents, he mounts a solitary last stand: *occursat fugientibus, increpat signiferos, quod inco<n>ditis aut desertoribus miles Romanus terga daret; simul excepta vulnera et, quamquam transfosso oculo, adversum os in hostem intendit; neque proelium omisit, donec desertus suis caderet* (3.20.2). Within the hexad such actions make Decrius look somewhat anachronistic, a heroic, selfless figure out of place amid the mediocre men of the principate (cf. Chapters 1 and 4 for mixed Roman fortunes in Books 1-6).³⁷ But the eye wound he acquires links him to several notorious individuals, mainly enemies of Rome – the appearance of the similarly-impaired Flavus at 2.9.1 (see p. 63 above) has already raised this issue – and *transfosso oculo* seems specifically to recall Sallust's reference to Sertorius (*effosso oculo*, *H.* 1.88M).³⁸ Thus the echoes of the *BJ* are complemented by another parallel with a work by Sallust, in this case one that describes not a foreign war of the late second century but rather strife between Romans in the 70s BC.³⁹

Apronius' response to Decrius' death is to decimate the legion involved, *raro ea tempestate et e vetere memoria facinore* (3.21.1). This is cast as an attempt to revert to Rome's past but in fact decimation, despite its supposedly hallowed origins, is mainly

³⁶ Woodman and Martin (1996) 199 *ad* 3.20-1 note how at the end of the episode Tacfarinas is in the same position as at the beginning (note how *pulsum*, 20.1, is succeeded by *pellit*, 21.4).

³⁷ There seems to have been a trend in the early principate to use auxiliaries instead of legionaries where possible: see *Agr.* 35.2 and Gilliver (1996). Are the soldiers waiting for auxiliary help (in evidence at 3.21.4)?

³⁸ See n. 79 of Chapter 1 on monophthalmism, and Woodman and Martin (1996) 205 *ad* 3.20.2. Ash (1999) 126 and n. 53 suggests that Decrius may appear foolhardy and hints at a link with Tacfarinas' death; cf. p. 176 below.

³⁹ Not that the *BJ* is unconcerned with events in Rome (see e.g. p. 177 below) but here the contrast is important.

attested as an action carried out by Caesar, Antony, Octavian and others during the civil wars of the late republic.⁴⁰ Once more the relevance of the distant republican past is revealed as illusory: more recent and troubling events offer a closer precedent.

Meanwhile Tiberius, *questus magis quam offensus* that Apronius did not grant Helvius Rufus the *civica corona* (3.21.3), interferes to a greater extent than at 2.52.5, although his intervention is still presented as relatively benign. But while Apronius' action is temporarily effective, Tacfarinas will soon be causing more trouble, and in any case at 3.21.4 the commander's son Apronius Caesianus is able to inflict a defeat on him without imposing any such punitive measures on his men.⁴¹

d. History after Sallust

i) *Rerum Romanarum florentissimus auctor* (3.30.2)

The episode described at 3.20-1 hints at the importance of both the war with Jugurtha and events in Rome in the troubled early first century, as opposed to the distant and uplifting republican past evoked at 2.52, as a point of comparison for the Tiberian present. Moreover, from now on Sallust's work will recur in Book 3 and beyond. The *BJ* will feature again when fighting in north Africa flares up once more, but another Sallustian narrative, formed of echoes of the *Bellum Catilinae* (which may be foreshadowed by the allusion at 3.20.2 to Sertorius, and hence dissension between Romans, in Sallust's *Histories*), is also about to begin. Sallust's 'presence' in the text

⁴⁰ See Walbank (1957) 721 *ad Plb.* 6.38.2, and Woodman and Martin (1996) *ad loc.* for another Sallustian parallel (cf. *H.* 4.23M; Crassus). The ambivalence of *facinus* (see Ash (2010a) 280-1) also clouds the issue, and cf. also Ash (2006) 362-3 on Corbulo's strict punishments at 11.18.3.

⁴¹ At 4.73, however, Apronius will disgrace himself when dealing with the Frisian revolt (p. 224-5 below). See also 2.32.2 and 3.64.4: his political sycophancy sits ill with his supposedly old-fashioned stance here.

seems to be signalled a few chapters later by the first annalistic-style obituary in the *Annals*, which marks the deaths of Lucius Volusius and Sallustius Crispus (3.30). The pairing has been read as showing how new ways of acquiring power developed under the early principate. Volusius seems to represent traditional virtue, while Crispus is a different kind of servant to the state.

His potted biography here has also been seen to look ahead to the rise of Sejanus, who at the beginning of Book 4 will be described in ‘Catilinarian’ terms,⁴² and so there is a complex irony to the fact that Sallust’s descendant appears to be a prototype for Sejanus, in an obituary of which the style has been compared to Sallust’s.⁴³ It is also significant, however, that Crispus, whose covert service to Tiberius has already been mentioned at 1.6.3 and 2.40.2, is here linked to Augustus, and juxtaposed with Maecenas, who fulfilled a similar role for that *princeps*. Tiberius claimed Augustus’ behaviour as a precedent at 3.6.2; his use of Crispus looks like a more direct instance of adherence to Augustan policy.⁴⁴ But the fact that Crispus seems to prefigure Sejanus introduces the possibility that Tiberius’ imitation of Augustus in making use of a confidential helper may have had unintended consequences.

Before the obituaries at the end of the year AD 20 have been reached, however, Sallustian echoes are also to be found in the digression on the history of law that narrowly precedes them. This passage significantly contributes to the presentation of the changing perspective on the past in Book 3, but an additional point may be made at the outset. Once the narrative has left north Africa, the trial and appeal of Aemilia Lepida (3.22-3) and then the return to Rome of Decius Silanus (3.24) are reported. The circumstances of his exile are explained: as one of the alleged lovers of Julia, Augustus’ daughter, he had

⁴² Gingras (1992) 251-2; cf. Benario (1962), Martin (1990) 1535-6 and Pomeroy (1991) 205-6.

⁴³ Pomeroy (1991) 224; cf. 129-31 and 192.

⁴⁴ Kehoe (1985) 251-2 notes that elsewhere Crispus is associated more with Augustus, though cf. now Pettinger (2012) 175-84.

deemed the withdrawal of the emperor's friendship a sign that he should leave the city. Tacitus notes Augustus' attitude to such crimes (*nam culpam inter viros ac feminas vulgatam...*, 3.24.2) but will not go into great detail: *...cetera illius aetatis memorabo, si effectis in quae <te>tendi plures ad curas vitam produxero* (3.24.3). It is not clear if this vague undertaking is sincere or merely conventional.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, it seems to reinforce what the theme of Tiberius' use of Augustan precedent signals: Augustus' actions are relevant to the Tiberian principate, but what they induce Tiberius to do is more important, and demands more immediate attention, than the model he follows.

ii) A principio reges (1.1.1) again: the Digression on Legal History

Meanwhile, the growing importance to the narrative of Book 3 of late republican history and of its presentation in Sallust is underlined by the digression that follows Tacitus' vignette about Silanus (3.25.2-28.2). In a neat piece of ring-composition, the passage accounts for Tiberius' appointment of a commission to revise the *lex Papia Poppaea*. It explains how once upon a time laws were instituted to check *dominationes*, and then considers early Roman lawgivers. Following the kings' expulsion, a fair legal system was developed in Rome, but factionalism and jockeying for honours led to its perversion, and the emergence of demagogic figures. Sulla attempted to restore order, but renewed trouble soon ensued. Pompey tried to emulate him but, when he failed, for twenty years there was *discordia, non mos, non ius* (3.28.1). Finally Augustus, his position secure, *dedit...iura, quis pace et principe uteremur* (3.28.2).

⁴⁵ Woodman and Martin (1996) 229-30 *ad loc.*

This kind of survey of Roman history from the very distant past onwards, introduced in formal and rather remote terms, recalls the similar overview at *BC* 6-13 (as well as, to some extent, *BJ* 41-2), and its presence confirms the importance of Sallust in this part of the *Annals*.⁴⁶ Indeed, if 3.20-1 opens a ‘Sallustian’ narrative in the text, the digression stands near its beginning in the way that *BC* 6-13 does in the story of the Catilinarian conspiracy. The digression also hints at certain aspects of Roman history that will turn out to be especially relevant under Tiberius. It draws attention to the regal period and the autocratic elements in Rome’s past, and then it stresses the late second and early first centuries at the expense of the preceding sweep of republican history.

The advent of *dominationes* is presented as inevitable (cf. p. 89 above on the principate as a *dominatio*). Although the role of lawgivers elsewhere is described in reasonably positive terms, the nuanced historical tradition concerning Rome’s founder is summarised tersely (*nobis Romulus, ut libitum, imperitaverat*, 3.26.4), while his successor Numa is made to sound similarly autocratic.⁴⁷ Less ambiguous figures, and then the decemvirs and the Twelve Tables, are given very concise treatment. A brief, gloomy and vague survey of subsequent legal history follows and, when more specific historical details feature again, the end of the second century has already been reached: *hinc Gracchi et Saturnini turbatores plebis* (3.27.2). At last Tacitus reaches another autocratic individual, Sulla (*ibid.*). This section is resolved in a *sententia* that may offer a subtly ironic comment on the theme of Augustan legislation (*corruptissima re publica plurimae leges*, 3.27.3). The focus next shifts to Pompey, whose title (*consul corrigendis*

⁴⁶ See Woodman and Martin (1996) 236-8 *ad loc.* in general and, for the Sallustian verbal echoes in the passage, 241-2 *ad* 3.26.2 on the turning-point *postquam exui aequalitas*, and 254 *ad* 3.27.2 (*nec multo post tribunis reddita licentia...*). Koestermann (1963) 471 *ad* 3.28.1 shows how *non mos, non ius* picks up Sall., *H.* 1.18M.

⁴⁷ See Keitel (1984) 315-6, Sage (1991) 1418 and Woodman and Martin (1996) 245-6 *ad loc.* Note *Numa religionibus...populum devinxit* (3.26.4): on *devincio* see Santoro L’hoir (2006) 144-51, and cf. 1.3.4 and 4.1.2.

moribus, 3.28.1) indeed looks forward to the duties that Augustus assumed. Further chaos soon erupts, however, before the first emperor takes matters in hand.

Rome's past is presented in a manner familiar from the opening paragraph of the *Annals* at 1.1.1, with its disproportionate stress on the autocratic phases in Roman history and circular movement from *reges* to the *imperium* of Augustus, who was preceded by a succession of dominant individuals.⁴⁸ The description of the early rulers at 3.26.4 hints at the precedent for the principate afforded by Rome's kings. The regal period is allotted much more space than the early and middle republics; the importance of those eras is thereby minimised, and they are in any case presented in a selective, negative manner (*secutae leges...saepius tamen dissensione ordinum et apiscendi inlicitos honores...*, 3.27.1). Tacitus is less laconic about the final century or so of republican history and the information he includes is more specific and colourful: once again the principate is prefigured.⁴⁹ This increased emphasis on the late republic reinforces the view that this era is of significance in the surrounding text, and the themes that are to the fore in this section of the digression hint at the nature of that significance.

While the era prior to the civil wars is characterised in detail, however, those conflicts are termed merely *continua per viginti annos discordia* (3.28.1). They have already been outlined at 1.1.1; are they too well-known to be recounted again? Moreover, despite using Sallust in the 'long Book 3' to allude to events of the mid-first century BC, Tacitus will not evoke the civil wars themselves when Sejanus appears at the beginning of Book 4 and strife in Rome breaks out. Nevertheless, it has already been noted that a

⁴⁸ On the sequence of thought at 1.1.1 see Bardt (1894), Schillinger-Häfele (1966) and Leeman (1973), esp. 186-98; on the chapter as a whole see O'Gorman (2000) 7-9. cf. also pp. 88-9 above on 2.3-4, and Gowing (2005) 21, along with Moles (1998/2011) 124-6 and Clarke (2002) 84-5, and note that the history of the office of *praefectus urbi* at 6.11 follows a similar pattern, stressing the kings' role and then Augustus' actions.

⁴⁹ See Keitel (1984) 316-7, and Woodman and Martin (1996) 251 *ad* 3.27.1 on Tacitus' omissions and 253 *ad* 3.27.2-3 on how Sulla is linked to Augustus. Is Drusus mentioned at 3.27.2 – and not, say, Sulpicius – to hint at the existence of his homonyms under the principate? Chapter 2 suggested that Germanicus' eastern travels link him to various late-republican figures who foreshadow the emergence of the principate.

factor in the latter's emergence is Tiberius' emulation of Augustus in seeking partners for his rule. Here, by attempting to modify the Augustan marriage laws, for once Tiberius rejects his predecessor's example – but he seems not to achieve very much (*modicum in praesens levamentum*, 3.28.4). What Augustus established cannot easily be altered, even if adhering to his example brings trouble.

iii) The Shadow of the Past

In the digression Tacitus lays emphasis on the correspondences between the regal era and the principate, and the connections of the late republic, and of Sallust's accounts of it, with Tiberius' reign. This prepares for a chain of episodes that occupy a key position at the centre of Book 3. In each case the historian presents events in Rome with reference to republican history narrated by other authors, initially Livy and then Sallust, implying that there are telling parallels between Tiberian Rome and the period that preceded the first-century civil wars. But these allusions serve to underline how the individuals in the text seem unaware of which aspects of the past are truly relevant to the present; the sense at 2.52 that both Tacitus and his characters were drawing on the same episodes in earlier Roman history has been replaced with divergence.

First, there is the senatorial discussion of whether women should be forbidden to accompany their husbands abroad (3.33-4). The senate has failed to respond conclusively to Tiberius' request for a commander to be sent to Africa, where Tacfarinas is causing trouble again (3.32): already the senators seem unwilling to engage with pressing issues, and the dialogue does nothing to dispel the sense that they are generally 'out of touch'. The passage recasts the debate over the *lex Oppia* at Livy 34.1-8, with Valerius

Messalinus and Caecina Severus arguing for and against female freedom and taking on the Livian roles of the tribune Valerius Tappo and Cato the Censor respectively. Ginsburg has examined the intertextual parallels in the Tacitean passage, and sees both men as failing to emulate their predecessors fully.⁵⁰

As she points out, there is no way of telling if, in the actual debate, reference was made to the *lex Oppia*; it might be added that Tacitus does not explicitly suggest that the speakers are consciously ‘quoting’ Livy. Rather, their failure to perceive the nuances of the contemporary situation is demonstrated by how they are made to echo a scenario from the past. Ginsburg suggests that Caecina in particular is shown adhering to former practice so scrupulously that he appears to take no account of what has changed since Cato the Elder’s time: he argues ‘as if he were speaking in 195 BC instead of AD 21’.⁵¹ While in Books 1 and 2 Caecina proved a capable commander in Germany, possibly more adept than his superior Germanicus (see pp. 57-8 above), this stance now makes him look surprisingly anachronistic. But, as the narrative is moving away from the distant past as a point of reference for the present, the fact that *Caecinae sententia elusa e<s>t* (3.34.6), seemingly by Drusus’ decision to give his own opinion, is hardly unexpected.⁵² This imperial intervention confirms that acting as if nothing has changed since Cato’s time is not feasible.

The assertion of Caecina’s main opponent Messalinus that *neque..., ut olim, obsideri urbem bellis aut provincias hostiles esse* (3.34.2), however, is not entirely correct: the discussion was originally sparked by Tacfarinas’ persistent activities in north Africa. His words will ring more hollow as the narrative goes on and provincial hostility flares up elsewhere, most immediately in the Gallic revolt at 3.40-7. He also suggests, in

⁵⁰ Ginsburg (1993); cf. Marshall (1975), Sinclair (1995) 143-5 and, especially, Santoro L’hoir (1994) 11-17.

⁵¹ Ginsburg (1993) 92-3 (quotation from 93).

⁵² See Ginsburg (1993) 95-6 on *elusa*.

Livian terms, that *multa duritiae veterum <in> melius et laetius mutata* (3.34.2);⁵³ this confident statement about the present's improvement on the past sits ill with the growing impression in the text that, although there is continuity between the two eras, it is potentially of a kind that does not flatter imperial Rome. His words are capped by Drusus, who adds *pauca...de matrimonio suo* and also cites the example of Augustus' journeys *comite Livia* (3.34.6). The irony of his reference to his *uxor carissima* (ibid.) is obvious, for her adultery with Sejanus will be revealed at 4.3.3, but his characterisation of Livia merely as Augustus' supportive helpmeet also elides her role as a holder of power behind the scenes with influence over key dynastic events (see especially 1.5.4). In fact, although Caecina's original proposal may have been triggered by Plancina's recent behaviour in Syria, and it has also been suggested that an arch allusion to Agrippina's similar actions can also be read into his words, none of the three protagonists in this episode seems fully aware of the real danger posed by imperial women.⁵⁴

The participants in the debate at 3.33-4 are made to echo older precedents, but the obvious differences between past and present serve to demonstrate their inability to respond effectively to contemporary developments: if they have been won over by the 'Augustan façade', they are deluded. Subsequently the issue of the African command is resolved when Tiberius presents the senators with a choice between Marcus Lepidus and Iunius Blaesus (3.35.1). The former excuses himself (*intellegeretur...etiam quod silebat, avunculum esse Seiani Blaesum atque eo praevalidum*, 3.35.2), but his presence here also looks forward to his role in the next senatorial set-piece, in which Sejanus' role will be signalled again.

⁵³ See Chapter 4; and cf. Woodman (1998d) 136-40 on Tiberius' 'attacks' on Rome as the hexad proceeds. For the Livian echoes in *multa duritiae...*, see Woodman and Martin (1996) 301 *ad loc.*

⁵⁴ See Koestermann (1963) 483 *ad* 3.33.3, McCulloch (1984) 106-7 and Woodman and Martin (1996) 296 *ad* 3.33.3. Santoro L'hoir (1994) discusses the text's powerful imperial women more generally; see esp. 16-17. But Plancina has faded from the narrative and Tacitus will now stress Agrippina's vulnerability: despite Tiberius' fears, she does not present an actual threat to him (cf. pp. 228-9 below). Caecina has chosen the wrong targets.

The domestic narrative of AD 21 is presently interrupted by the Thracian and Gallic revolts (3.38.3-47), a distinct unit in the middle of Book 3. In Chapter 4 they will be discussed in the context of the other narratives of foreign opposition to Rome in Books 2, 3 and 4 (see pp.204-20 below): it will be argued that the Gallic revolt in particular prefigures the Batavian revolt in *Historiae* 4 and its civil war setting. Moreover, while both the rebellious Gauls and the discontented individuals back in Rome who rejoice to hear of the revolt seem drawn to the kind of Romano-Gallic war that was fought in the last years of the republic and recounted in Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*, they also resemble the conspirators in Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae*. The senate at 3.33-4 recalled Livy's account of the early second century BC; now the point of reference has shifted towards the first century.

When the narrative returns to Rome, at 3.49-51, the end of the year AD 21, Tacitus reports the trial of Clutorius Priscus, who was charged by a *delator* with composing a memorial poem for Drusus during the latter's illness (after doing this for Germanicus, he had been rewarded by the emperor).⁵⁵ Marcus Lepidus opposes the proposed death penalty, suggesting that Priscus' actions deserve a less stringent response from the senate and emperor, who has often lamented being unable to exercise clemency. He wins little support and Priscus is executed, but Tiberius then complains to the senate *solitis sibi ambagibus* (3.51.1). As a result, a measure is enacted to prevent immediate executions in future, although Tacitus comments on its limited effect.

There are some striking correspondences between what Lepidus says and the speech Sallust has Caesar deliver at BC 51 when he recommends mercy for the

⁵⁵ See Shotter (1969) and Petrini (2008).

Catilinarian conspirators.⁵⁶ Between 3.33-4 and 3.49-51, then, and via the late-republican echoes in the account of the Gallic revolt, the historical period evoked in the narrative has advanced from 195 to 63 BC: Cato the Elder and Julius Caesar are both figures from republican history but they have very different associations (see Chapter 2 for the latter as a ‘proto-imperial’ figure). Recollection of how in the *BC* Caesar is made to cite the clemency once shown to the Rhodians at Cato’s urging may have drawn attention to this shift.⁵⁷ Furthermore, evoking Sallust in this way continues the miniaturised Catilinarian narrative in the text, for it follows on from the echoes of the *BC* at 3.25.2-28.2 (and in the account of the Gallic revolt).

The advent of Sejanus, the ‘new Catiline’, is drawing closer but, although Lepidus seeks mercy for Priscus just as Julius Caesar spoke against executing the conspirators of 63, the rest of the senators do not even need an answering speech from a Catonian figure to dismiss Lepidus’ recommendations. They are happy to let a supposedly ‘Catilinarian’ individual go to his death even as they prove incapable of action against Sejanus and the genuine threat that he poses. Lepidus stands out, even though he will not obstruct Sejanus directly (see 3.35.2 and pp. 162-3 below).⁵⁸ As at 3.33-4, though, Tacitus’ use of another historiographical text underlines the senators’ ineffective attitude: even if they are not intentionally aping Sallust’s depiction of the senate of 63 BC,⁵⁹ there is nevertheless a sense that they are attempting to act as if the republic still existed, regardless of the changes wrought by the principate. The echoes of Sallust in their harsh action against the harmless Priscus underline how misguided they are, but later in Book 3 they will look

⁵⁶ These are discussed by Ginsburg (1986) 528-33; cf. Rogers (1953).

⁵⁷ See Levene (2000) esp. 185-8 and Ramsey (2007) 194-5 *ad BC* 51.5. The irony is, of course, that Caesar’s opponent is Cato the Younger.

⁵⁸ See Sinclair (1995) 171-5 (and 164-83, a challenge to the idea that Lepidus is Tacitus’ ‘hero’, *pace* 4.20.2-3).

⁵⁹ In both episodes the consul designate – Junius Silanus and Haterius Agrippa respectively – recommends the death penalty (*BC* 50.4; *A.* 3.49.2), but Silanus soon changes his mind. Is the imperial senate trying to outdo its republican counterpart?

even more anachronistic. At the same time they seem insensible of the ominous similarities between past and present,⁶⁰ while Tiberius' detachment from the issue and alleged unwillingness to act differently (*neque Tiberius interiectu temporis mitigabatur*, 3.51.2) suggest he is no more alert to the prospect of a new Catiline in Rome.

iv) *Nec omnia apud priores meliora* (3.55.5)?

Once Priscus' trial is over, the narrative of AD 22 opens with an account of attempts made to curb *luxus* (an issue already considered at 2.33). The aediles refer the problem to Tiberius (3.52), who responds with a letter that Tacitus purports to reproduce (3.53-4), in which he affirms that new legislation would probably lead to complaints and be ultimately ineffective; looking nostalgically back at the past, he points out that no one has tried to remedy the more pressing problem of food shortages. The question is dropped, but Tacitus then comments how in the post-Julio-Claudian period a more frugal lifestyle was adopted by the upper classes; some things may even have improved over time (3.55). Woodman and Martin suggest that this episode is a variation on Book 3's other major set-piece, the digression on legal history. There, the *princeps'* action framed an excursus on the past; here, his lack of action precedes a reflective consideration of future history.⁶¹ But the outlook on the past – and indeed, the future – that Tiberius seems to display in these chapters requires further analysis. The emperor has been absent from Rome for some time (his withdrawal to Campania was signalled at 3.31.2); he did not

⁶⁰ cf. Ginsburg (1986) 532.

⁶¹ Woodman and Martin (1996) 377 *ad* 3.52-5.

therefore attend the senatorial sessions recounted at 3.32-5 and 3.49-51. His position may be in some ways that of an outsider, looking in on Rome and the senate.⁶²

Tiberius is deemed by others a *princeps antiquae parsimoniae* (3.52.1), and initially he seems imbued with anachronistic values. His letter, with its stylised castigation of *villarum...infinita spatia* (3.53.4) and other luxuries, and its reference to the possibility of returning *priscum ad morem* (ibid.), appears to evoke a generalised, morally simplistic past. But he draws attention to his own imperial role (*maius aliquid et excelsius a principe postulatur*, 3.53.3), as well as claiming that old-fashioned thrift is no longer practised (*cur ergo olim parsimonia pollebat?*, 3.54.3). It is implied that a *princeps* cannot after all simply represent antique parsimony,⁶³ and the very existence of the principate, along with the implication at 3.53.3 that most magistrates have not been performing their proper duties, means that things are not as they once were. Not for the first time in Book 3, the senators expend their energies on a question demonstrably not of foremost importance to contemporary Rome, and adopt an almost culpably outdated point-of-view.

At 3.51 Tiberius appeared no more perceptive than the senate, but here he seems to have quite a lively appreciation of the situation.⁶⁴ His historical survey begins with an apparently idealised evocation of Rome's origins (*unius urbis cives eramus*, 3.54.3),⁶⁵ but his reference to the real problems facing a ruler of Rome (*Italia externae opis indiget*,

⁶² See Ash (2013) 442-3, and *passim* for Tiberius' critical – satirical, indeed – voice; cf. Morello (2006) 339.

⁶³ As Woodman and Martin (1996) 380 *ad loc.* note, *antiqua parsimonia* also occurs at 12.53.3. Can the patent scorn and irony there be read back into this passage?

⁶⁴ Koestermann (1963) 523 *ad* 3.54.4 compares Tiberius' tone to Cato's speech at Sallust, *BC* 52, but the senate at 3.49-51 have undermined the idea of taking a Catonian stance (see pp. 154-5 above), although the overlap between Tiberius' sentiments and those at *BC* 11.5-6 and 13.2-4 may contribute to Tacitus' underlying 'Sallustian' narrative. The emperor refers to Augustus' laws, now *contemptu abolitae* (3.54.2), although he does nothing to correct this: see p. 162 below for further adherence to his predecessor's example.

⁶⁵ Ash (2013) 450 shows how *sibi <quis>que moderabatur* (3.54.3) evokes Tiberius' famous *moderatio*, but it is rather piquant that here the emperor seems to deny the existence of that quality under the principate.

3.54.4) then puts the senators' more nebulous concerns into perspective. He also mentions how life in Rome has been affected by victories in foreign and civil conflicts (*externis victoriis aliena, civilibus etiam nostra consumere didicimus*, 3.54.3). Now, it has been implied (cf. pp. 28-9 and 55-6 above) that this progression from foreign to civil war is a defining pattern of Roman history: the withdrawal of *metus hostilis* culminated in the strife of the late republic. Tiberius' mention of this sequence may further set him apart from the senate by attributing to him a privileged viewpoint, approaching that of the author himself – but he refers to *victoriae*. Quite apart from the difficulties encountered by Roman troops fighting foreigners in the first hexad, the notion of victories in civil wars suggests that the emperor believes such conflicts are over. As Book 3 advances, however, the threat of a new civil war, one within the principate itself, is coming nearer; Tiberius' concern for feeding the populace will be counterbalanced by a failure to perceive a different sort of destructive threat to Rome in his own time.⁶⁶ He asserts that *hanc...curam sustinet princeps: haec omissa funditus rem publicam trahet* (3.54.5), but soon the *deum ira* will cause similar damage to the *rem Romanam* (4.1.2) and the *princeps* will be deeply implicated in this.

Moreover, the emperor's apparently complacent belief that Rome's civil wars have been concluded victoriously is a departure from his earlier suspicions of Germanicus, which were couched in terms of a fear of a premature start to the conflicts of 69, and this contrast is heightened by the authorial reflections that round off the episode.⁶⁷ Tiberius' assertion that *nos pudor, pauperes necessitas, divites satias in melius mutet* (3.54.5) is echoed and complicated by Tacitus' overview, which applies this notion of improvement within a Roman historical framework and stresses the painful nature of the

⁶⁶ As Woodman and Martin (1996) 396 *ad loc.* note, Rome had been dependent on imported grain since the second century: Tiberius' shock is misplaced. See also pp. 193 and 249-50 for the conjunction of food shortages and civil strife.

⁶⁷ Presumably he terms them *civiles victoriae* from a Julio-Claudian perspective: cf. Chapter 2's analysis of how a threatened replay of the wars won by Augustus gives way to a proleptic threat, to be realised in 69.

process: formerly great families *prolabebantur* (3.55.2), and then it was only after 69 (*postquam caedibus saevitum et magnitudo famae exitio erat*, 3.55.3) that an improvement was apparent.⁶⁸ Indeed, Roman history encompasses change and continuity here. The idea that *nec omnia apud priores meliora* (3.55.5), quite apart from its applicability to the *Annals* itself, serves as a rather sardonic comment on the actions of characters in the narrative who seem to look back to the past at the expense of their grasp on the present, but then *haec nobis <in> maiores certamina* suggests that Tacitus is taking on his predecessors directly. This seems to be the case in Book 3 particularly, in which his use of late-republican history suggests an overlap between past and Tiberian present to which the text's characters are evidently oblivious: both periods have been treated by historians of civil war.⁶⁹

e. Waiting for Sejanus

i) The Recent Past Revisited: 3.56-71

It has been suggested that in the last part of the narrative of AD 22 – and of *Annals* 3 – Tacitus ‘seems consistently to present persons and events in terms of a series of comparisons with the past’. The commentators link this adoption of a ‘consciously “historical”’ manner to the portrayal of the emperor, but also to the significant transition that will be marked at the beginning of Book 4.⁷⁰ So, in the light of the points made so

⁶⁸ To what this point refers has been much discussed, but Woodman and Martin (1996) 404 *ad loc.* show this probably refers to the civil wars of 68-9 in particular, and possibly also Domitian's reign.

⁶⁹ So perhaps indeed *rebus cunctis inest quidam velut orbis* (3.55.5), although strictly this applies to social and not political change: see Goodyear (1970a). See also Woodman and Martin (1996) 407-13 *ad locc.* on this difficult passage, and cf. pp. 199-200 below on Tacitus as a civil war historian.

⁷⁰ Woodman and Martin (1996) 375-6 *ad* 3.52-76.

far, it is worth examining the characters' use of various kinds of historical precedent here. The partial divide between the emperor and the senate that was discerned at 3.52-5 is maintained; once again, Tiberius seems shrewd in some respects but insensible in others.

The senators were last seen decrying the spread of conspicuous consumption in a rather anachronistic manner, even as they urged the emperor to act. Now, Silanus and Haterius propose to use the names of holders of *tribunicia potestas* rather than those of the consuls for official dating purposes, and to record the senatorial response to the emperor, who has asked that this power be granted to Drusus, in gold letters (3.57.1-2). This piece of *quaesitor adulatio* (3.57.1) continues the theme of the senate's eagerness to defer to the *princeps*, but it is also symbolic of the principate's republican 'look'. Ateius Capito's objection to an imperial decision *quasi per libertatem* (3.70.1; cf. pp. 166-7 below) a few chapters later can be read in a similar way. The senators seem to ape the past in an exaggerated manner, as if they have once again been taken in by the Augustan façade. Indeed, they now start to display a new interest in earlier Roman history, particularly in the era preceding the civil wars that have so often been referenced in Book 3. But they are unable to effect a full withdrawal back into the past.

First, the flamen Dialis, Servius Maluginensis, asks to be permitted to become proconsul of Asia, despite the taboos traditionally applied to his office (3.58). He refers to the existence of relevant historical precedents,⁷¹ but although he goes on to mention a pertinent fact from the previous century about the case of Cornelius Merula, he is coy about the context of the latter's death (cf. Vell. 2.22.2) and even more reticent about the seventy five years that then elapsed before another priest was appointed. His avoidance of the civil war period is conspicuous. Then, various Greek cities' claims to the right to offer asylum are heard: their representatives' appearance in Rome sparks recollections of

⁷¹ See Woodman and Martin (1996) 423 ad 3.58.2 for the possibility that he errs; cf. Shannon (2012) 101-3.

positive aspects of the republican past – and, evidently, of events prior to the civil wars – and the senate’s prominent role at that time (*magna... eius diei species fuit, quo senatus maiorum beneficia, sociorum pacta, regum etiam, qui ante vim Romanam valuerant, decreta... introspevit*, 3.60.3).⁷² The senators are initially eager to decide the issue, as if inspired to emulate their republican predecessors in the belief that the principate is not so very detached from the republic.

Tacitus’ exhaustive survey of the historical origins of the cities’ claims (3.61-2), however, creates a sense of the real work this would entail, and the senators soon hand over their responsibility to the consuls, just as they have previously proved loath to take decisive action independently of the emperor.⁷³ They have failed to follow republican practice in any meaningful way. Tiberius’ characterisation of them as ‘... *homines ad servitum paratos*’ (3.65.3; cf. n. 108 below) seems apt, but their problematic engagement with the past continues. A shift for the worse in their actions (*ab indecoris ad infesta transgrediebantur*, 3.66.1) is marked by a trial in which Mamercus Scaurus, an accuser of Gaius Silanus, bandies about *antiqua exempla* (3.66.1). Tacitus dwells more on the fact that these are less than apposite (*videlicet Scipio et Cato talia ulciscabantur*, 3.66.2), that Scaurus is hardly a worthy successor of the homonymous relation to whom he refers, and that his fellow-accusers are rather unsavoury (one of them had been helped *Seiani potentia*, 3.66.3), than on the defendant’s guilt or the disproportionate force wielded by those prosecuting him (3.67). Moreover, the events thus recalled occurred in

⁷² Note the episode’s introduction: *Tiberius, vim principatus sibi firmans, imaginem antiquitatis senatui praebebat* (3.60.1). This sentence’s connotations have been debated (see Woodman and Martin (1996) 432-3 *ad loc.*), but it clearly encompasses the continued existence of republican forms under the principate. Even if *imago* is not cynically meant, surely it does not preclude that response in a reader. cf. Shannon (2012) 105, and 108 for the cities’ emphasis on Roman involvement in their past at the expense of other powers.

⁷³ Shannon (2012) 109 also contrasts the lack of imperial flattery in the cities’ claims with the senate’s actions.

the second half of the second century BC,⁷⁴ a time immediately prior to the war against Jugurtha and indeed to the first century, both of which eras are key parallel narratives in *Annals* 3. Scaurus' examples are relevant to the direction events have taken in Rome in a way that he does not intend them to be, not least as this episode reintroduces Sejanus and his influence.

By contrast, in this section of the narrative Tiberius is not found looking back at remote history; he seems concerned with much more recent events, and in particular the example of Augustus. On a number of occasions he refers to his predecessor, whether by upholding the special role of the Augustales (3.64.4), ostentatiously citing a decision Augustus had made in a case similar to Silanus' (3.68.1), or turning down Maluginensis' request on the grounds that *quae principe Augusto constituta* offer sufficient guidance (3.71.2). These decisive interventions based on recent precedents mark him out from the senate, but they follow a more sustained example of engagement with Augustus, which sets the tone for this part of the narrative and for where it is leading. The emperor's expression of his views on sumptuary laws at 3.53-4 is said to have impressed the senate (*fama moderationis parta, quod ingruentes accusatores represserat*, 3.56.1),⁷⁵ and he then requests that the senate grant Drusus *tribunicia potestas*. Tacitus sets out the recent history of this function. Adopted by Augustus as a means of unobtrusively holding wide-ranging powers, it was granted to Agrippa and then to Tiberius himself (3.56.2). The latter then takes up the story to justify his request: *esse illi coniugem et tres liberos eamque aetatem, qua ipse quondam a divo Augusto ad capessendum hoc munus vocatus sit* (3.56.4).

⁷⁴ They span the years 149-116 BC: see Woodman and Martin (1996) 459-61 *ad loc.*, who also note that Scaurus' choice of these cases hardly attests to his good judgement. Moreover, as Gowing (2005) 33 points out, one of his fellow-accusers is the historian Bruttidius Niger, who wrote of the late republic (*Sen., Suas.* 6.20).

⁷⁵ cf. 3.50.2 and Woodman and Martin (1996) 367-8 *ad loc.* on *moderatio* as a Tiberian imperial virtue.

In the context of the ‘long Book 3’, however, the precedent for the *summi fastigii vocabulum* (3.56.2) – a phrase that demonstrates the transparency of Augustus’ application of republican nomenclature to the principate – does not look especially happy. Quite apart from the likely recollection that doubt was cast on Tiberius’ role as chosen successor of Augustus at the very beginning of the *Annals* (note 1.3.3), the reference to Drusus’ stable family life will soon look rather ironic (cf. p. 152 above on 3.34.6). Indeed, Drusus himself does not have much longer to live, and Tiberius’ incidental mention of Agrippa’s death is more applicable here than his direct comparison between himself and his own son. But this passage also raises an even more disquieting aspect to Tiberius’ adherence to Augustan practice. Tacitus’ reference to Agrippa’s role as *socium eius* [i.e. *tribuniciae*] *potestatis* (3.56.2) is picked up by the emperor’s own wish that Drusus *noti laboris participem sumi* (3.56.4). These past and present designations can be blended to form *socius laborum*: Sejanus’ acquisition of this title will soon be revealed (4.2.3), and not long afterwards he will destroy Drusus.

So the scene is almost set for Sejanus’ formal introduction at the beginning of Book 4, which is more directly foreshadowed by two developments pertaining to Roman topography. First, Marcus Lepidus requests senatorial permission to renovate his ancestral basilica, *Aemilia monimenta* (3.72.1). Augustus *nec...arcuerat* (ibid.) members of notable families to refurbish such buildings with their own funds, Tacitus explains, and Lepidus duly *avitum decus recoluit* (ibid.). Then Tiberius promises to repair the fire-damaged theatre of Pompey, as no one remained to do so (3.72.2). He also praises Sejanus for limiting the harm done by the fire, and *censuere patres effigiem Seiano* to be installed at the site (3.72.3).

Earlier in the narrative, Lepidus stood out somewhat from the rest of the senate when his speech recalled Sallust’s Julius Caesar (see pp. 153-4 above). His restoration of

the basilica, however, seems to reflect the way his peers have been behaving: it creates a semblance of continuity between republican past and imperial present, eliding the changes that have taken place in the interim. The illusory nature of this is symbolised by the need to seek imperial permission, of a kind once granted by Augustus – just as the first emperor had in other ways attempted to create the impression that aspects of the republic continued to exist under the principate.⁷⁶ Not only that, but the emperor's own adherence to Augustan precedent, which has been a recurring theme in the text, is revealed yet again. The consequences of Tiberius' efforts to follow his predecessor in another respect, by seeking to share the burden of ruling, are then revealed with this reference to Sejanus.⁷⁷ He has evidently been present all along.

ii) Res Blaesi (3.72.4)

Sejanus also serves to introduce a brief focus on events outside Rome. Tiberius is said to have granted triumphal *insignia* to Blaesus as a way of honouring his nephew – Sejanus – but even so *res Blaesi dignae decore tali fuere* (3.72.4). This leads into a retrospective summary of recent developments in the war with Tacfarinas. The latter has been absent from the narrative for some time, but his merely partial repulse at 3.21.4 means that it may not be surprising when he returns here, not only causing the Romans renewed trouble but even sending an embassy to Tiberius, demanding *sedem...ultra sibi atque exercitui suo* (3.73.1). If his request is not met, he will wage a *bellum*

⁷⁶ Tacitus simplifies the building's history, but further details would have made the same point: Sinclair (1995) 176 affirms that 'everything about [the Basilica Pauli, last renovated in 14 BC]...fully conformed with and promoted the ideology of the Principate'.

⁷⁷ Lepidus' appearance itself presages an allusion to Sejanus, just as it did at 3.35.2. Moreover, Tacitus' readers are likely to have been aware of the reaction of Cremutius Cordus, who will memorably appear at 4.34-5, to this *effigies* (*tunc vere theatrum perire*, Sen., *Marc.* 22.4).

inexplicabile.⁷⁸ The emperor, however, is said to be greatly affronted that a mere bandit and deserter is demanding what had been granted *ne Spartaco quidem post tot consularium exercituum clades inultam Italiam urenti, quamquam Sertorii atque Mithridatis ingentibus bellis labaret res publica* (3.73.2).⁷⁹ Suddenly Tiberius' perspective on the past seems to have changed: he does not draw on the Augustan era but on the late republic, and indeed the period that Tacitus' earlier allusions to Sallust's first-century narratives have brought into focus. In differentiating between the past and the current situation, however, the emperor seems not to recognise the full significance of these historical examples. While the seventies BC gave way to the sixties and the advent of further turbulence in Rome, Tiberius is apparently not aware of this or of the potential for such events to be 'replayed' during his principate, for he is more concerned with having Tacfarinas hunted down (3.73.3).

Moreover, once the fighting in north Africa begins, sustained echoes of Sallust's *BJ* appear. Local colour is given to Tacfarinas' activities with reference to his native-style *mapalia* (3.74.3, recurring at 4.25.1; cf. *BJ* 18.8 and 46.5) and, following on from Thala at 3.21.2, further geographical markers that link the two texts are specified. There is *praedatio in Lepci<ta>nos et suffugia Garamantum* (3.74.2; for Leptis (*sic*) and the Leptitani see *BJ* 19.3; 77.1, 2; 79.1) against which Cornelius Scipio is deployed,⁸⁰ and Blaesius' son is stationed *ne Cirtensium pagi impune traherentur* (3.74.2).⁸¹ But, in a departure from the contrasts with the *BJ* in Tacitus' narration of events at 3.20-1, this

⁷⁸ As Woodman and Martin (1996) 482 *ad loc.* note, *bellum inexplicabile* is unparalleled, but it may be slightly arch, in view of how Tacfarinas keeps recurring in the narrative.

⁷⁹ Tacfarinas' request echoes Maroboduus' at 2.63.2 (see p. 64 above), but the contrast between Maroboduus' retirement and Tacfarinas' continued resistance is keen; cf. also n. 19 above on Tacfarinas and Arminius.

⁸⁰ This name's heritage is obvious, but Tacitus does not draw attention to it as he did with Camillus at 2.52.4. This may well be because Scipio only has a cameo in the narrative, but by now the pre-first century past no longer feels relevant to the present.

⁸¹ At *BJ* 21.2-26.3 Adherbal takes refuge in Cirta, while from 81.2 onwards it recurs (though cf. Scanlon (1988) 144).

time it is almost as if the Roman commanders are aware of Sallust's work and have taken heed of it.

After Blaesus' appointment, *adversum artes Tacfarinatis hau<d> dissimili modo belligeratum* (3.73.3). The Roman forces are divided up, and *dux ipse arcta et infensa hostibus cuncta fecerat* (3.74.2); Blaesus also makes use of *expeditos et solitudinum gnaros*, and refrains from withdrawing the troops to *hibernaculis veteris provinciae* (3.74.3).⁸² This emphasis on employing Tacfarinas' methods against him and making good use of the African terrain is strongly reminiscent of the efforts of Metellus against Jugurtha.⁸³ Tacitus' use of the *BJ* may suggest it has become a textbook for the Romans in north Africa, enabling them to make gains against the enemy; this stands out against the unwitting adherence to late-republican historiographical narratives attributed to the senators in Rome.

But despite the detailed description of Blaesus' approach, which checks Tacfarinas, its outcome is ultimately rather underwhelming, as Tacfarinas *fratre eius capto regressus est...relictis per quos resurgeret bellum* (3.74.3).⁸⁴ Tiberius nevertheless responds enthusiastically (*id quoque Blaeso tribuit, ut imperator a legionibus salutaretur, prisco erga duces honore*, 3.74.4), although Tacitus follows this by noting archly that previously *erant...plures simul imperatores nec super ceterorum aequalitatem*. He also adds that *concessit quibusdam et Augustus id vocabulum, ac tunc Tiberius Blaeso postremum* (ibid.). Blaesus' victory and the reaction to it are very far removed from the replay of past glories that Camillus was seen to achieve at 2.52.4-5:⁸⁵ the distance

⁸² See Woodman and Martin (1996) 487 *ad loc.* on the anachronistic *vetus provincia*, 'perhaps to be explained by [Tacitus'] seeing the events of AD 22 through the eyes of Sallust...'

⁸³ Woodman and Martin (1996) 484 *ad* 3.73.3 cite *BJ* 48.1, Jugurtha's realisation that *se suis artibus temptari*. Surely relevant as well is *BJ* 44.1, when Metellus imposes his own methods on the unwarlike troops in Africa, although Tacitus does not explicitly suggest that the Romans at 3.73-4 have lacked discipline.

⁸⁴ This also fits the *BJ*: Metellus is not given the chance to finish off the war in Africa (*BJ* 73.7, 88.1)

⁸⁵ Note *prisco...honore* (3.74.4): at 2.52.5 Tiberius' praise of Camillus is neutrally reported, but here his treatment of Blaesus is explicitly characterised as anachronistic.

between the Tiberian present and the earlier republican past is underlined.⁸⁶ There are also obvious points to be made about the nature of the principate as it is revealed here and its use of republican-style designations such as ‘*imperator*’, and about Blaesus’ less than deserved rewards.⁸⁷ But when the fighting against Tacfarinas breaks out one more time in Book 4, Tiberius’ talk of late republican conflicts will take on a new meaning, and the full implications of Tacitus’ allusions to the *BJ* will be revealed.

f. Sejanus (At Last)

i) *Deum ira in rem Romanam* (4.1.2): Endings and Beginnings

Annals 3 ends with a group of obituaries at 3.75-6, which match those at 3.30 (cf. pp. 145-6 above) and round off AD 22.⁸⁸ The deaths of Asinius Saloninus, and then of Ateius Capito are reported, and the latter is juxtaposed with a third individual, Antistius Labeo, whom Augustus is said to have held back in public office in favour of Capito.⁸⁹ Labeo was a man *incorrupta libertate et ob id fama celebratior, Capitonis obsequium dominantibus magis probabatur* (3.75.2): the former managed to maintain his personal independence under Augustus, but *incorrupta libertate* also echoes Capito’s speech *quasi per libertatem* (3.70.1; cf. p. 159 above), where *libertas* seems to have more overtly

⁸⁶ With *nec super ceterorum aequalitatem* Woodman and Martin (1996) 488 *ad loc.* compare *omnes exuta aequalitate iussa principis aspectare* (1.4.1). See too Haynes (2004) 55-6.

⁸⁷ McCulloch (1984) 45-50, however, suggests that Tacitus unjustly disparaged Blaesus’ African campaign.

⁸⁸ Woodman and Martin (1996) 475 *ad* 3.71-2 note how the African narrative separates the obituaries from the other end-of-year items at 71-2 and thus emphasises them.

⁸⁹ See Gingras (1992) 254-6. Note the echoes of key concepts from 1.1.1 in *libertate* and *dominantibus*: the sweep of Roman history from remote past to late republic and early principate is briefly recalled.

political overtones.⁹⁰ The contrast between old and new ways of gaining power introduced at 3.30 is reaffirmed more forcefully, and in more emotive terms.

In a sense, however, both men seem to have acted as if the republic still existed. What differentiates them is that Capito's adoption of republican-style free speech, rather like the rest of the senate's efforts in Book 3 to hark back to the past, was transparent. During Augustus' principate, by contrast, Labeo appears to have preserved what he considered to be a more genuine form of republicanism in his own actions, even though he was pursuing his career under an emperor. This won him *commendatio* (3.75.2) but not the imperial favour and political success that Capito achieved; now, however, the behaviour of Capito and other senators has itself failed to impress the *princeps*, and shown them to be unable to handle political realities under the Tiberian principate. In any case, soon the disappearance of the Augustan façade that Capito and Labeo variously reflected will be made clear.

A similar pattern can be discerned in the funeral of Junia, Brutus' sister and Cassius' wife, which concludes Book 3 (3.76). This has been seen as counterbalancing the evocation of Drusus' republican-style obsequies and the responses to the death of Germanicus, the alleged aspirant republican, at the beginning of the book.⁹¹ Ambiguous elements in the portrayals of both the elder Drusus and his son Germanicus have already been noted, so there is potentially an implicit contrast here between those two men – and the recurrent imperial practice of aping the republican system – and Brutus and Cassius, who sought to defend the republic before it was succeeded by the principate. As in the case of Labeo and Capito, though, all these individuals are dead now: the nature of their different forms of republicanism is irrelevant. Meanwhile, at the funeral itself a much older time is briefly, piquantly evoked: the *Claudiorum Iuliorumque imagines* paraded at

⁹⁰ See Woodman and Martin (1996) 494 *ad* 3.75.2, and 24-8 above on different definitions of *libertas*.

⁹¹ Woodman and Martin (1996) 489 *ad* 3.75-6; Gingras (1992) 246. See p. 197 below on Brutus and Cassius in Book 4.

the elder Drusus' obsequies (3.5.1) have been replaced by the antique *Manlii, Quinctii aliaque eiusdem nobilitatis nomina* (3.76.2).⁹² But the narrative has shown that republican history no longer means very much – apart from its last phase, which will now at last come into focus.

Indeed, *Annals* 4 begins with a sharp transition: all was reasonably well at the beginning of AD 23, *cum repente turbare fortuna coepit, saevire ipse aut saevientibus vires praebere. initium et causa penes Aelium Seianum...cuius de potentia supra memoravi* (4.1.1). The language here is famously modelled on Sallust's description of the detrimental effect on Rome of Carthage's destruction (*BC* 10.1), although it is striking that Sallust uses *saevire* of *fortuna*, but Tacitus of the emperor: the destructive role in the state of the *princeps* himself is emphasised. Moreover, the summary of the methods Sejanus used to acquire power (*corpus illi laborum tolerans, animus audax; sui obtegens, in alios criminator*, 4.1.3) alludes in a clear and sustained manner to Catiline's introduction at *BC* 5. These echoes confirm what Tacitus' earlier allusions to the *Bellum Catilinae* hinted: it is not republican history in general, but the last years of the late republic, as recounted by Sallust, that are particularly relevant to Tiberian Rome.⁹³ Moreover, they signal the start of a further Sallustian narrative within the *Annals*, in which Rome will be afflicted with a kind of civil war. It has been argued so far that the Sallustian strands in the text and the suggestions about the characters' relationship to the past both point to what is actually happening in Rome as Sejanus' appearance is awaited,

⁹² At the younger Drusus' funeral will be *imagines* of Aeneas, the Alban kings, Romulus, *post Sabina nobilitas, Attus Clausus ceteraque effigies Claudiorum* (4.9.2; see p. 169): the focus returns to the regal period, of which the links to the principate were noted at pp. 147-9 above, and the – politically inoffensive? – very early republic.

⁹³ Martin and Woodman (1989) 79, 84-6 *ad loc.*: note the difference from the parallel section of Dio's narrative (Dio 57.19: the turning-point there is AD 20 rather than 23, but that text lacks a triadic structure). They also note the altered use of *saevire*: as Pelling (2013) 7 remarks, amid the similarities this marks a key difference between republic and principate.

and also lead up to an initial climax; this will now begin. The threatened inconsistency between *cum repente* and *supra memoravi* fits this sense that Book 4 marks both a beginning and a continuation.

As AD 23 unfolds, first the state of the empire and Tiberius' methods of ruling so far are surveyed (4.4.2-7.1),⁹⁴ and then the circumstances of Drusus' death and its aftermath are discussed (4.3, 7.1-10.3). Although the latter is posthumously granted *eadem quae in Germanicum decernuntur* (4.9.2), his demise is marked out from that of his brother both by a public statement from the emperor and a funeral in Rome. In fact, although his tone this time is rather less admonitory, Tiberius' reported speech bears some resemblance to the sentiments he expressed at 3.6 when calling for an end to the extreme grief for Germanicus. He calls attention to his own fortitude and asserts his intention to find comfort *e complexu rei publicae* (4.8.3; cf. *rem publicam aeternam esse*, 3.6.3), before commending Drusus' sons Nero and Drusus to the senate and reminding the boys that '*...ita nati estis, ut bona malaque vestra ad rem publicam pertineant*' (4.8.5).

The imperial redefinition of the term '*res publica*' begun at 3.6 (see pp. 132-3 and 141 above) appears to be complete. The emperor's use of it picks up his earlier statement, which similarly referred not to the republican political system but the Roman state as a whole, here confirmed to be a hereditary monarchy by the imperial grandchildren's prominence.⁹⁵ In his speech to the senate, however, the emperor goes on to add *vana et totiens inrisa...de reddenda re publica utque consules seu quis alius regimen susciperent* (4.9.1). What he has just said gives the lie to these sentiments. If the *res publica* is Rome itself, it is meaningless to speak of restoring it. In any case, Tacitus has already offered a

⁹⁴ See Martin and Woodman (1989) 105 *ad* 4.6.1 on the difficulties of linking this to the narrative of Books 1-3.

⁹⁵ The knowledge that Nero and Drusus will die prematurely and their absent brother Gaius become emperor adds an extra frisson to this. See also p. 243-4 below on 6.24.1.

cynical perspective on the popular belief that the elder Drusus and Germanicus might bring back republicanism.⁹⁶ Moreover, the senators have repeatedly shown their lack of suitability for independent government, which makes the possibility that *consules seu quis alius* (4.9.1) should take over look even more unrealistic.⁹⁷

This point recurs, in starker terms, when Gaius Silanus, a target of Sejanus but also resented by the emperor in his own right, faces an accusation from Visellius Varro, the current consul. Silius asks for the prosecution to be deferred until the latter has left office, but Tiberius objects to this apparent contravention of procedure: *nec infringendum consulis ius, cuius vigiliis niteretur, ne quod res publica detrimentum caperet* (4.19.2). Tacitus adds that *proprium id Tiberio fuit, scelera nuper reperta priscis verbis obtegere. igitur...quasi aut legibus cum Silio ageretur aut Varro consul aut illud res publica esset, coguntur patres...* (4.19.2-3). Once again, Tiberius appears to uphold the *res publica*, defined by the immediate context as Rome itself, but when Tacitus goes on to assert that the situation was *quasi aut legibus cum Silio ageretur aut Varro consul aut illud res publica esset*, the meaning of *res publica* momentarily shifts, back to the republic. At the same time, though, the historian confirms that the republic is no more and stresses the illusory nature of the emperor's words by citing his tendency *reperta priscis verbis obtegere*.⁹⁸

Such an appeal to senatorial prerogative can only ring hollow, given the recent actions of the senate and consuls and their inability to react to Sejanus. But *ne quod res*

⁹⁶ See pp. 140-1 above, Osgood (2006) 290 *ad Cic., Off.* 2.3-4 and Martin and Woodman (1989) 121-2 *ad loc.* for Augustus' alleged plans *de reddenda re publica* (though cf. Griffin (2005) 36 n. 8). Kampff (1963) 46-53 argues that 4.9 reflects a historical intention on Tiberius' part to restore senatorial government (cf. n. 11 of Chapter 1), but acknowledges that Tacitus' presentation does not encourage the reader to credit this.

⁹⁷ The vague *quis alius* picks up Tiberius' recurrent efforts to share his responsibilities with someone else (hence *totiens*), but there is a palpable irony in the idea that Tiberius is now contemplating a replacement helper, given that Sejanus' influence and indeed his alleged role in Drusus' death have now been made known.

⁹⁸ As Martin and Woodman (1989) 148 *ad loc.* note, this fits Tiberius' dissimulatory habits, and it may also echo the civil war trope of words changing their meanings. But it also seems to represent the principate's use of the terminology of the republic, initiated by Augustus and continued by Tiberius.

publica detrimentum caperet clearly echoes the republican *senatus consultum ultimum* and, in this Sallustian context, the passing of that decree against Catiline (see especially *BC* 29.2).⁹⁹ The characters appear not to realise it, and Tiberius overplays the threat posed by Silanus just as the senate exaggerated the guilt of Priscus in similar terms at 3.51. The one enduring continuity between past and present, however, is the existence of a Catilinarian figure – although it is not he who is identified as such by the characters in the text – and the prospect of civil conflict.

Indeed, by now signs of burgeoning civil war within the principate, stirred up by Sejanus, can be discerned. He induces the two Liviae, elder and younger, to complain to Tiberius about Agrippina: *subnixam popularibus studiis inhiare dominationi* (4.12.3). In this way Germanicus' widow is represented as a potential civil war contender,¹⁰⁰ someone who seeks *dominatio*, a way of ruling that was said at 1.1.1 to have recurred in the turbulent last years of the republic (cf. pp. 88-9 above). The irony that it should be Sejanus, who has been repeatedly characterised with reference to that period,¹⁰¹ who causes such allegations to be made is brought out when he himself accuses her more openly: *diductam civitatem ut civili bello; esse qui se partium Agrippinae vocent...* (4.17.3). Far from acting as a defender of the state, he will prove to be a most dangerous aggressor.

⁹⁹ Readers may have also thought of Caes., *BC* 5.3, where the same decree heralds a much greater conflict.

¹⁰⁰ Agrippina's popularity is of course genuine (see e.g. 3.4.2, 5.4.3), as was that of her husband, and it was one of the factors that gave him the potential to initiate civil war (cf. pp. 48-9 above).

¹⁰¹ Indeed, *dominatio* is explicitly used of what Catiline and his associates are seeking at *BC* 17.5 and 20.2. See too p. 244 below.

ii) The Death of... Tacfarinas

The move against Silanus heralds a depressing sequence of trials, accusations and senatorial decisions, into which intrude the final instalment of war against Tacfarinas and the reaction back in Rome to his defeat (4.23-6). Initially this change of scene seems merely to underline the parlous state of Rome under the principate. The ‘republikanische Stilisierung’ that announces this final success (*is demum annus...*, 4.23.1)¹⁰² is soon eclipsed by stress on previous failures, exemplified by the *tres laureatae in urbe statuae* (ibid.). There is also the disclosure that the African proconsul Dolabella had prematurely withdrawn the ninth legion, *iussa principis magis quam incerta belli metuens* (4.23.2). The mood evoked by the account of events in Rome in the surrounding chapters is paralleled in operations abroad.¹⁰³ Despite this unpromising beginning, however, the Romans actually fare rather better against Tacfarinas than on previous occasions, and this episode offers a number of more complex interpretative possibilities, not least because within it the two Sallustian strands in the narrative finally come together.

Once the preliminary survey of Roman mismanagement of the war has been completed, the focus shifts to Tacfarinas’ own actions: he has apparently changed. Originally presented as a treacherous ex-auxiliary (2.52.1-2), although the implications of this were not pursued, and then as a dogged opponent who kept harrying Roman forces, he now appears in a rather different guise. He calls on others to join him, alleging that the legion’s withdrawal was due to the fact that *rem Romanam aliis quoque ab nationibus lacerari* and that now is the time for *cuncti, quibus libertas servitio potior* to join in

¹⁰² Koestermann (1965) 96 *ad loc.*; cf. p. 222 below on 4.46.1 and 72.1.

¹⁰³ Note too the reference to Tacfarinas’ new troops, deserters from king Ptolemaeus: they *libertos regios et servilia imperia bello mutaverant* (4.23.1). This directly echoes what some Romans felt during the Gallic revolt (see further p. 209 below). It may also foreshadow the role of freedmen in later books (cf. *Ger.* 25.2); Tiberius was not known for relying on them, but *incuriosus*, used of Ptolemaeus here, will be applied to him at 4.32.2.

attacking Rome's remaining forces (4.24.1). Now, Chapter 1 considered the struggles of the *liberator* Arminius, and in Chapter 4 it will be shown in further detail that Tacfarinas is not the only foreign rebel in the Tiberian hexad to talk in terms of freedom and servitude, and of attempting to throw off Roman rule completely. His claims about Rome's supposed plight in fact seem to reflect knowledge of these other insurrections, and in his use of the rhetoric of freedom he almost seems to have 'learnt' from the leaders of the Gallic revolt at the centre of Book 3 (3.40-7, with this kind of language at 40.3; the Thracian revolt at 3.38.3-39 may also be relevant to this).

The ambiguities in Arminius' portrayal have already been considered, and it will be shown in due course that the leaders of the Gallic revolt are by no means entirely unambiguous figures, not least as they are linked to Iulius Civilis, the morally dubious leader of the Batavian revolt in *Histories* 4 (see especially pp. 216-20 below).¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, their resistance and that of the other rebels shows up Roman acceptance of the principate's curtailment of liberty, and Tacfarinas' new status as a freedom-fighter here, directly after a narrative section that emphasises the grim situation in Rome, highlights a contrast that will become more starkly apparent in the Thracian and Frisian episodes later in Book 4 (4.46-51, 72-3; see pp. 221-6 below). But the free, unsubdued Germans in Books 1 and 2 are the only foreigners who are ultimately able to defeat Rome. As the hexad goes on it becomes clear that, for the rest, fighting for freedom will ultimately result in failure. So within the text Tacfarinas' new role may also imply that his campaigns are about to reach an unsuccessful end.

Indeed, the Romans at last prove able to induce the kind of disarray amongst their north African enemies that they previously failed to achieve. The new commander Dolabella operates *terrore nominis Romani* (4.24.2) and, after raising the siege of

¹⁰⁴ Indeed, Tacfarinas' allegations about the *rem Romanam* echo Civilis' words at *H.* 4.14.4 (*numquam magis inflictam rem Romanam*), although more ironically they also pick up *deum ira in rem Romanam* (*A.* 4.1.2).

Thubursicum and executing some potentially disloyal Musulamian allies,¹⁰⁵ continues Blaesus' strategy of dividing the Roman forces in order to overcome Tacfarinas' now familiar refusal to engage in direct confrontations (see *pluribus...expeditionibus cognitum*, 4.24.3). But this adoption of 'native' tactics and use of local forces is followed up by a surprise attack on the Numidian camp, in which a sharp dichotomy between Roman organisation and barbarian disorder is drawn: *cuncta proelio provisa: hostibus contra omnium nesciis non arma, non ordo, non consilium, sed pecorum modo trahi occidi capi* (4.25.2).

The Roman assault on *semisomnos...barbaros, praepeditis Numidarum equis aut diversos pastus pererrantibus* (ibid.) in fact verbally links this encounter to Germanicus' similarly easy victory over *semisomnos, inermos aut palantes* Germans at 1.51.1. But, as Chapter 1 showed, his early success heralded a far more difficult campaign, and Dolabella's achievement here must be seen in the context of Rome's mixed military fortunes in the Tiberian hexad as a whole.¹⁰⁶ The terror inspired by the *nomen Romanum* will not last. The reaction at home to Tacfarinas' eventual defeat can be read in a similar way. Dolabella is denied triumphal honours out of consideration for Blaesus and Sejanus (4.26.1), and then Ptolemaeus' services in providing troops are rewarded *ex vetusto more*: he is granted *antiqua patrum munera* and the title *socius atque amicus* of the Roman people (4.26.2). Traditional distinctions of this kind, however, are of only limited meaning under the principate.¹⁰⁷ At the beginning of the north African narrative, Camillus' success looked directly back to a glorious past and was duly rewarded in

¹⁰⁵ And forestalling the emergence of a new Tacfarinas (said at 2.52.1 to be a deserter and a *dux Musulamiorum*)?

¹⁰⁶ A similarly easy victory is won over the rebellious Thracians at 3.39.2, but it too will be succeeded by a much more difficult encounter at 4.46-51: see pp. 221-6 below.

¹⁰⁷ cf. n. 103 above: Ptolemaeus does not look like an especially worthy recipient of such honours.

Rome; Dolabella's greater achievement is now presented amid a scene of wider political turmoil and pointless anachronism.¹⁰⁸

There is, however, another aspect to this final instalment of the Tacfarinas-narrative, which will further focus attention on events in Rome: the way in which it represents the climax of the two Sallustian strands in this part of the *Annals*. The commentators point out that the description of the fighting in north Africa here, like the episodes at 3.20-1 and 73-4, contains a number of echoes of similar warfare in the *BJ*.¹⁰⁹ These parallels, along with the fact that Dolabella continues Blaesus' guerrilla strategy, which also worked against Jugurtha, suggest that the Romans may now have recognised the significance of their Sallustian 'textbook'. The narrative of the *BJ* cannot be mapped exactly onto Tacitus' account of the fighting against Tacfarinas or even this last section of it, but there is some sense that the final victory against Jugurtha has resonance for Dolabella's success.¹¹⁰ Moreover, Tacfarinas dies fighting, in contrast with the treacherous capture of his second-century counterpart (*BJ* 113.6). Tacfarinas is a particular target for the Roman soldiers' vengeful ire and, when he finds himself surrounded, with his bodyguard cut down and his son captured, he *ruendo in tela captivitatem haud inulta morte effugit* (4.25.3). The comparison between the two scenarios may seem to reflect well on Rome, despite the less than satisfactory domestic

¹⁰⁸ It is immediately followed by a report of a slave war, initiated by yet another ex-auxiliary who also uses the rhetoric of *libertas* (4.27). Again, this may seem to evoke memories of the republican past, especially the war against Spartacus in the 70s BC, but now it reinforces the point that the Romans themselves seem incapable of resisting the oppressive principate. Tiberius indeed characterised the senate as servile at 3.65.3.

¹⁰⁹ See Martin and Woodman (1989) 157-9 *ad* 4.24.1 *oppidum circumsidet*; 24.3 *praedatorias manus* and *ipse consultor aderat omnibus*; 25.1 *mapalibus*; 25.2 *aderant semisonos in barbaros, cuncta provisa, non...non...non* and *trahi occidi capi*.

¹¹⁰ *non...non...non* and *trahi occidi capi* (4.25.1; see previous note), which underline the Africans' helplessness, seem to allude to passages near the end of the *BJ* (99.2, 101.11).

reaction to the victory; Tacitus' earlier assertion that *nec omnia apud priores meliora* (3.55.5) comes to mind.¹¹¹

But even if the Romans have 'learnt' from Sallust, they will prove ultimately unaware of the full significance of his monograph. Within the north African narrative, Tacfarinas' lone last stand recalls that of Decrius at 3.20.1: both men lack support and see that the situation is hopeless, and fight until their very last gasp. Decrius' heroism is not necessarily called into question by this parallel, although his eye wound has already linked him to some rather ambiguous figures (see n. 79 of Chapter 1 and p. 144 above). More important, however, is the fact that Tacfarinas' death in this style is reminiscent of that of another key figure in Roman historiography, Sallust's Catiline. As with Decrius, there are no direct verbal parallels, but *at ille deiectis circum stipatoribus* (4.25.3) and *Catilina postquam fusas copias seque cum paucis relicuom videt* (BC 60.7) follow a similar pattern: realisation of the hopeless situation and the absence of comrades, decision to rush headlong into the fray, death while fighting.¹¹²

So the final Roman victory in north Africa echoes Jugurtha's defeat, but also Catiline's death. In replaying the endings of the *Bellum Jugurthinum* and the *Bellum Catilinae* it thereby represents the conclusion of the two Sallustian narratives in the 'long Book 3': Sallust's description of the war against Jugurtha has been an increasingly relevant parallel text for the campaigns against Tacfarinas, while links to his account of the Catilinarian conspiracy have contributed to an increasing sense that the first century BC is the past era with the greatest relevance for the domestic situation in Tiberian Rome. These strands now reach a joint conclusion.

¹¹¹ cf. Tiberius' assertions at 2.88.2, but note too the Roman habit of deceiving foreigners (and fellow Romans): see pp. 91-2 above, and also 202-4 below on Rhescuporis, the other 'Jugurtha'.

¹¹² Vretska (1976) II 686 *ad BC* 60.7 cites only one close parallel, Hasdrubal's death (Livy 27.49.3-4, which looks intentional). The lack of further examples suggests that this trope is not common, and that the possibility that Tacitus is alluding to the end of the *BC* should of itself be taken seriously.

First, the contrasting fates of Jugurtha and Tacfarinas do not constitute the only point of difference between the endings of Sallust's and Tacitus' north African narratives: in *Annals* 4, Dolabella is not granted the triumphal honours he seems to deserve, whereas at the end of the *BJ* Marius *magna gloria consul triumphavit* (*BJ* 114.3). The rejoicing in Rome at this victory, however, is tempered by the recent defeat of a consular army at the hands of the Gauls, and the work ends with a reference to the expectations accordingly placed in Marius: *ea tempestate spes atque opes civitatis in illo sitae* (*BJ* 114.4).¹¹³ Although those hopes were justified, it is almost impossible not to see this finale as casting an ironic look further into the future, towards the more destructive and destabilising role that Marius would later play. The themes of civil turbulence that have featured earlier (cf. *BJ* 41-2, and the speeches of Memmius and Marius at 31 and 85) have already shown that the text is concerned with issues other than than the north African war. In the *Annals*, Dolabella is an entirely different figure and, as incidents at 3.47.3 and 69.1 have already shown,¹¹⁴ very much a creature of the principate.

The implied comparison with Marius may therefore engender a degree of relief: Dolabella is unlikely to contribute to political disorder in Rome. But despite the differences between Sallust's and Tacitus' works, there have been enough sustained allusions to the *BJ* in the Tacfarinas-narrative for Dolabella's victory to be seen as looking forwards in the same way that Marius' does. The troublesome Gauls in the *Annals* have already been defeated, but the Roman success in north Africa will be followed by more difficult encounters with the Thracians and Frisians,¹¹⁵ and there will then be no Marius-figure to uphold Roman military prowess. Moreover, further conflicts

¹¹³ See e.g. Levene (1992) 54-5.

¹¹⁴ His success here contrasts with his obsequious response to Tiberius' 'victory' over the Gallic revolt at 3.47.3.

¹¹⁵ Sallust refers to *Gallos* at *BC* 114.1-2, but the Cimbri were Germans. He may well have been alluding to the *topos* of the *tumultus Gallicus* (cf. n. 58 of Chapter 4), but would Tacitus' audience, mindful of the role of the Germans in the *Annals*, have remembered the correct detail?

await imperial Rome, both the civil war within the Tiberian principate and the more distant events of 69, which have already been foreshadowed in various ways (see again pp. 216-20 below and n. 96 of Chapter 4, as well as pp. 45-54 above). In this Jugurthan-style ending to the war against Tacfarinas, the prospect of near and far strife is reflected.

g. The End of the Beginning, or the Beginning of the End?

Tacfarinas' demise itself serves as an important reminder about the proximate cause of conflict within the principate. The way in which it resembles Catiline's death in the *BC* may ostensibly illustrate a rather heartening shift from internecine to foreign war for Rome, but in the Tiberian books it is demonstrated repeatedly that in a Roman context, thanks to the elimination of *metus hostilis*, this progression seems inevitably to be in the other direction. The threat of civil strife has been attested in the *Annals* from the outset, and the irony that Tacfarinas should meet his end in this 'Catilinarian' manner when Sejanus is flourishing in Rome is patent. As one Tacitean Catiline dies, the other is alive, and contributing to the 'civil war within the principate' that is now gathering pace. Moreover, like the events of the *BJ*, those of the *BC* preceded – in this case, by only a few years – more serious future conflicts.¹¹⁶ That text's 'presence' in the *Annals* again signals that to which Tacitus' work is leading up. But while one Sallustian monograph ultimately provides a guide to warfare in Africa, in Rome, by contrast, no one can see where the real threat lies.

¹¹⁶ This is clear from very early on: see *BC* 3.3-4.2.

In Chapter 1 it was argued that Germanicus, despite being perceived as an individual with republican tendencies, in fact represented the principate's status as a *regnum* and its curtailment of *libertas*. Moreover, it became clear in Chapter 2 that the principate's origins could be discerned in the late republic: Germanicus' travels in the east linked him to autocratic individuals of the past as well as the future. After Germanicus' death, however, Tacitus depicts the relationship between the past and the Tiberian present from a different perspective. In this chapter, it has been confirmed that beliefs that any imperial figure would have restored the republic are mistaken, but it has also been shown that the imperial regime's use of republican norms – the façade established by Augustus – is illusory.

The principate may look in certain respects like the republic, but the presence of an emperor denudes these parallels of meaning: at the end of the hexad this will be made starkly clear when Tiberius' principate is revealed as an actual *regnum* (see pp. 263-7 below). The imperial system also denies the senate any real role in government, and its members, who seem incapable of real resistance to the loss of their *libertas*, react by clinging to the past, apparently under the influence of Augustus' duplicitous promotion of that past's importance. Just as Germanicus resembled his republican counterparts, however, the 'long Book 3' also reveals similarities between the late republic and the early principate. Tacitus' use of Sallust's monographs draws the two eras together and hints that the outbreak of 'civil war within the principate' is drawing closer. The first phase of the war proper was mentioned above, and in the following chapter it will be traced further as Sejanus continues to wreak havoc in Rome. He represents the rebirth of Catiline under the principate – but he does much more damage than his late-republican counterpart, for the 'Catilinarian' thread in the *Annals* concludes not with his death but

with his emergence. Amid the telling similarities between the characters, this is one key difference.

Chapter 4

Perspectives on the Principate

a. Introduction

The discussion so far has considered the principate's origins in the late republican past, the absence of Roman *libertas* and the status of the principate as a *regnum*, and the prospect of civil war for Rome, both during Tiberius' reign and in the longer term; it has also stressed the importance of passages that depict Roman relations with others to the narrative as a whole. This chapter will further develop these themes and, after an initial focus on the historiographical digression at 4.32-3 and Cremutius Cordus' trial at 4.34-5, will be structured around the foreign episodes in Books 2, 3 and 4 that have not yet been examined. These are the three Thracian sections (the Romans' dealings with king Rhescuporis at 2.64.2-67, and the rebellions at 3.38.3-39 and 4.46-51), the Gallic revolt (3.40-7), and the Frisian movement against Rome (4.72-3). There are no other significant surviving accounts of these events with which Tacitus' narrative can be compared. In any case, the historian does not place them in the context of the broader history of each people in the first century AD, but these representations of Roman interaction with non-Romans seem to say a great deal about Rome, both individually and as a sequence.¹

The four successive revolts (by Thracians, Gauls, Thracians again, and Frisians) show a distinct progression: each group fares better than its predecessors. Moreover, the narrative seems to show that such success is inversely proportional to the level of Roman

¹ cf. Goodyear (1981) 400 *ad* 2.64.2 and Martin and Woodman (1989) 206-7 *ad* 4.46-51 on the Thracians: the *Annals* is silent on their revolt of 11 BC (Vell. 2.98.1-2; Dio 54.34.5-7; cf. Syme (1986) 334 and 6.11.3). It is not known if Tacitus mentioned Thrace's annexation as a province (Hieron. *Chr.* p. 180 H) under AD 46; cf. also p. 10 above. See n. 55 below on Gaul; the Frisian insurrection appears unattested elsewhere. The only other revolt in Books 1-6, the movement of the Cietae at 6.41.1, is different and will be dealt with at pp. 236-9 below.

contact experienced by those involved; what happens when foreigners with significant Roman connections are pitted against those who lack them illustrates this point graphically.² But while the Frisians in particular inflict humiliating reverses on Rome, even they do not entirely lack Roman influence, and they prove unable to free themselves from Roman control. The notion suggested by the earlier German narrative recurs: contact with Rome curbs freedom, and so prevents that freedom from being reclaimed by Rome's subjects. Moreover, some of those subjects seem to have been affected by the loss of *metus hostilis* and propensity for civil war that characterises Rome so strongly in the text.

In making these points, Tacitus seems implicitly to challenge claims about Rome's position at the empire's centre, along with its superiority over its subjects and Italy's ideally temperate position, that seem to have been popular in the early principate. Indeed, this fits the reflections in the text of the events of 69, at which point it was 'discovered' that emperors could be made *alibi quam Romae* (*H.* 1.4.2; cf. Chapter 1).³ The idea, however, that Roman influence is deleterious to freedom is also of more immediate importance within the Tiberian hexad, for it follows on from a central theme that has already been identified, that the principate represents the disappearance of *libertas* in Rome and the impossibility of restoring it.

The sequence traced by the Gauls, Thracians and Frisians (and the Germans) represents another perspective on this idea. If distance from Rome, relative freedom, and

² Admittedly the Thracian rebels are defeated at 3.38.2 despite having had little contact with Rome, but when Thracians revolt again at 4.46 their Roman links are much less numerous than the Gauls' at 3.40-7; see pp. 222-3 below.

³ See Balsdon (1979) 1-2, Nicolet (1991) 192-4 on Augustus' care to dispel rumours from the civil war period about relocating the seat of Rome's power, and Dench (2005) 156-7, 217-20 and Lavan (2013) 208 on the so-called *laudes Italiae* of Pliny the Elder, Tacitus' near-contemporary, at *NH* 3.5.38-20.138. cf. also Clarke (2002) 91-2 on the notion that true 'Roman-ness' is now only to be found on the empire's fringes; conversely, see Livy 34.13.8-9, the idea that once conquered by Rome a people can only rebel instead of engaging in a war, and Lavan (2013) 88.

capacity for resisting further erosion of that freedom all correlate, the prospect of resistance to Rome – and to the principate – within Rome itself appears unlikely. This is confirmed by the narrative of Books 1-4, in which foreign anti-Roman movements are interspersed with acceptance of the imperial regime by Romans: similar themes can be discerned in both spheres, but events abroad serve as an inverted, illuminating mirror of what is happening in Rome. The senate's inability to act independently of Tiberius has been clear from his accession onwards, and Chapter 3 further analysed its members' increasing disinclination to participate fully in government, let alone take a stand against the emperor or his representatives. In each foreign revolt, the Roman exactions to which the rebels allege they are subject appear successively more harsh, while concurrently the situation in Rome itself becomes more and more bleak. Nevertheless, there are virtually no Roman claimants to freedom in this part of the text.⁴

The one exception is the historian Cremutius Cordus, who at 4.34-5 upholds his right to speak freely:⁵ like the foreign rebels, despite his lack of success he nevertheless distinguishes himself. Moreover, the account of Cordus' trial and the historiographical digression that precedes it can be read as an important commentary on Books 2, 3 and 4 and indeed the hexad in general. A close analysis will show that, *pace* previous interpretations, Tacitus does not actually draw a divide between republican and imperial historiography at 4.32-3. Instead, his reflections emphasise the continuities between the republic and the principate even as they point to the specific problems faced by Rome under the emperors. Tacitus also implies that both he and Cordus are historians of civil war. Cordus describes the strife of the first century BC, while the *Annals* prefigures the events of AD 69 and evokes late-republican conflicts; Tacitus' work also suggests that Tiberius' reign is characterised by a form of civil war, and this element comes to a head

⁴ The popular support for Agrippina and her son Nero (see pp. 229-30 below, and cf. pp. 246-50 on 'opposition' to the emperor in Book 6) challenges Tiberius, not the regime itself.

⁵ cf. Roberts (1988) 129-30 on resistance to Rome abroad as a parallel for Thrasea's opposition to Nero.

towards the end of Book 4. Once 4.32-5 and then the various foreign episodes have been considered, the final section of this chapter will begin to examine Tacitus' portrayal of the domestic conflict in Rome, and indeed within the imperial house.

b. 4.32-5

i) '[Tacitus] has in fact denied what one thought he had said'⁶

As the previous chapter showed, the last phase of fighting against Tacfarinas takes place at 4.23-6. After reporting further trials back in Rome, Tacitus then pauses to reflect on his project. He professes himself not unaware that much of his subject-matter may seem trivial: his work should not be compared with texts by authors who described Rome's pre-imperial past, for the latter wrote of various stimulating subjects *libero egressu* (4.32.1), whereas *nobis in arto et inglorius labor* (4.32.2). But what is inconsequential at first sight may have a deeper significance. Just as it was once helpful to understand how the populace, senate and *optimates* thought and functioned, so Tacitus' narrative of life under the principate may be of use to those who read it, even if it will not bring them much enjoyment (4.33.1-2). Moreover, past historians writing about distant history did not have to worry about being patriotic, or about offending the descendants of those whom they described or individuals of their own time who behave in a similar way (4.33.4).

These chapters, regularly considered with the subsequent account of the trial of Cordus and his defence-speech at 4.34-5, have attracted a range of critical responses.⁷ It

⁶ Woodman (1998d) 140, quoting Irving Kristol.

is invariably assumed that here Tacitus draws a sharp distinction between republican and post-republican historiography by affirming that his work does not engage with the same subject-matter as that of his predecessors.⁸ It has also been surmised that his remarks, near the beginning of the second half of the hexad, herald a change in the *Annals*' texture. Woodman suggests that at 4.32-3 Tacitus declares he is capable of covering the latter part of Tiberius' principate only by excluding conventional historiographical topics such as sieges and ethnographic descriptions, and proposes that in Books 4-6 these are replaced with 'metahistory', the 'metonymic or metaphorical presentation of elements whose absence [readers] had been asked previously to deplore,' such as Tiberius' virtual 'siege' of Rome.⁹

But while Woodman's associated argument that the Tiberian principate is the site of a form of civil war has been regularly evoked in this discussion, and will soon recur, the idea that after 4.32-3 the hexad is devoid of 'old-fashioned' episodes is not easily reconciled with the presence in the latter part of Book 4 of the second Thracian revolt and the Frisian insurrection, in which battles feature that involve Roman troops. Woodman can only suggest that by including them Tacitus is, characteristically, playing with his readers' expectations.¹⁰ Levene also considers the apparent incongruity, but contends that Tacitus has intentionally made these elements less dramatic to indicate Rome's degeneration under the principate.¹¹ Moreover, while Germanicus' earlier victory over the Germans may echo the republican-style historiography Tacitus eschews, Levene suggests that this represents the acquisition of a mastery over the empire's terrain that pre-

⁷ Martin and Woodman (1989) 169-76 *ad loc.*, Sinclair (1995) 55-62, Woodman (1998d) esp. 128-35, originally published before Martin and Woodman (1989), Moles (1998/2011), O'Gorman (2000) 97-105, Clarke (2002) 88-101 and Sailor (2008) 250-313. cf. Levene (2009).

⁸ See e.g. Sinclair (1995) 56-7, Moles (1998/2011) 128, Sailor (2008) 261-3.

⁹ Woodman (1998d) 136-41 (quotation from 140); cf. Moles (1998/2011) 174.

¹⁰ Woodman (1998d) 140 n. 118: in fact he mentions only the Thracian episode. The notion of 'metahistory' is extremely cogent but this omission highlights how it must be supported by other interpretative tactics.

¹¹ Levene (2009) 226-32, and cf. Clarke (2002) 92-3. Wellesley (1969) 67 suggests the lost books would have provided more such material.

emptively defuses all other foreign threats, not least that posed by the Thracians, who are defeated by the ‘quintessential Tiberian commander’ Poppaeus Sabinus.¹²

The transition at the beginning of Book 4 is obvious and Tiberius’ principate certainly grows darker and more claustrophobic as the text progresses. Conversely, the foreign sections in Book 4 do constitute ‘republican-style’ material as Tacitus apparently defines it at 4.32-3, and conclude a strand that spans the hexad and cannot be explained away by special pleading. It seems unlikely that Tacitus inserted accounts of the Thracian and Frisian insurrections just to be contrary, and it will also transpire that neither Roman victory is achieved with ease or amid signs that foreign topography presented no problems for the Roman troops – just as was the case when Germanicus fought the Germans with limited success (see Chapter 1). Moreover, the related critical assumption that at 4.32-3 Tacitus evokes a clear divide between republican-style historiography and the *Annals* is worth interrogating. A closer analysis will show that he is not so much denying the presence of ‘old-fashioned’ themes in his work as signalling that he must cover both that kind of material and the different subjects enjoined by the new system.

Tacitus begins the digression by affirming that many of the topics he covers may *parva forsitan et levia memoratu videri* (4.32.1), but the litotic *non nescius sum* on which this statement depends and the studiously non-committal *forsitan* appear to undermine its effect. Moreover, *videri* – not *esse* – introduces a dichotomy between appearance and reality that is picked up by the reference to *illa primo aspectu levia, ex quis magnarum saepe rerum motus oriuntur* (4.32.2). Drawing attention to this theme hints at its importance: the whole passage may not be what it seems.¹³ Tacitus also warns that no one

¹² Levene (2009) 232-7 (quotation from 234).

¹³ See Moles (1998/2011) 126. Woodman (1998d) 140-1 n. 119 notes the sense of a disjunction between being and seeming is so characteristic of Tacitus’ work that it ‘almost constitutes a warning to view the narrative itself in that light’ (141). At 131 n. 84, however, he concedes the *Annals*’ subject-matter is not

annales nostros...contenderit with the work of those who wrote of the republic (4.32.1), and it is hard not to feel inclined to defy such an ostentatiously firm command. It may even be read as an invitation to join a privileged group of readers who look beyond the surface of the text.¹⁴

Moreover, the historian immediately disobeys his own injunction by juxtaposing the material typical of older historical works with the data that he must include. His predecessors *ingentia...bella, expugnationes urbium, fusos captosque reges aut...discordias consulum adversum tribunos, agrarias frumentariasque leges, plebis et optimatum certamina libero egressu memorabant* (4.32.1). On the contrary, *nobis in arto et inglorius labor; immota quippe aut modice lacessita pax, maestae urbis res, et princeps proferendi imperi incuriosus erat* (4.32.2). After he has discussed the changes in Rome's constitution and the relevance of this to the writing of history, he mounts a case for the utility of his project, despite the fact that it will scarcely be entertaining for its readers. Once more he compares the contrasting subject-matter found in his predecessors' works and his own: *nam situs gentium, varietates proeliorum, clari ducum exitus retinent ac redintegrant legentium animum: nos saeva iussa, continuas accusationes, fallaces amicitias, perniciem innocentium et easdem exitii causas coniungimus, obvia rerum similitudine et satietate* (4.33.3).

In these passages Tacitus announces he must deal with material which is different from that treated by his predecessors, but nowhere does he actually declare that he has eschewed 'old-fashioned' topics. He merely states that older works contained such topics,

explicitly termed unimportant at 4.32-3 but lays greater weight on the 'impression that [Tacitus'] material is actually insignificant' (his italics). cf. id. (1998g) 243 (quoting *non tamen sine usu...!*): '[t]raditional views die hard', but it is worth reconsidering individual textual details, as upon them 'an entire interpretative edifice may depend'. Joseph (2012) 25 suggests this passage is disingenuous but does not press the idea much further.

¹⁴ *contenderit* is generally taken as a perfect subjunctive (see Martin and Woodman (1989) 170 *ad loc.*) although the future perfect would also make sense: if readers will not have compared Tacitus' work to his predecessors' before, they may do so now. For a different version of the idea that Tacitus here invites his audience to consider if they are discerning readers or not, see Sinclair (1995) 61, O'Gorman (2000) 101-3 and Sailor (2008) 263-74.

that their authors wrote *libero egressu*, and that their accounts tend to be found enjoyable by readers. The *Annals*, then, is characterised not by its exclusion of the kind of history written by republican historians but by the additional inclusion of new matter peculiar to the principate: does *coniungimus* (4.33.3) gesture at the fusion of both sets of themes?¹⁵ Appearance indeed belies reality, and there is no need to explain away the presence in the narrative subsequent to 4.32-3 and indeed in the *Annals* as a whole of the ‘old-fashioned’ subjects referred to in this digression. The kind of material mentioned here as representative of older historiography is clearly found in the *Annals* and indeed in the Tiberian books.¹⁶ Moreover, given the surrounding narrative, it can be shown that the topics which feature at 4.32-3 read rather suggestively.¹⁷ The discussion here will focus on the relationship between this passage and Books 1-4 generally: Chapter 5 will go on to consider the different (though still somewhat ironic) perspective on the digression offered by two episodes in Book 6, which in several ways seems detached from the rest of the hexad (see pp. 236-9 and 259-60 below).

First, the ‘external’ material: *ingentia...bella, expugnationes urbium, fusos captosque reges* (4.32.1) and then *situs gentium, varietates proeliorum, clari ducum exitus* (4.33.3). The storming of a city by Romans in the extant text occurs in the Neronian books, and the target is Legerda in Armenia (14.25.1; this happens *non sine certamine*). Within the first hexad, alongside various successful attacks on German and Frisian positions (1.51, 2.20-1, 4.73.2-3), the Thracian rebels’ stronghold is overrun at

¹⁵ cf. Cornell (1993) 149-50.

¹⁶ The following discussion will focus primarily on *Annals* 1-6: the status of 4.32-3 as a ‘second preface’ half way through the hexad (Woodman (1998d) 131-2) seems to indicate its special relevance to these books.

¹⁷ Whether this refers to specific historians seems not to have been considered, though cf. Moles (1998/2011) 120-3. Are earlier republican authors meant, or would the notion of a vague allusion to Livy (*veteres populi Romani res* (4.32.1) picks up Livy *praef.* 1 *...urbis res populi Romani perscripserim... cum veterem tum volgatam esse rem videam*) for generic *res externae* and Sallust for specific *res internae* be too simplistic? It would also depend on whether they wrote *libero egressu* (Cordus suggests that Livy did, at 4.34.3), but citing a late republican and an early imperial author would further the impression of overlap between those two eras.

4.51.3, but it will be shown below that this Roman victory is achieved with difficulty and is ultimately incomplete.¹⁸ Moreover, instead of kings routed and captured, the rather different fates of Rhescuporis and Vonones are reported: both monarchs fall into Roman hands and eventually die amid an atmosphere of deceit that Tacitus shows to be typically Roman (2.67.3, 68: see pp. 91-2 above and 202-3 below). Conversely, the Roman-sponsored Thracian ruler Rhoemetalces will have to be rescued when other Thracians threaten to overrun Philippopolis (3.39.1, and see p. 205 below; later, at 14.32-3, British rebels will actually storm Camulodunum and Verulamium).

Relatively detailed descriptions of *situs gentium* are indeed offered in German and Thracian contexts at 1.61-70 and 2.6-24, and 4.46-51. Again, however, these serve as a backdrop for Roman difficulty and near-disaster (see pp. 57-62 above on the Germans, and n. 88 of Chapter 4 on the Thracians). Indeed, Germanicus' visit to the site of Varus' defeat evokes a dark episode that is almost repeated (1.61-2; see pp. 57-8), and this section of the narrative is one of those that hint at the flaws of this allegedly talented *dux*. Although his *exitus* is later recounted, he himself admits it to be *praematurus* (2.71.1); it is hardly *clarus*. That adjective is better applied to the death of Decrius at 3.20.2, but it has been demonstrated that his actions contrast with his troops' incompetence, and the African war drags on afterwards. More unsettlingly, his end foreshadows that of his opponent Tacfarinas, which in turn echoes the demise of Catiline and occurs just as the latter is being 'reincarnated' by Sejanus (see pp. 175-6 above). Still, Decrius does avoid the grim anonymity of the *multi tribunorum praefectorumque et insignes centuriones* (4.73.3) who will fall in the Frisian revolt.¹⁹

¹⁸ cf. Woodman (1998d) 136-40 on Tiberius 'attacking' Roman cities. Of course the Roman encounters detailed at 1.51, 2.20-1 and 4.73.2-3 do not occur in a context of equivocal success.

¹⁹ Moles (1998/2011) 174, furthering the concept of 'metahistory', also sees Cordus' death as a *clarus exitus*.

Tacitus also refers to more general characteristics of republican accounts of *res externae*: *ingentia...bella* (4.32.1) and *varietates proeliorum* (4.33.3). The latter expression seems to refer to *varietas* within individual battles. This is hardly lacking in the hexad but, as will become clearer below, even in ultimately successful encounters the Romans fare distinctly badly and, as a whole, a rather ambivalent impression of their military prowess is given. *varietas* might in the past have provided white-knuckle suspense but this has been replaced by revelations of Roman limitations and stress on the cost of narrow victories.²⁰ Moreover, the mention of *ingentia bella* also looks expressive. There are wars in the *Annals*, but it would be hard to describe any of them as simply *ingens*.²¹ Indeed, in the central part of the Tiberian hexad the very notion of war seems to undergo a kind of double redefinition, at least in Roman terms.

It will be shown below that at 3.38.4 Tacitus refers to the possibility of an *atrox bellum* between Romans and Thracians. This is immediately stymied by the Thracians' disarray and then the Romans' clear military superiority, but the phrase evokes Tacitus' reference at *H.* 2.46.3 to an actual *atrox bellum*, the civil war that followed Nero's death.²² Then, immediately after the Thracian episode, the Gallic revolt is twice termed a *bellum* (3.41.3, 47.1). As will be seen, however, the text suggests that it barely deserves that title, owing to both the ease of its suppression and the emphasis on the Gauls' Roman connections; moreover, Roman reactions to the revolt illustrate the impossibility of a cathartic foreign conflict, and the identity of the real threat to Rome. Internecine warfare is now of more immediate concern to Rome than foreign battles.

²⁰ On *varietas* as a traditional factor in suspense see Woodman and Martin (1989) 175 *ad loc.*; for the sense that here it refers to *varietas* within individual battles see Woodman (2004) 137 and Levene (2009) 229-30, although the latter surely overstates the one-sidedness of the battles in the text.

²¹ Contrast the (unnecessarily?) *longum...bellum* (4.23.1; cf. 2.52.1) against Tacfarinas, differentiated rather tententiously from *ingentia bella* of the late republic by Tiberius at 3.73.2.

²² See further pp. 205-6 below, but note too that the burgeoning civil conflict at *H.* 2.86.4 is called an *ingens bellum*. Note too how both Agrippina (4.52.2) and her son Drusus (4.60.3), who are both closely linked to the civil war in the imperial house that unfolds in the Tiberian books (see pp. 243-4 below), are characterised as *atrox*.

Another kind of *bellum*, however, also features in Books 1-4. The second group of rebellious Thracians and then the Frisians are both represented as envisaging their movements against Rome as *bella* (4.46.3, 72.3; cf. Tacfarinas' proposal of a *bellum inexplicabile* at 3.73.1), and their deeds come close to matching their words. Despite their lack of ultimate success they thus threaten to reclaim the idea of a *bellum*, characterising it as a fierce conflict between Romans and others – but from a foreign and not a Roman perspective.²³ In the Tiberian books, the transformation of the supposedly monolithic *ingentia bella* of the past into ominous variations on what an imperial *bellum* means is thus striking. Indeed, Tacitus caps his first comparative survey of old and new historiography by summarising conditions under the principate: *immota quippe aut modice lacessita pax, maestae urbis res, et princeps proferendi imperi incuriosus erat* (4.32.2). This looks like an appropriately grim and ironic appendix to the catalogue of *res externae*: it confirms the prominence of gloomy internal affairs in the narrative, and *modice lacessita pax* seems rather sly, given the reverses inflicted on Rome. Although the characterisation of Tiberius here seems to criticise imperial foreign policy, it may also hint that securing the empire's stability has become a more immediate priority than extending it.²⁴

²³ This assumes that *remedium ex bello* (4.72.3) is focalised to the Frisians: the Thracian parallel surely lends support to this, and note the arch inversion of the 'principate as *remedium*' trope (cf. 1.9.4 and Livy *praef.* 9). It is as if both groups challenge Cato's declaration (Livy 34.13.8-9) that a people once subdued by Rome can only rebel, not wage war; see n. 3 above.

²⁴ cf. 1.3.6: *bellum ea tempestate nullum nisi adversus Germanos supererat*, more to avenge Varus' disgrace than *cupidine proferendi imperii*. The notion of war's altered status under the principate and the distinction between preserving and extending the empire emerges early on: see Moles (1998/2011) 127 and pp. 9-10 above.

ii) The Late Republic Revisited

In his survey of historiographical subject-matter, Tacitus also refers to domestic topics treated by earlier historians: *si quando ad interna praeverterent, discordias consulum adversum tribunos, agrarias frumentariasque leges, plebis et optimatum certamina...memorabant* (4.32.1). In a movement that parallels the shift in the ‘long Book 3’ from the distant to the more specific and recent past, generalising snapshots of foreign material are succeeded by more specific references to episodes that characterised internal politics in the late republic.²⁵ Just as the first century BC became increasingly relevant as the emergence of Sejanus drew closer, however, the *Annals* is not actually lacking in material of the kind cited here. As the reference to Augustus’ stabilisation of his position (*populum annona...pellexit*) programmatically shows at 1.2.1, grain was a potential source of popular discontent in post-republican times too. Within the first hexad the issue recurs, at 2.87.1, 4.6.4 and 6.13.1 (see further p. 249 below); it was also shown in Chapter 2 that Germanicus’ interference in the grain supply in Alexandria both recalled the politics of the late republic and looked forward to Egypt’s continuing potential to be a factor in Roman civil wars.²⁶ Moreover, while full *plebis et optimatum certamina* may be absent from the *Annals*, there is still friction between masses and elite, embodied not least by the favour felt for Germanicus himself (1.33.2, 2.41.3, 3.4-6), and also by the increasing popular resentment of Tiberius at the end of the hexad.²⁷

As the previous chapter indicated, that enthusiasm seemed born of a nostalgic hope that the republic would be restored, but the portrayal of Germanicus and Tiberius’ response to his supporters hinted that such beliefs were deluded. The conditions obtaining

²⁵ Woodman and Martin (1989) 171 *ad loc.*

²⁶ cf. Goodyear (1981) 444 *ad* 2.87.1 and Woodman (2006b) 180-1.

²⁷ See too 15.36.4: the *senatus et primores* are set against the plebs and Nero. The latter’s principate also sees a dispute between consuls and tribunes (13.28.1: note *manebat nihilo minus quaedam imago rei publicae*).

in the past have not endured intact: grain shortages, indeed, are now dealt with by members of the imperial family rather than by demagogic politicians, and may have resonance for the future as well as the past. Nevertheless, the overlap implied at 4.32.1 complements the idea that the republic and the principate are not easily demarcated from each other in all respects. Finally, after the digression's second, briefer list of 'republican' themes (*situs gentium...*, 4.33.3) another array of contemporary woes is set out: *saeva iussa, continuas accusationes, fallaces amicitias, perniciem innocentium et easdem exitii causas* (ibid.). Such incidents are amply attested in the text, but they are here couched in general terms without any direct reference to the Tiberian principate. Indeed, they somewhat recall characterisations of civil wars, both those of the late republic and of AD 69.²⁸ As so often in the first hexad, Tacitus looks backwards and forwards at the recurring theme of civil strife, and Cordus' trial will shortly offer another perspective on this.

So in purporting to juxtapose the themes of republican historiography with his own, the historian in fact suggests that he is compelled to mix material specific to the principate with traditional topics, and his presentation of those topics makes some rather arch points. The *res externae* he singles out acknowledge the superficial similarity of republican and imperial warfare but, read with the surrounding narrative, serve to underline the Roman degeneration and failure prominent in the foreign strand of Books 1-4. Conversely, although Tacitus' evocation of late-republican Rome alludes to political conditions ostensibly very different from the principate, it finds unsettling parallels in the text.

The digression at 4.32-3 accordingly reflects the different kinds of overlap between republic and empire that have been identified so far in the Tiberian books. In

²⁸ cf. 3.28.1 and Sall., *BJ* 3.2, and then *H.* 1.2.1-3, for similar sentiments and asyndeton. See Joseph (2012) 31.

Chapter 2, it was argued that Germanicus' travels in the east associated him with key predecessors and evoked a series of connections between the late republic and early principate, as well as looking ahead to the events of the later first century AD. Chapter 3, meanwhile, traced the changing function of the pre-imperial past in a central portion of the hexad:²⁹ Sallust's depictions of the late republic in particular became more specifically relevant to Tiberian Rome as the narrative advanced, and Tacitus made the republican 'look' of the Augustan principate acquire a new and unsettling resonance. There are continuities, then, rather than an absolute divide between the republic and the principate, particularly between the last years of the former and the first years of the latter, but the imperial system has obviously been accompanied by great and generally detrimental change for Rome. The Romans no longer excel in the spheres in which they once did: Chapter 3 focused on senatorial behaviour, while the following discussion will consider warfare.

In the course of these reflections, indeed, Tacitus notes that earlier authors could write *libero egressu* (4.32.1). This apparent association of *libertas* with the republic cannot but recall the theme of freedom, and the principate's curtailment of it. But once again Tacitus does not explicitly deny that this quality once possessed by republican historiography applies to his own work, and his claim to be performing an *in arto et inglorius labor* (4.32.2) does not necessarily counter it. It will be suggested below that the subsequent account of Cremutius Cordus' trial may suggest how Tacitus himself is – in a sense – free.

²⁹ It also stressed the regal period and the late republic at the expense of the 'generic' republican era: cf. how at 4.32-3 Tacitus encourages events of the republican past to be considered alongside imperial history, not on their own terms, while his reference to domestic affairs also seems to emphasise comparatively recent history. See Moles (1998/2011) 124-6 for the idea of the republic as a 'digression' within monarchical history.

iii) Cordus and Tacitus: the Past and the Future

The digression is followed at 4.34-5 by the arraignment of Cremutius Cordus *quod editis annalibus laudatoque M. Bruto C. Cassium Romanorum ultimum dixisset* (4.34.1). In a speech, Cordus affirms his innocence and compares Tiberius with his more liberal predecessors Julius Caesar and Augustus. He evokes an era in which it was supposedly possible for historians such as Livy to write about the republic's last years without incurring punishment, and then suggests that his work is not as inflammatory as it is alleged to be: it seems that initially the principate's republican façade was maintained.³⁰ Cordus' defence of free speech – of *libertas* (see 4.35.1) – then aligns him with the various foreign freedom-fighters who feature in Books 1-4.³¹ This resemblance stresses how he is the only Roman opponent of the Tiberian principate to whom the text gives a significant role but, like most of his non-Roman counterparts, his resistance is unsuccessful. Subsequent developments in Book 4 will suggest a rationale for why this is so, as Roman influence seems to be injurious to liberty at home and abroad. Nevertheless, Cordus' self-definition as a historian of civil war suggests that more immediately he alludes to a key threat to the principate. It may also contribute to a claim that Tacitus himself possesses a kind of freedom.

To show this, it is necessary to highlight a possible contradiction in the presentation of Cordus' trial, which follows on from a similar point at 4.32-3. That set-piece ended by positing a rather simpler difference, in comparison with the previous

³⁰ cf. n. 13 above. See, however, Sailor (2008) 295-7 on how the trial's presentation is rather disingenuous. Cordus' description of the Augustan era does not match Tacitus' (cf. Moles (1998/2011) 151), and the emphasis on how Pollio and Corvinus *opibus[que] atque honoribus perviguere* (4.34.4) also brings them oddly close to figures like Epius Marcellus and Vibius Crispus (see *Dial.* 8.1-3, and Sailor (2008) 297).

³¹ See Moles (1998/2011) 141-59 and Sailor (2008) 280-2 and 297 for Cremutius as a representative of freedom, and Martin and Woodman (1989) 182 *ad loc.* on *libertas* signifying 'free speech' here. cf. also Suet., *Div. Clau.* 41.2, where it is reported that his mother's and grandmother's influence meant that in his historical work the youthful Claudius could write *neque libere neque vere* of the civil wars of the 30s BC.

discussion of historiographical subjects, between the historian and his predecessors: they could write freely of the distant past *neque refert cuiusquam Punicas Romanasve acies laetius extuleris*, but in his own time descendants survive of many people who fared badly under Tiberius, and in addition *reperies qui ob similitudinem morum aliena malefacta sibi obiectari putent* (4.33.4).³² As scholars have noted, this complaint is not entirely congruent with Tacitus' previous exhortations to pay attention to what may seem insignificant, and in response it has been suggested that only sympathetic readers are invited to look beyond its surface.³³

Nevertheless, the apparent inconsistency recurs when Cordus asks *num enim armatis Cassio et Bruto ac Philippenses campos obtinentibus belli civilis causa populum per contiones incendio?* (4.35.2). This apparent denial of contemporary import contradicts Tacitus' earlier assertions that seemingly trivial matters can signify much and that the history of the Julio-Claudian principate will be usefully read in later years. It is then, however, the repressive autocrat Tiberius who seems to insist on the potential significance to his own time of a history of the republican civil war.³⁴ Whether in his speech Cordus is actually 'reanimating' the wars of which he wrote has been debated,³⁵ but even if his words are not to be taken quite literally, it seems that Tiberius considers his account of the civil conflicts of the previous century highly pertinent to the present.

The emperor is mistaken, but the implications of his mistake are noteworthy. The republic as a real political institution is no more, and the wars with which it ended cannot be replayed (cf. pp. 97-9 above on Actium). Accordingly, in his anger at an account of the

³² cf. n. 62 of the Introduction. Sailor (2008) 271-4 (cf. Moles (1998/2011) 145) exposes how broad the distinction between 'past' and 'present' is here; the boundary between republic and principate is eclipsed.

³³ See n. 14 above on different kinds of reader; Moles (1998/2011) 144-7 further discusses the contradiction.

³⁴ cf. Moles (1998/2011) 145, Clarke (2002) 97 and Sailor (2008) 298.

³⁵ See Martin and Woodman (1989) 183 *ad* 4.35.2 (*num enim armatis...?*): Woodman suggests that here 'Cordus represents as *actually* taking place that which in his history is merely *described*' (his italics), though see Moles (1998/2011) 140-1 n. 82 *contra*.

first century BC's strife, Tiberius is like those who wrongly view reports of others' behaviour as applicable to themselves (cf. 4.33.4). This misplaced sensitivity to the past contrasts with his earlier awareness of the Julio-Claudian principate's future, discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, when it seemed that he had acquired foreknowledge of the events of the *Histories*. At this point in the narrative, the spectre of AD 69 remains at hand: it was noted above that Tacitus' characterisation of the Tiberian era at 4.33.3 as beset with *saeva iussa, continuas accusationes, fallaces amicitias* and so on in fact echoes descriptions of future as well as past strife (cf. also p. 237 below), and later in Book 4 further allusions to the *Histories* will be discerned, as Tacitus continues to look forward beyond the end of the *Annals*.

The emperor, however, has lost his erstwhile awareness of this threat. It seems that the difference is Sejanus, who has now emerged. Cordus' condemnation is initiated by *Seiani clientes* (4.34.1), who act under the influence of a man who has been represented in Sallustian terms which suggest that the late-republican conflicts are breaking out again under the principate. As Chapter 3 demonstrated, however, Tiberius seemed insensible to the new relevance of the late republic for his own principate. The emperor's mere suspicions about Germanicus, who was in a far better position actually to initiate civil war, have been succeeded by direct action against the much less influential Cordus, while even the more culpable Piso received what purported to be a fair trial.³⁶ Given the presence of Sejanus in Rome, though, there is an obvious irony in the misdirected suppression of Cordus as a supposedly subversive figure who commemorates the late republic. Tiberius' role in this episode confirms that depictions of one era may have an underlying relevance to another, but his choice of the wrong target shows that not

³⁶ cf. p. 176 above on Tacfarinas' death in the style of Catiline even as Sejanus, another 'Catiline', flourishes. Tiberius does not directly condemn Cordus (see Pelling (2010b) 376-7), but his absence from Rome at this point surely emphasises his detachment from the most pressing threats to the principate. See Sailor (2008) 299-305 and Pelling (2010b) esp. 366-7 on the question of securing the emperor's memory, treated here and at 4.37-8.

all such readings are equally valid. Tacitus has shown the pertinence of both past and future civil conflicts to the Tiberian principate, but the emperor's understanding of this is incomplete, and before his death he will take more action against individuals who do not represent real threats to the principate.

iv) A Final Speculation

Tacitus' report of Cordus' trial concludes with a sharp cautionary note: the efforts of those who *praesenti potentia credunt extingui posse etiam sequentis aevi memoriam* will be in vain, and *externi reges aut qui eadem saevitia usi sunt* are said to be powerless to forestall lasting fame (4.35.5). The potential applicability of this to Tiberius and Sejanus has been noted,³⁷ and the concomitant idea that the Julio-Claudian principate at any rate can be construed as a form of *regnum* has already been discussed (see pp. 72 above, and 265-6 below on how this idea culminates in Book 6, where Tiberius is again linked to foreign *reges*). But it is also possible that Tacitus is making a statement about his own work and the conditions under which he is writing. That is not to say that there are grounds for seeing a direct challenge to the contemporary emperor here: although Chapter 2 considered the hypothesis that Germanicus' eastern travels served as wary comment on Trajan's activities in the region, the inscrutable nature of Tacitus' attitude to Trajan in the *Annals* has already been remarked upon (see pp. 31-3).

Just like Cordus, however, Tacitus is a historian of civil war, first in the *Historiae* and now, in a more metaphorical sense, in the *Annals*: Cordus' punishment for writing of the late-republican civil wars is juxtaposed in the narrative with indications that those

³⁷ Martin and Woodman (1989) 184 *ad loc.* Tiberius' *saevitia* is introduced at 1.4.3 and recurs regularly: see further n. 50 of Chapter 5.

wars are recurring in a new form under the principate, and that future conflicts are in store. So can 4.34-5 be read as a subtle warning that Tacitus is not to be treated as Tiberius treated Cordus, and that if Trajan were to act in this way his own future *memoria* would be threatened? It is true that the free republic is gone (cf. *libero egressu*, 4.32.1),³⁸ and political freedom under the principate is restricted. But in asserting his right to choose his own subject-matter, Tacitus still lays claim to literary *libertas*.³⁹

c. Thrace and Gaul: Two Rebellions, Three Kings

i) The Deceiver Deceived: 2.64.2-67

Now that it has been shown that the digression at 4.32-3 and the trial of Cordus at 4.34-5 draw attention to a number of important themes within the first hexad, it is time to consider how those themes are further developed in the linked foreign narratives in Books 2, 3 and 4 that have hitherto not been discussed. First, the initial Thracian episode at 2.64.2-67,⁴⁰ which is introduced via a report of the celebrations back in Rome in response to Germanicus' successful installation of Zeno as king of Armenia (2.56.2-4; see p. 103 above). The emperor is said to have been especially pleased that matters had been settled

³⁸ Indeed, note Cordus' comment at 4.35.1 on the proximity of *libertas* and *libido*: (republican) freedom can lead to excess, and thence to civil strife? cf. n. 85 below.

³⁹ cf. Moles (1998/2011) 149, 167-8, and cf. 178-80, and also Sailor (2008) 276-91 and 295-7. The latter's thesis that Tacitus means to portray himself as another Cordus, whose politically-charged work puts his life at risk, is not strictly incompatible with the arguments here. The focus has been, however, on the relationship between republic and principate constructed in the text, and the status of Cordus and Tacitus as historians of civil war. On emperors' *memoria*, see n. 36 above.

⁴⁰ There are several chronological problems in this section; Steup (1869) proposed that 2.62-7 should precede 2.59, but Syme (1982) 78-9 and Goodyear (1981) 393-6 *ad* 2.62.1 conclude that it is impossible to be certain that such a procedure is required, and this discussion will proceed on that basis. As the text stands, Vonones' death in mysterious circumstances at 2.68.2 (p. 91 above) immediately follows Rhescuporis' similar demise at 2.67.3 (p. 201 below): this *may* be another argument against transposition.

diplomatically (2.64.1),⁴¹ and so *Rhescuporim quoque, Thraeciae regem, astu adgreditur* (2.64.2). Tacitus includes some background information about the situation: on king Rhoemetalces' death in AD 12, Augustus had partitioned Thrace between the deceased's brother Rhescuporis and his son Cotys. The latter was of gentle temperament but his uncle was ill-disposed to share his kingdom and soon began to encroach on Cotys' lands, especially after Augustus' death (2.64.3).

Having described these previous developments, Tacitus then reports under AD 19 that *nihil aeque Tiberium anxium habebat, quam ne composita turbarentur* (2.65.1);⁴² accordingly, a centurion is sent to warn the kings against embarking on war. Although Cotys complies, Rhescuporis then treacherously captures his nephew and writes to Tiberius justifying his actions. He receives an inscrutable answer: *si fraus abesset, posse eum innocentiae fidere*, but a proper investigation is necessary (2.65.5). Now *inter metum et iram cunctatus*, Rhescuporis has Cotys killed (2.66.1). In response Tiberius sends out Pomponius Flaccus, an old friend of the king (2.66.2), who manages to overcome Rhescuporis' suspicions, not least by encircling him with troops *specie honoris*, and induces him to come to Rome (2.67.1). Accusations are laid against him in the senate by Cotys' wife and he is condemned. Thrace is divided anew between Rhescuporis' son, another Rhoemetalces, and Cotys' children, who are given a Roman regent (2.67.2). Rhescuporis is last heard of dying in Alexandria *fugam temptans an ficto crimine* (2.67.3).

Key aspects of this Thracian narrative look like a microcosmic retelling of Sallust's *Bellum Jugurthinum*, a text that may well be in readers' minds after the recent

⁴¹ cf. p. 66 above on Tiberius' calculated attitude to the Germans (*adgreditur* occurs both at 2.26.4 and here), but see also the next note.

⁴² Gowing (1990) 326-7 draws attention to the chronological telescoping of Rhescuporis' provocations. He also suggests that Tacitus implies Tiberius' reluctance to alter Augustus' arrangements was culpable; this may foreshadow the consequences of his use of Augustan precedent in selecting assistant rulers (see p. 162 above).

introduction to the campaigns against the Jugurtha-like Tacfarinas at 2.52. Rhescuporis is a clear analogue to Jugurtha. Both are superfluous male relatives turned usurpers of a legitimate but weak heir with whom they share a kingdom,⁴³ and ultimately fall into Roman hands in similar circumstances, influenced by someone they deem a friend: Bocchus the Mauretanian ruler in Jugurtha's case, and the Roman Flaccus in the *Annals* (note the echo of *honoris causa*, *BJ* 113.5, in *specie honoris*, 2.67.1).

It is telling, however, that a foreigner was disloyal to Jugurtha, but a Roman fulfils the same role for Rhescuporis. This is a nice variation on the *topos* of Roman deceit in Book 2, which was discussed in Chapter 2: Antony's initial deception of the Armenian Artavasdes was followed by Augustus' treachery towards other Romans and Tiberius' deceptive behaviour towards Germanicus (see pp. 91-2 above: *specie honoris* at 2.67.1 follows on from similar phrases at 2.3.1, 5.1 and 42.1). Neither progression is flattering to imperial Rome, and this is stressed by the additional deceptions at 2.64.2-67: Rhescuporis' capture is preceded by his own entrapment of Cotys in similar circumstances. The Thracian king may have received his just deserts (Rhescuporis' specious justifications for Cotys' murder are matched by *ficto crimine*,⁴⁴ 2.67.3), but this rather unsavoury foreign figure's actions are similar to those of leading Romans, and this equivalence is underlined by how Tiberius and Rhescuporis each attempt to deceive the other (2.65.4, 66.2). Moreover, Rhescuporis' harassment of his nephew Cotys rather resembles Tiberius' attitude towards Germanicus.⁴⁵

⁴³ Tacitus seems to stress the correspondence: note the self-justification of Jugurtha and Rhescuporis: *structas sibi insidias, praeventum insidiatorem*, (2.65.4) / *Adherbalem dolis vitae suae insidiatum...* (*BJ* 22.4). cf. McCulloch (1984) 93-4, 97-8.

⁴⁴ Tacitus allows that the king might have tried to escape, but *ficto crimine* looks like a 'weighted alternative' – cf. Sullivan (1976) – especially compared with the considered account of Vonones' similar death at 2.68.

⁴⁵ See McCulloch (1984) 97-9 on Tiberius and Germanicus. Tacitus does not explicitly censure Flaccus' actions, and see n. 38 of Chapter 2 for the relative acceptability of tricking foreigners rather than Romans (note Archelaus' fate at 2.42.3), but within Book 2 it contributes to a critical portrayal of Rome. In any case, the means of Rhescuporis' removal will not be justified by the resolution of Rome's problems in Thrace.

The first Thracian episode in the Tiberian hexad accordingly represents a culmination of the instances of Roman treachery in *Annals* 2: the ugly nature of this theme is highlighted with the link to Sallust's work, and with the mirroring of various Romans' actions by the decidedly unpleasant Rhescuporis. But there are further aspects to the connection between the latter and Tiberius. Before hostilities commence, the two Thracian kings are said to have acted *subdola concordia* (2.64.3). Not only does this recall the uneasy relationship of Tiberius and Germanicus, but elsewhere in the extant Tiberian books *subdolos* is used almost exclusively of the principate and its holders.⁴⁶

Rhescuporis then induces Cotys to attend a parley *ficta modestia* (2.65.2). *modestia* is attributed to a number of imperial figures in the *Annals*, and ambiguous *modestia* and pretence are closely associated with Tiberius in particular.⁴⁷ Moreover, the circumstances of Cotys' detention at a banquet and his subsequent murder evoke a further Roman theme: the motif of 'death at/following dinner' directly or indirectly inflicted by the emperor. It will be fully realised in the Neronian books (see 13.16.1-3, 15.69.2-3 and 16.19.2) but is first attested in various forms in the Tiberian narrative: note the recent case of Libo Drusus at 2.31.1-2, while the emperor will in due course be thought capable of imposing a similar fate on his relations Drusus (4.10.3) and Agrippina (4.54).⁴⁸

All such correspondences come to a swift end once Rhescuporis has been brought to Rome for trial, but his temporary identification with Tiberius has wide-ranging implications for Tacitus' Roman narrative. The subtle association of the emperor with a foreign king complements the sense that the principate can be characterised as a form of

⁴⁶ *subdolos*: 1.10.3 (Augustus), 81.4 (Tiberius); 6.20 (Caligula's *subdola modestia*; see p. 245 below), 51.3 (Tiberius). Cotys – the 'Germanicus' figure – is the joint subject of *subdola concordia*: this indirect link matches Germanicus' own connections to the principate.

⁴⁷ For his *dissimulatio* see n. 25 of Chapter 1; *ingere* is used of him at 1.46.1 and 2.26.5. He claims *modestia* at 1.11.1; cf. 3.56.2, 4.38.4 and 5.2.1, all rather ambivalent (for other imperial figures see 2.58.2, 4.15, and 6.20, of Caligula: again, see p. 245 below). Readers of the *Histories* may also have been reminded of Domitian's deceptive *modestia*: see *H.* 4.40.1 and Chilver and Townend (1985) 52 *ad loc.*

⁴⁸ cf. 6.18.1. Asinius Gallus' arrest at dinner with the emperor (Dio 58.3.3; cf. 6.23.1) may also be faintly foreshadowed; cf. Woodman (2006b) 186-7. See also Gowers (1993) 214-5 and Dio 67.9 on, again, Domitian.

regnum, and that its republican façade is illusory: the theme of Rome's closeness to a foreign and more overtly autocratic regime will come into focus properly in Book 6. More specifically, as well as highlighting the dissimulatory qualities of Roman imperial figures, Rhescuporis' treatment of his nephew foreshadows unsettling incidents to come and the prospect of strife within the imperial house itself. Unlike the king, in Book 2 Tiberius does not have his nephew, Germanicus, killed, but he will in due course take more direct action against other members of his own family. Finally, this first spotlight on Thrace looks forward to the Thracian episodes to come in Books 3 and 4. Although now Tiberius seems to enjoy a reasonably positive reputation at home, and the villainous Rhescuporis is ultimately eliminated with ease, the Thracians who subsequently feature in the text will present a substantially greater threat. Their resistance to Roman rule will illuminate both the situation itself in Rome and the contrasting failure of the Romans themselves to alter it.

ii) The First Thracian Revolt: 3.38.3-39

Indeed, soon after his narrative for AD 21 begins at 3.31.1, Tacitus explains that trouble broke out in Thrace *diviso imperio in Rhoemetalcen et liberos Cotyis* (3.38.3). The renewed insistence on this detail, initially mentioned at 2.67.2, recalls Augustus' original partition of the kingdom (cf. 2.64.2). Given the unfortunate outcome in that case, such eagerness to share out Thrace anew between a king's offspring and an older male relative looks questionable, and trouble does result,⁴⁹ but this time it is of a different kind. In contrast with the dealings between individual Romans and Thracians at 2.64.2-67, the

⁴⁹ Tiberius' adherence to Augustan precedent is again problematic: cf. n. 42 above and p. 162.

more general notion of Roman misrule abroad comes to the fore, along with a number of other points that from now on will be central to the characterisation of foreigners in the hexad.

The Thracians are said to be agitated *insolentia nostri*,⁵⁰ complaining that *neque minus Rhoemetalcen quam Trebellenum...popularium iniurias inultas sinere* (3.38.3).

Roman control is thus exercised in a cruel and unjust manner by intermediaries, Trebellenus (regent for Cotys' children) and the client-king Rhoemetalces, and this looks towards the more direct misgovernment of foreigners that will feature later in the hexad. At this point various *validae nationes* take up arms, and Rhoemetalces is soon besieged in Philippopolis by a group of his fellow Thracians (3.38.4). A new theme now emerges: the inferiority to their free counterparts of foreigners with demonstrable Roman links. That was clearly not the case with Arminius and Tacfarinas, who had both been Roman auxiliaries (although the more Romanised Segestes did seem inferior to his rival Arminius), but the ease with which the rebellious Thracians outmanoeuvre Rhoemetalces now suggests that Roman influence is detrimental to others.

Nevertheless, the Roman commander Publius Vellaeus takes action. The siege is lifted and his troops win an overwhelming victory over the rebels: *neque aciem aut proelium dici decuerit, in quo semermi ac palantes trucidati sunt sine nostro sanguine* (3.39.2). For the moment Roman superiority is evidently secure, but Tacitus stipulates that only the Thracians' internal divisions (*ducibus diversis et paribus inter se per ignobilitatem*, 3.38.4) prevented them from waging an *atrox bellum* (ibid.). Such a formulation draws attention to the unrealised possibility as well as to what actually

⁵⁰ See Woodman and Martin (1996) 322-3 *ad loc.* on whether this means 'through their unfamiliarity with us' or 'through our own arrogance': the latter is cogent but the idea of ignorance of Rome would contrast with the heavy Roman involvement in Gaul evident at 3.40-7. There may be overtones of both ideas.

happened; it looks forward to how, in Book 4, the Thracians will achieve somewhat greater unity and prove more fearsome opponents of Rome.⁵¹

Moreover, although there is an element of barbarian and indeed specifically Thracian stereotyping to this dissension,⁵² the Thracians' failure here can also be read as a demonstration of how internal strife hampers resistance to an external enemy: it echoes the notion of *metus hostilis* and the effects of its removal, which is a key aspect of the mirroring between Romans and others in the Tiberian books. Soon, in the Gallic revolt, these ideas will recur when both Romans and Romanised Gauls attempt to reverse this historical process. It will also be shown shortly that the continuing presence of civil war in Roman imperial history, and its deleterious effect on military prowess over others, is further stressed when in the Gallic episode Tacitus alludes to his account of the Batavian rebellion, which emerged out of the wars of AD 69, in *Histories* 4. The Thracians in *Annals* 3 deny themselves the chance of fighting an *atrox bellum* against others, but this unfought external conflict still contrasts them with the Romans and their domestic troubles: the phrase may trigger more recollections of the *Histories* by echoing Tacitus' own characterisation of the events of 69-70 as a *bellum atrox, lugubre, incertum victis et victoribus* (*H.* 2.46.3; cf. p. 191 above).⁵³ Even though the Romans suppress the first Thracian revolt easily, Tacitus' narrative of it raises issues peculiar to Rome. As the ensuing narrative will show, these cannot be resolved with so little difficulty – if at all.

⁵¹ The slaughter of the *semerni ac palantes* rebels (3.39.2) recalls the Germans attacked while *semisomnos, inermos aut palantes* at 1.51.1 (see p. 57). That massacre belied the threat subsequently posed by the Germans; similarly, in Book 4 the Thracian resistance will be much more effective.

⁵² See Woodman and Martin (1996) 323-4 *ad loc.*: the notion that the Thracians' disunity is a barrier to greater success seems to originate at *Hdt.* 5.3.

⁵³ *atrox bellum* is not especially common and tends to refer to foreign conflicts (see its only other occurrence in Tacitus, at 1.17.4, the Pannonian mutineers' complaints, and *TLL* II.1109.30-6: instances seem to cluster in Livy's Hannibalic books), though Livy 24.28.4 and Val. Max. 5.4.1 are less clear-cut. Tacitus may also be playing on Velleius' description of the Thracian revolt in 11 BC as an *atrox...bellum* (2.98.1), and recalling Sallust's introductory characterisation of the fighting against Jugurtha as *magnum et atrox* (*BJ* 5.1). As shown in Chapter 3, though, Tacfarinas is already waging his own version of the Jugurthine war.

iii) Trouble in Gaul: 3.40-7

. Gallia est omnis divisa... (Caes., BG 1.1.1)

The short-lived Thracian rebellion is followed immediately (*eodem anno*, 3.40.1) by a more detailed and complex account of the Gallic insurrection.⁵⁴ Debt is said to have been an underlying cause, but Tacitus describes the efforts of two leading Gauls, Iulius Florus and Iulius Sacrovir, to stir up their respective tribes by complaining about Roman injustices and the suitability of the present time for seizing their freedom (3.40.1-3). Full resistance soon breaks out, although Tiberius appears unconcerned (3.41.3). The Treviri under Florus are defeated swiftly (3.42.3) but the Aedui and Sacrovir occupy Augustodunum, their capital, and distribute weapons (3.43). This raises grave fears in Rome, although some people rejoice that Tiberius will have to turn his attention away from *maiestas*-trials and towards war; nevertheless, the emperor still seems unperturbed (3.44). When the last rebels are defeated (3.46), he publicly acknowledges the whole affair, but refuses any resultant honours (3.47.1-2).

As with all the foreign narratives discussed in the present chapter, external evidence for this revolt is extremely sparse.⁵⁵ Here, however, the focus will not be on the historical situation in Gaul in AD 21, but on Tacitus' engagement with several other texts in his description of what happened. In particular, his account echoes Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*, Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae* and Book 4 of his own *Histories*. These overlapping

⁵⁴ The Thracians' swift defeat is usually differentiated from the larger Gallic conflict (Woodman and Martin (1996) 322 *ad* 3.38.3-47). Both, however, follow the same narrative arc – initially successful resistance followed by suppression – as do the two individual Gallic movements, which have been compared to the two mutinies in Book 1 (*eid.* 328 *ad* 3.40-7). It seems preferable to consider Thrace and Gaul as variations on a theme.

⁵⁵ cf. pp. 9-10 above: the only other reference is very brief, at Vell. 2.129.3. For general discussion see Clarke (1965), Christopherson (1968), Drinkwater (1983) 27-30 and Bowersock (1987) 300.

networks of allusions develop strands that have already been discerned in the text. The failure of *metus hostilis* in Rome is further underlined, as is the deleterious effect of Roman influence on others, who now prove unable to live up to their own past. Moreover, the replaying of the late republican civil wars in the Tiberian principate, and the prospect of future conflicts for Rome, are once again signalled.

The first section of the narrative is coloured by a series of key details that echo Caesar's *BG*. The revolt is initiated by Florus and Sacrovir *inter Treveros...apud Aeduos* (3.40.1), a programmatic note that immediately recalls those two tribes' prominent role in the *BG*.⁵⁶ Florus is then said to have proceeded to the Belgae and Sacrovir to Gauls living nearer Italy (3.40.2): the Belgae and Gauls are similarly conjoined at *BG* 1.1.2, while the *Andecavi ac Turoni* (3.41.1), who are the first to join in, are also mentioned together by Caesar.⁵⁷ As the insurrection of the Treviri continues, Florus leads a move to a place named rather archly: *saltus, quibus nomen Arduenna* (3.42.2; cf. p. 143 above on Thala at 3.21.1). This forest, *totius Galliae maxima* (*BG* 6.29.4), recurs several times in the *BG* and is mentioned only very rarely elsewhere (*TLL* II.492.11-28). It may be that accounts of the 50s BC influenced sources describing the events of AD 21, but this concentrated evocation of Caesar's work appears artful, not least because it seems to shape the reactions of characters within the text.

Tacitus reports how panic was sparked in Rome by the belief that *quattuor et sexaginta Galliarum civitates descivisse* (3.44.1).⁵⁸ While *optimus quisque rei publicae cura maerebat* (3.44.2), many others rejoiced *odio praesentium et cupidine mutationis*; in

⁵⁶ Woodman and Martin (1996) 330 *ad* 3.40. They adduce other verbal and thematic parallels: Florus' *vulgus obaeratorum aut clientium* (3.42.2) / Orgetorix' *omnes clientes obaeratosque suos* (*BG* 1.4.2) looks the most striking. Both Gauls die early on, but this does not end what they begin.

⁵⁷ *BG* 2.35.3, 7.4.6: see Woodman and Martin (1996) 333 *ad loc.*

⁵⁸ This also echoes the tradition of *metus / terror Gallicus*: see Sall., *BJ* 114, Drinkwater (1983) 7-8, 29 and Urban (1999), who notes the recurrence of rumours about Gallic tumult at times of unrest in Rome (16-18, 43). cf. too Gardner (1983) and Bellen (1985).

their view, *miseram pacem vel bello bene mutari* (3.44.2-3). The trope of ‘war being exchanged for peace’ is inverted,⁵⁹ and this desire to see Rome pitted against foreigners recurs as the revolt nears a climax. Before the final battle with the Aeduan rebels, the Roman commander Gaius Silius declares that the Romans are facing them *tamquam in hostem* (3.46.1): the Gauls’ friendly status is rendered unimportant. He also emphasises his troops’ achievements against other foreign opponents, terming them *Germaniarum victores* (ibid.), and his concluding command (‘... *imbelles Aeduos evincite et fugientibus consulite*’, 3.46.2) is suffused with aggression more appropriately directed towards enemies than wayward allies. Once the news of the Roman victory has been officially acknowledged, the senate proposes various military honours for the emperor, as if for a foreign war (3.47.3).

Moreover, the text suggests that this apparent urge to construct a hostile polarity between Romans and others is also felt in Gaul. The Gauls’ mere decision to resist Roman rule is indicative of this: their leaders play up the difference between Romans and others by claiming that the Roman army is divided into a weak Italian and a strong *externum* element (3.40.3), and Florus tries to end the Gauls’ participation in that army by calling on a Gallic unit serving with the Romans to join him (3.42.1). Sacrovir’s occupation of Augustodunum is an aggressive move against an embodiment of Gallo-Roman integration (3.43.1) and it is notable that here the ‘native’ elements in his forces are emphasised in some detail: note the preponderance of non-Roman weapons and the *cruppellarii*, armoured *more gentico*, at 3.43.2. When the final battle looms, he is said to *memorare veteres Gallorum glorias quaeque Romanis adversa intulissent* (3.45.2: this

⁵⁹ Woodman and Martin (1996) 343 *ad loc.* They cite several parallels which all occur in contexts of intra-Roman strife, and the closest verbally, which also use *mutare*, are Sall., *BC* 58.15 (Catiline’s speech; cf. p. 213 below) and Val. Max. 5.4.1 (Coriolanus’ change of heart, a passage that was also echoed at 3.38.4; see nn. 53 above and 67 below).

contrasts with 3.40.1, where he and Florus are introduced with reference to their ancestors' notable deeds in Rome's service).

This sense that there are Romans and Gauls who believe they should be taking on each other as external foes, and the concomitant feeling in Rome at least that this will provide a respite from domestic unhappiness, once again brings the issue of *metus hostilis* to the fore. Both sides seem to look nostalgically back to a past when they waged unambiguous wars against one another. The implications of this idea, however, are different in each case. The echoes of Caesar's *BG*, particularly as they seem to be concentrated in Tacitus' account of the insurrection's opening phase, before he reports the situation in Rome at 3.44, create the impression that when some Romans hear of these events they believe that a revolt similar to those in Caesar's *commentarii* will restore the glories of the first century BC. Members of the senate, in their attempts to honour the emperor for this success, also seem to have been infected by a version of this belief.

To a certain extent, Tiberius' own reaction acts as a corrective. Having already justified his low-key response (3.47.2; cf. 3.41.3, 44.4), he protests vehemently against being accorded honours for the 'victory': with his genuine military experience, he has no interest in *peregrinationis suburbanae inane praemium* (3.47.4). His consistent lack of concern contrasts with his greater agitation at the equivalent stage of the German mutiny (see 1.47), and indeed with his recurrent concerns about Germanicus in Books 1 and 2.⁶⁰ It was demonstrated in Chapter 3, however, that in the 'long Book 3' (which of course encompasses the Thracian and Gallic revolts) the emperor proves increasingly unaware that Sallust's account of the troubled years of the late republic is more and more applicable to the situation in Rome, and particularly to the rise of Sejanus. His

⁶⁰ On the parallelism between 1.47 and 3.44, see Woodman and Martin (1996) 341 *ad* 3.44.1.

‘foreknowledge’ of 69 must be seen alongside his ignorance about the nature of his own principate:⁶¹ it will be shown below that the Sallustian overtones to Tacitus’ portrayal of the nostalgic Romans and Gauls further this point, as indeed does the use of Caesar’s *BG*. The echoes of *Histories* 4 at 3.40-7 will also be discussed shortly, and Tiberius’ apparent insensibility to them suggests that his awareness of the Julio-Claudian principate’s ultimate fate as depicted in the *Histories* may have receded. He is uninterested in what the revolt may signify about *metus hostilis* and its absence from Rome. Meanwhile, *optimus quisque rei publicae cura maerebat* (3.44.2) but, like Lepidus (see pp. 162-3 above), they seem unable to act.

The Gauls who look to the past prove similarly misguided. Despite their leaders’ efforts to polarise Rome and Gaul, and to stage an all-out war between the two, the final battle between the Aedui and Silius’ troops turns out rather one-sided (as 3.46.3 shows). Sacrovir’s stress on the *veteres Gallorum glorias* and the reverses once inflicted on the Romans (3.45.2) cannot inspire his men sufficiently: they are unable to emulate their predecessors’ deeds.⁶² Now, the most obvious distinguishing factor between past and present is increased Gallic interaction with Rome. This is represented tangibly by the leaders’ and armies’ Roman connections, which will be examined more closely below, and the Romano-Gallic settlement at Augustodunum (note too *tamquam in hostem*, 3.46.1).⁶³

Not for the first time in the hexad, Roman influence seems to be an enervating force on foreigners: Rome’s effect on Gallic society apparently means that independent resistance is now no longer possible. Moreover, Tacitus mentions tensions amongst the

⁶¹ After his refusal of military honours here, he will soon be ‘attacking’ Rome himself: see Woodman (1998d) 136-41 and pp. 246-7 below.

⁶² It is not clear if he is referring to the 50s BC, to which Tacitus has already alluded, or to earlier history: it is hard not to deem the former ironically appropriate here, as the Gallic resistance to Caesar ultimately failed.

⁶³ See Woodman and Martin (1996) 332 *ad* 3.41.1 on the complications in Sacrovir’s assertion *nihil validum in exercitibus nisi quod externum*, and cf. too Woolf (1998) 22.

Gauls that result from their various links to Rome (note the loyal Iulius Indus, *discors Floro*, 3.42.3, and Sacrovir's suicide *metu deditiois*, 3.46.4), and contribute to the insurrection's failure. Roman contact, it seems, has brought about internal disagreements; by contrast, in the *BG* the final Gallic effort against Rome is marked by unwonted unanimity (cf. *BG* 7.37-9, 63-5). As in the Thracians' case, the Gallic historiographical predilection for *discordia* cautions against assuming that these details mean that the Roman phenomenon of civil war has proved contagious,⁶⁴ but there still appears to be a link between the incorporation of Gaul into the Romans' empire and these examples of Gallic disunity. In Rome as well as in Gaul, the withdrawal of *metus hostilis* has proved injurious to internal stability.

The point is subtly underlined by Silius' description of his men as *Germaniarum victores* (3.46.1). This looks notably disingenuous as, unlike the Gauls, the free Germans in Books 1 and 2 were fully a match for Roman attempts to incorporate them within the empire, and then their subsequent internal discord did not curb their continuing freedom. Silius' comment thus serves to hint at how the Gauls' situation could have been different, had their links with Rome been less close.⁶⁵

. Yet More History after Sallust

In Chapter 3, it was argued that in the narrative of events in Rome that spans Books 2, 3 and 4, chains of allusions to Sallust's *Bellum Jugurthinum* and *Bellum*

⁶⁴ See p. 206 above and Woodman and Martin (1996) 337 *ad* 3.42.3. cf. too the unrealised prospect of invincible Gallic unity evoked by Vercingetorix at Caes., *BG* 7.29.6.

⁶⁵ See pp. 59-60 on Gauls and Germans in *Annals* 1, but the notion that contact with 'civilisation' is debilitating to Gaul occurs already in the *BG* (see 1.1.3 on Belgian isolation, and cf. 7.77.15-16, as well as pp. 18-9 above). The implication that the Gauls of *Annals* 3 have degenerated is compelling, but readers of the *BG* may have remembered the Aeduan links to republican Rome (see Braund (1980), Gardner (1983) 183-4 and *BG* 1.33.2). The 'decline' had started already at that point.

Catilinae, especially the latter, serve to characterise the increasingly troubled nature of Tiberius' principate. So it should not be altogether surprising that in the account of the Gallic revolt, which falls in the middle of the 'long Book 3', the presence of Sallust's *BC* in particular can also be detected. In *Annals* 3, the importance of penury and debt as triggers of the Gauls' discontent are immediately emphasised: initially the revolt is said to have occurred *ob magnitudinem aëris alieni* (3.40.1), and amongst the followers of Florus and Sacrovir are those *quibus ob egestatem ac metum ex flagitiis maxima peccandi necessitudo* (3.40.2).

These details directly recall several passages in the *BC*. Tacitus' Gallic debtors are analogous to their compatriots, the Allobroges whom, *publice privatimque aere alieno oppressos* (*BC* 40.1), Catiline invites to join him, but also to his Roman followers: *quique alienum aes grande conflaverat quo flagitium aut facinus redimeret...postremo omnes quos flagitium egestas conscius animus exagitabat* (*BC* 14.2-3; cf. 33.2). He is also said to have targeted individuals who possessed *necessitudo et plurimum audaciae* (*BC* 17.2).⁶⁶ Florus' unsuccessful plan to spark war by slaughtering *negotiatores* (3.42.1) also resembles Jugurtha's actual massacre at Cirta, described in the *Bellum Iugurthinum* (*BJ* 26.3), but then there is a further important parallel with the *BC*. It has already been noted that, after reporting the general fear in Rome, Tacitus mentions that some individuals felt delight *odio praesentium et cupidine mutationis*, because at last *miseram pacem vel bello bene mutari* (3.44.2-3). This again echoes the Catilinarians, who at *BC* 37.3 are termed the kind of people who *...nova exoptant, odio suarum rerum mutari omnia student*.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ See Woodman and Martin (1996) 329 *ad* 3.40.1 and 330-1 *ad* 3.40.2 (note *necessitudo*'s elegant shift in meaning), although they may underestimate Tacitus' surely pointed evocation of Sallust: in the parallel passage at Cic., *Cat.* 2.18-24, *aes alienum* unsurprisingly occurs more than once but there are no further echoes of it here.

⁶⁷ cf. too *BC* 17.6, and n. 59 above.

These correspondences can be read in two complementary ways. Although the rebellious Gauls of the *Annals* are briefly linked to the Allobroges of 63 BC,⁶⁸ they and those Romans who resent Tiberius look more like the Catilinarian conspirators themselves. Chapter 3 showed how within *Annals* 3 the advent of Sejanus, the ‘second Catiline’, was a key factor in the emergence of the *BC* as an appropriate Sallustian model for Tiberius’ principate, and within the smaller compass of the Gallic revolt these arresting echoes of Sallust similarly highlight the looming possibility of a kind of civil war in Rome, to say nothing of the more distant conflicts to which the *Annals* would have led up. As with his descriptions of the senate in Rome (see pp. 150-5 above, and the senators act similarly at 3.47.3), Tacitus seems to use Sallust’s account of the first century BC to evoke the prospect of civil war, but also to highlight the thoughtlessness of those who ape the past without reference to its wider connotations and the stark contemporary situation. In fact, his echoes of the *BG* here may be read like this too. The Romans who desire a Caesarian-style Gallic war seem not to remember that this account of martial success was the product of a troubled decade that directly preceded the civil wars that eventually led to the emergence of the principate (see *BG* 7.1.1-2, while Tacitus’ reference to the 50s BC at 3.28.1 is not complimentary; cf. pp. 147-9 above), and was authored by a key precursor of the imperial system (see Chapter 2).⁶⁹

Moreover, the discontented Gauls and Romans have already been seen as linked by their respective efforts to restore *metus hostilis*, but the two groups are also equated by their resentment of the leadership to which they are subject, even though in other respects their outlooks are directly opposed. In comparison with the earlier Thracian episodes, the situation has deteriorated: Rhescuporis’ portrayal in Book 2 merely foreshadowed

⁶⁸ The Allobroges refused to betray Rome even under pressure (Sall., *BC* 41.3-5; though see Dio 37.47-8 for their revolt in 61 BC and cf. Gardner (1983) 182). Tacitus’ Gauls prove unable to emulate two kinds of forebears: the rebels of Caesar’s *BG* and the loyal subalterns of Sallust’s *BC*.

⁶⁹ Moreover, on Caesar’s promotion of his own image in the *BG*, see the collection of Welch and Powell (1998).

Tiberius' later development as a despotic ruler, and at 3.38.3 Roman cruelty was only exercised via intermediaries. Now, however, the Gauls are resisting direct Roman rule. The reference to Tiberius' *cruentas epistulas* in Rome (3.44.3) seems proleptic,⁷⁰ but as Chapter 3 showed, *Annals* 3 depicts the republican 'look' of the principate gradually dissolving as the emperor's control and the senate's weakness become clearer and Sejanus' emergence looms. In his narrative of the Gallic revolt Tacitus suggests that there now is some dissent both at home and abroad, but soon it will be obvious that foreigners are much better at resisting Roman rule than the Romans themselves are.

. The Gallic Iulii (Sacrovir, Florus, Vindex, Civilis...)

So far the discussion of the Gallic revolt has considered the rebels as a whole, and the reaction back in Rome, but the details of Tacitus' portrayal of its two instigators, Iulius Florus and Iulius Sacrovir, are also significant. As foreigners with Roman links who proceed to initiate resistance to Rome, they fit a model that has already been established by the German Arminius and the north African Tacfarinas. Arminius' actual service with Rome is not a prominent theme in the narrative, however, and Tacfarinas' auxiliary experience is mentioned only when he first appears (see pp. 63-4 and 135-6 above). Conversely, it is clear that Florus, Sacrovir and their communities have been imbued with Roman influence for some time.

The two leaders are said to have possessed hereditary Roman citizenship (3.40.1), and their Gallo-Roman aristocratic status, as well as that of Iulius Indus, who remains

⁷⁰ Walker (1952) 101-2 and Morello (2006) 333-5.

loyal to Rome (3.42.3), is signalled at the outset by their *nomina*.⁷¹ Then there is the evidence for the Gauls' role in the Roman military: Sacrovir, who has already claimed, with reference to the Roman troops, that *nihil validum in exercitibus nisi quod externum* (3.40.3, though see n. 63 above), is amongst the leading Gauls on the Roman side who duplicitously help check the first outbreak of trouble (3.41.2-3), and then Florus tries to win over a cavalry unit of Treviri kept *militia disciplinaque nostra* (3.42.1). His fellow Gaul Indus, however, who fights on the Romans' side, is instrumental in his defeat (3.42.3).

Such details no doubt reflect the historical fact of Gaul's 'Romanised' state in the early principate,⁷² but it is all but certain that for the *Annals'* original readers the description of a revolt led by Gallic individuals with strong Roman connections would have recalled the more recent insurrections of Iulius Vindex in AD 68 and Iulius Civilis in AD 69. As has already been noted, Tacitus' account of the former event does not survive, although it is possible that it is echoed in his depiction of Germanicus in Germany in Book 1 (p. 52 above), and Dio's later narrative gives some clue as to how it may have been represented.⁷³ It can be shown, by contrast, that in a number of respects the Gallic revolt in *Annals* 3 resonates with the narrative of Civilis' rebellion in the *Histories* (*H.* 4.12-37, 54-79; 5.14-26, where the text breaks off) in which the Germano-Gallic Batavians,⁷⁴ along with various Gallic tribes, are involved.

In each text, Tacitus begins by highlighting the noble birth of the leaders in question (*...regia stirpe multo ceteros anteibant, H.* 4.13.1 / *nobilitas ambobus, A.* 3.40.1); in the *Histories*, it is later revealed that this is also true of the Gauls – Classicus,

⁷¹ Note the Latin pun on 'Florus', *ipsi florentes*, at 3.40.3; cf. Woodman (1998g) 218-29.

⁷² See n. 30 of the Introduction on 'Romanisation', and Drinkwater (1983) 26-8 on Roman Gaul and id. (1978) for the Gallo-Roman Iulii.

⁷³ cf. Woodman and Martin (1996) 329 *ad* 3.40.1 while Drinkwater (1983) 49 speculates, on the basis of the extant *Histories*, that Tacitus presented Vindex 'in the manner of a latter-day Sacrovir' rather than a senatorial opponent of Nero. See too how at *H.* 4.57.2 Vocula couples the revolts of Sacrovir and Vindex.

⁷⁴ On the Batavians' dual status see Rutherford (2010) 320; cf. n. 66 of Chapter 1.

Tutor (both Treviri, as is Florus) and Sabinus – who join Civilis in due course (*H.* 4.55.1-2).⁷⁵ All these individuals bear the *nomen* ‘Iulius’ and have longstanding associations with Rome (cf. the similar description of Vindex at Dio 63.22.1).⁷⁶ As conspirators, they then go about winning support in similar ways. Florus and Sacrovir operate *secretis conloquiis*: in *conciliabula et coetus* they complain *de continuatione tributorum, gravitate faenoris, saevitia ac superbia praesidentium* and suggest that it is *egregium resumendae libertati tempus*, not least as foreigners are the bulwark of the Roman army (*A.* 3.40.2-3). Later Sacrovir proclaims that *quam decora victoribus libertas, quanto intolerantior servitus iterum victis* (*A.* 3.45.2). In the *Histories*, Civilis similarly works on his fellow-countrymen (with the superlative *ferocissimo quoque adsumpto*, *A.* 3.40.2, cf. *promptissimos vulgi*, *H.* 4.14.2), reminding them of Roman injustices and declaring that *numquam magis adflictam rem Romanam* (*H.* 4.14.4; cf. again Dio 63.22.2-6 on Vindex’ actions). Like Sacrovir, he at first disguises his defection from the Roman cause (*H.* 4.16.1); his success then causes the Batavians to be hailed as *libertatis auctores* (*H.* 4.17.1) and soon he attempts to win over the Gauls, stressing *secretis sermonibus* (*H.* 4.17.2) the harshness of Roman *servitus* and Rome’s current weakness (with *quantum in Italia reliquum*, *H.* 4.17.2, cf. *quam inops Italia*, *A.* 3.40.1). Civilis acclaims the Gauls’ strength and the fact that they have acquired *si quid militaris disciplinae* from Rome (*H.* 4.17.3). Later, Tutor and Sabinus similarly induce their fellows to revolt, at first *secretis sermonibus* (*H.* 4.55.3) and then more openly.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Woodman and Martin (1996) 330 *ad A.* 3.40.1 compare *nobilitate...ante alios...* (of Classicus; *H.* 4.55.1). They also note how this lineage marks the Gallic rebels in the *Annals* out from the Thracians at 3.38.3-39.

⁷⁶ Classicus leads an *ala Trevirorum*; Woodman and Martin (1996) 335 *ad* 3.42.1 wonder if Florus tries to win this same unit over. At *H.* 4.55.2, Sabinus’ claim of Caesarian descent does not seem *a priori* implausible. Does Tacitus include it as a wry comment on the existence of so many Iulii? See too Woolf (1998) 21-3.

⁷⁷ Sacrovir’s death also displays a strong verbal resemblance to the rumoured demise of Sabinus (*illic sua manu, reliqui mutuis ictibus occidere; incensa super villa omnes cremavit*, *A.* 3.46.4 / *ut...famam exitii sui faceret, villam, in quam perfugerat, cremavit, illic voluntaria morte interisse creditus*, *H.* 4.67.1).

In an ancient historiographical context, such rhetoric of freedom and slavery is by no means confined to Florus and Sacrovir in the *Annals* and to Civilis and the other rebels in the *Histories*. Still, there are a number of reasons to suggest that Tacitus intended a connection between Civilis and his peers, and Florus and Sacrovir, to be perceived.⁷⁸ The covert methods of operating and gradually building up support attributed to the Gauls in *Annals* 3 are not unique, not least as within the first hexad they recall the beginnings of the German and Pannonian mutinies at 1.16.3-17.5 and 31.4-5,⁷⁹ but this link to Book 1 is significant in itself.⁸⁰ It serves as a reminder of the mutiny-narratives and potentially of their echoes of *Histories* 1, at a point in *Annals* 3 at which Tacitus seems to be extending the connection between his two major works. The verbal parallels between the Gallic and Batavian revolts may not be exclusive, but if it is acknowledged that there are allusions to the *Histories* at A. 3.40-7, this represents an important development in the way in which the Tiberian books look forward to the wars of 69.

Tiberius' contrasting reactions to the mutinies in *Annals* 1 and the Gallic revolt in *Annals* 3, which seem to represent an increased detachment on his part both from what is currently happening in Rome and from the prospect of the ultimate end of the Julio-Claudian principate, have already been noted. Moreover, the fact that the Gauls of the *Annals* echo the Batavians of the *Histories* further stresses the naivety of the *multi* (3.44.2) who nostalgically recall Rome's past wars with the Gauls. Their wish for such wars to be waged again will eventually be granted in 69, but this happens in the context

⁷⁸ No other account of comparable scale survives of either revolt, so it cannot be determined to what extent Tacitus' narratives may be influenced by other sources.

⁷⁹ These follow a similar escalating pattern and contain several verbal points of contact with *Annals* 3 (n.b. *pessimi cuiusque...miscere coetus...nocturnis conloquiis...deterrimum quemque*, 1.16.2-3; *cur...in modum servorum oboedirent*, 1.17.1; *saevitiam centurionum*, 1.17.4; *implere ceterorum rudes animos*, 1.31.4). cf. Woodman (2006a) 305-7 on the parallels between these two passages. See also Sall., *H.* 1.77.7M.

⁸⁰ It also shows Roman individuals asserting themselves against their superiors, while later in the hexad virtually all Romans – in contrast to foreigners – will fail to do so; cf. p. 184 above.

of civil strife in Rome, and the possibility that it is time for the Gauls to destroy Roman power and establish an empire of their own is at least briefly canvassed (see *H.* 4.54).

Furthermore, a reading of the Gallic revolt that takes into account Civilis' rebellion in the *Histories* also offers an important perspective on the role of freedom at home and abroad in the first hexad of the *Annals*. It is worth stressing that Tacitus does not make Florus and Sacrovir especially heroic or honourable. The account of the Treviran movement's swift end shows the former to be inept and unpersuasive (note *pauci...equitum corrupti, plures in officio mansere*, 3.42.1). Sacrovir, meanwhile, appears shrewder, but his duplicity while still serving with the Romans (3.41.3) is stressed, and as has already been noted his forces are ultimately defeated with ease. As opposed to fighting to the end, he flees and then commits suicide to avoid betrayal to the Romans (3.46.4). While he is not the last individual in Books 1-6 to die in this manner after a battle (see below), this end will contrast with the more heroic death of his fellow rebel leader Tacfarinas at 4.25.3, who has just rallied his forces in the cause of freedom (4.24.1; see pp. 172-3 above).⁸¹ The two Gallic leaders do not look capable of achieving and living up to the *libertas* they claim to seek.

In the *Histories* Civilis is portrayed even more ambivalently. Although he proclaims the necessity of seeking freedom from oppression and injustice in a manner that appears to be reminiscent of other anti-Roman rebels, from the beginning he harbours self-aggrandising ambitions, as is made clear by the reference at *H.* 4.13.2-3 to his dubious involvement in Roman internal politics and the pre-emptive disclosure that *si destinata provenissent, validissimarum ditissimarumque nationum regno imminebat*, *H.*

⁸¹ cf. n. 77 above: his death links him to Sabinus in the *Histories*, a not especially admirable figure (*H.* 4.55.2).

4.17.6.⁸² The narrative of *Histories* 4 also includes a highly ambivalent gloss on the rhetoric of *libertas* itself. Once support for Civilis is fading, the Roman commander Cerialis, pragmatically justifying Roman imperialism to the Gauls, suggests that Germans have always been eager to control Gaul and, like all invaders, they attempt to deceive: *libertas et speciosa nomina praetexuntur* (*H.* 4.73.3). Cerialis is not entirely admirable, but this speech underlines Civilis' duplicity and makes a wider point about the impossibility of unconditional *libertas*.⁸³

Just as real civil war will not break out in Rome until AD 69, in 21 the Gauls are unable to achieve what the Batavian Civilis would in that year. They lack his single-minded self-interest, but they also fail in their own commitment to freedom, and the ambivalent if not cynical treatment of this quality in *Histories* 4 happens to serve as an arch commentary on aspects of the Tiberian *Annals*. As Tacfarinas and then the Thracians and Frisians demonstrate, there are rebels in these books whose demands to be free seem sincere, and who go some way towards obtaining it, but their ultimate lack of success reinforces the view that it is not available to subjects of Rome – still less to the Romans themselves. Then there are the Germans of Books 1 and 2, whose freedom did allow them to maintain their independence. But this was under the leadership of Arminius who – rather like Civilis (cf. *...regno imminebat*, *H.* 4.17.6) – was said to have later sought a kingdom of his own (2.88.2; see pp. 66-72). His own compatriots were able to check him, but his trajectory towards *regnum* rather than *libertas* mirrored that of the principate itself: in Rome, freedom is indeed a *speciosum nomen*.

⁸² See Lavan (2013) 146; there may be a further echo of the *BG* too, of the detail that Celtillus, Vercingetorix' father, had sought *regnum* (Caes., *BG* 7.4.1). This is almost the first thing reported of Vercingetorix, and may condition attitudes to him.

There is also a debate about whether the Batavian revolt was, rather than a subsidiary element to the civil wars, a genuine nationalistic movement, which Flavian propaganda tried to obscure: see Walser (1951) 86-96 and 123-7, Dyson (1975) 264-5 and Drinkwater (1983) 45-7. But Urban (1999) 70-4 notes that Tacitus' account includes both strands; the picture was probably not clear-cut to contemporaries. On *Histories* 4 see too Keitel (1993), Haynes (2003) 148-77 and Pomeroy (2003).

⁸³ See Keitel (1993) 51-7 and Haynes (2003) 156-7, 163-71.

d. Civil War, and the Pursuit of *libertas*

i) Thracians and Frisians: 4.46-51, 72-3

The opening of *Annals* 4, of course, heralds a major development in Tiberius' principate, as Sejanus' presence in Rome is now openly acknowledged (pp. 168-9 above). The further significance of this for the 'civil war within the principate' will be considered below. It has already been remarked, however, that Book 4 also contains several confrontations between the Romans and their subjects. First, Tacfarinas makes one final effort to defeat Rome in north Africa, calling on those who prefer freedom to slavery to join him, and eventually letting himself rather heroically be slain (4.24-5; see pp. 175-6 above). Moreover, as was noted with reference to the digression at 4.32-3, later two other groups of rebels act against Rome: the Thracians, and then the German Frisians.

Tacitus' account of AD 26 opens with the second revolt in Thrace. The Thracians, faced with heightened Roman demands for them to supply troops, send an embassy in protest but concurrently prepare for war (4.46). After some initial skirmishes and the slaughter of a unit of Thracian auxiliaries serving with the Romans (4.47-8), whose members carelessly let themselves be ambushed, the rebels are compelled to retreat to a remote stronghold and there debate whether to surrender, commit suicide or fight (4.49-50). Eventually a battle occurs and the Romans eventually prevail, but not with ease (4.51). Later, in AD 28, the Frisians respond to the centurion Olennius' harsh intensification of exactions by attacking him and his troops (4.72). When hostilities spread, a legate from lower Germany comes to assist but the Roman forces and

accompanying auxiliaries fare badly. Although they eventually quell the disturbance, once again the victory is far from glorious and heavy losses are suffered (4.73). Both these episodes are introduced in formal annalistic terms (*Lentulo Gaetulico C. Calvisio consulibus decreta triumphii insignia Poppaeo Sabino contusis Thraecum gentibus*, 4.46.1; cf. *eodem anno*, 4.72.1) but they are starkly representative of Rome's military fortunes under Tiberius (cf. pp. 189-91 above).

The Thracians' and Frisians' relative success and their more sustained commitment to *libertas* mark them out from Tacfarinas and, in particular, from the Gauls who revolt in Book 3; indeed, these movements represent the culmination of the idea that proximity to *libertas* is directly proportionate to distance from Rome. The account of the Gallic revolt referred to the Gauls' extensive integration within the Roman army, and even Arminius and Tacfarinas are not said to have caused trouble while they were actually serving under Rome. There is no sense of strong Roman involvement in Thracian and Frisian society,⁸⁴ however, and Tacitus shows that the rebels are not so much calling for *libertas* to be reclaimed as protesting against the prospect of its removal. The rebellious Thracians, who seem entirely separate from the auxiliary unit massacred at 4.48.3 (commanded by the client king Rhoemetalces, who similarly came under attack at 3.38.3-4), are barely amenable to the mere idea of sending troops for the Romans. They are *ne regibus quidem parere nisi ex libidine soliti* (4.46.1).

This disinclination to be ruled associates them more with the Romans of the distant past, who abolished monarchy, than with those who are subject to the

⁸⁴ See Haynes (2011b) 9-11 on how even after provincialisation in AD 46 Thrace absorbed little Roman influence (though see also n. 90 below). 11.19.1 and 13.54 show the Frisians' unwillingness to submit totally to Rome; as will be noted, they joined the Batavian revolt in 69. That these peoples have fewer Roman links than the Gauls at 3.40-7 also recalls the overview of the Britons (and Gauls) at *Agr.* 11-13: see Clarke (2001), whose comments about the distant rebel Calgacus' use of the Roman rhetoric of *libertas* (105-9) are also relevant here.

contemporary principate.⁸⁵ Even so, the Thracians undertake not to withdraw their *amicitiam obsequiumque* if their demands are met; *sin ut victis servitium indiceretur, esse sibi ferrum et iuventutem et promptum libertati aut ad mortem animum* (4.46.2; cf. the additional reference to *servitium* at 4.48.3). They do not consider themselves to be enslaved to Rome, and represent the possibility of losing their freedom as hypothetical. Moreover, the later reference to Dinis, *longo usu vim atque clementiam Romanam edoctus* (4.50.2), suggests that his more extensive experience of Rome has been in hostile situations.

The Frisians appear to be in an analogous situation, resisting the harsher imposition of Roman control. It is said that they *pacem exuere* as if casting off slavery (4.72.1);⁸⁶ the advent of this in tangible form (*postremo corpora coniugum aut liberorum servitio tradebant*, 4.72.2) prompts them to act, although it is Roman *avaritia*, rather than their own *obsequium* (4.72.1), to which they object. Conversely, the Thracians promised *obsequium* to Rome at 4.46.2, and the suggestion that the Frisians are not subject to this implies that they are freer than the Thracians.⁸⁷ Subsequently they will inflict more damage on Rome than their fellow rebels, although both groups enjoy appreciable success. Separately from their slaughter of the auxiliaries, the Thracian rebels present a significant challenge to the Romans themselves: they resist Sabinus' provocations (4.49.1) and endure a gruelling siege. When their remnants eventually break out, they prove resourceful (4.51.1), and Tacitus' narrative of the battle makes clear that the general confusion and *suorum atque hostium ignoratio* (4.51.2) that ensue are more

⁸⁵ The kings' expulsion is rather underplayed at 3.27.1, but cf. pp. 23-4, for foreigners resembling Romans of the past, and 67 above, on Maroboduus' exile. *libido* can be used like *licentia* to denote extreme *libertas* (see n. 31 above with Martin and Woodman (1989) 182 ad 4.35.1, and cf. *Dial.* 40.2), but *ex libidine* may also recall Rome, for *libidines* in the concrete sense are regularly associated with Tiberius from 1.4.4 onwards (note too Sejanus' *summa apiscendi libido*, 4.1.3): see pp. 264-6 below.

⁸⁶ See Martin and Woodman (1989) 256 ad loc. for the equation of *pax* and *servitus* elsewhere.

⁸⁷ cf. *Romani, quorum superbiam frustra per obsequium ac modestiam effugias* (*Agr.* 30.3): *obsequium* is only deployed when *libertas* is gone. The concept is not unequivocally negative in the *Agricola* (see *Agr.* 42.4), but cf. *deforme obsequium* at *A.* 4.20.3. See too Moles (1998/2011) 175 and n. 119, and Lavan (2013) 156.

harmful to the Romans than to the Thracians. While the former are eventually victorious, some rebels make a last stand, and even when this is over there remain a few whom ultimately *praematura montis Haemi et saeva hiems subvenit* (4.51.3). The episode thus ends by disclosing that the Roman victory was not complete.⁸⁸

The Frisians also cause much trouble for Rome, although again they outdo the Thracians by initiating rather than enduring a siege (*soluta iam castelli obsidio*, 4.73.1). They then staunchly resist Roman forces. After their eventual defeat (*acri pugna hoste pulso*, 4.73.3), the harm they did is revealed: they caused the deaths of *multi tribunorum praefectorumque et insignes centuriones*, and then of *nongentos Romanorum apud lucum* and another four hundred men who had fled to the villa of an ex-auxiliary, Cruptorix, and there killed each other *postquam proditio metuebatur* (4.73.4). Tacitus previously referred to Romans dying in a grove when he recalled the Varian disaster (cf. *lucus* at 1.59.3 and 61.3); at 4.73, not only does he completely avoid stressing the Roman victory, but this echo emphasises that the Germans as a whole have proved a match for Rome.⁸⁹ The Thracians' and Frisians' achievements thus seem to symbolise the effects of distance from Rome and proximity to *libertas*. Nevertheless, unlike the Germans in Books 1 and 2, neither group is sufficiently detached from Roman influence to attain full freedom. The historical inevitability of their respective defeats remains, and the circumstances of each uprising – objections to increased but not unprecedented Roman exactions – indicate that these foreigners are not entirely free of Roman influence.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ The Thracians' independence seems tied to the wild landscape they inhabit: see too *qui montium editis incultu atque eo ferocius agitabant* (4.46.1).

⁸⁹ For Cruptorix, see Woolf (2009); for another echo between Books 1 and 4, see n. 84 of Chapter 1.

⁹⁰ The Thracians' protests about conscription ring slightly hollow given that some are already serving Rome; indeed, increasingly large numbers joined Roman units in the first and second centuries AD (Zahariade (2009) 59-72, though see also n. 84 above); cf. Rives (1999) 261 on the Frisians. See also Shotter (1989) 178 *ad* 4.46.2, although in the context of Books 1-6 the Thracians' demand that auxiliaries be commanded by *suos ductores* (4.46.1) looks rather threatening, given the example of such leaders as Arminius, Tacfarinas and Sacrovir.

Moreover, the idea that Roman contact is an enervating force on others, which has already been applied to the Gauls, is in evidence in both revolts, although it contributes to the rebels' relatively positive portrayal. In Thrace, when the Romans move camp they leave behind the Thracian auxiliaries under Rhoemetalces, with permission to plunder *dum populatio lucem intra sisteretur* (4.48.1), but these grow careless and suffer a surprise attack from the rebels.⁹¹ The latter butcher the auxiliaries, pointing out that the fact they are bearing arms *ad suum patriaeque servitium* renders them *perfugae et proditores* (4.48.3). The auxiliaries' clear inferiority to the rebels starkly delineates the negative results of contact with Rome.⁹² Moreover, the presence of *quod peditum Germanorum inter nostros merebat* (4.73.2) is similarly noted amongst the Roman troops deployed against the Frisians, but the latter immediately repel *turmas sociales equitesque legionum* (ibid.) alike. The allies' failure to attack in an organised manner harms the Roman cause, and the bloody results of this setback are made clear (4.73.3-4).

Nevertheless, both revolts end by stressing the foreigners' ability to withstand the Roman forces rather than the fact of their defeat. Within Book 4, their resilience and relative independence are set against almost all Romans' acceptance of how they are ruled, just as the speech of Cordus in favour of *libertas* at 4.34-5 stands out in Rome itself. In the last stages of each insurrection, however, there are some ominous touches in the portrayal of the Romans. Tacitus implies that in the main battle in Thrace it is they who are especially hampered by night and the unfamiliar terrain (note *quaedam munimenta Romani quasi perrupta omiserint*, 4.51.2), and this fosters *suorum atque*

⁹¹ There is an element of barbarian stereotyping to their laxness (see Martin and Woodman (1989) 210 *ad loc.*) but their comparative weakness is clear.

⁹² See, however, what happens to the rebels at 4.50: the trope of besieged barbarians disagreeing is common (Cohen (1982) 387-90) but Caes., *BG* 7.69-90 and Sall., *H.* 2.87M are specifically echoed here (Martin and Woodman (1989) 206 *ad* 4.46-51). Compare Dinis' action with Critognatus' invective against surrender (*BG* 7.77; cf. *H.* 2.87M C-D) and the Thracians' sortie with the Gaul's ultimate rejection of that course. Like the Gauls at 3.40-7, the rebellious Thracians cannot live up to the past.

hostium ignoratio (ibid.).⁹³ The Frisian episode concludes by emphasising the victors' failure to fulfil their obligations (*neque dux Romanus ultum iit aut corpora humavit*, 4.73.3), and by reporting the mass Roman suicide: *mutuis ictibus procubuisse* (4.73.4).

Now, the blurring of distinctions between friends and foes in a military context is by no means unparalleled elsewhere (see most notably Thuc. 7.44.2-5), but it can certainly gesture towards the confusion of identities embodied by civil war.⁹⁴ This point is made even more clearly by the fate of the Romans who, even after the Frisians have been defeated, fall *mutuis ictibus* to avoid betrayal. Within this part of the hexad, their collective suicide during a kind of siege alarmingly assimilates them to groups of rebellious foreigners (see 3.46.4 and 4.50.3). The very fact, however, that what is technically a Roman victory ends with large numbers of Romans killing each other is a chilling reminder of the Roman propensity for civil strife,⁹⁵ reflecting both the conflict in Rome under Tiberius and the more distant outlook for the Julio-Claudian principate.⁹⁶

ii) opus adgredior...ipsa etiam pace saevom (H. 1.2.1)

Indeed, as these problematic confrontations are played out on the fringes of the empire, the situation in Rome deteriorates. The way in which Sejanus' Sallustian introduction in the first chapter of Book 4 marks the beginning of a 'civil war within the

⁹³ This fits the interpretation of the passage at Martin and Woodman (1989) 214 *ad loc.*

⁹⁴ cf. Jal (1964) 322-6.

⁹⁵ See n. 92 above and again Cohen (1982) 387-92, who stresses that the trope is not confined to barbarians. For such an event in a Roman context see also Lucan 4.529-81, and Fantham (2010) 217-8, while the expression *mutuis ictibus* is uncommon but occurs at Vell. 2.27.5 in a context of republican civil strife.

⁹⁶ There are further echoes of Civilis' revolt in these two episodes. The Thracians, resenting the *dilectus*, warn that if they are encumbered with a *novo onere...esse sibi ferrum et iuventutem et promptum libertati aut ad mortem animum* (A. 4.46.1-2; cf. *Batavorum iuventus ad dilectum vocabatur, quem suapte natura gravem onerabant ministri avaritia ac luxu*, H. 4.14.1; cf. 14.2, 14.3). At A. 4.72.1 the Frisians are introduced as a *transrhenanus populus* (cf. the reference to them as a *transrhenana gens* at H. 4.15.2: they will play an active role in the Batavian rebellion). These may be due merely to Tacitus' treatment of similar events in each case (cf. pp. 39-40 above), but they serve to continue *Annals* 4's evocation of *Historiae* 4.

principate' was noted in Chapter 3 and this struggle now unfolds. As Woodman has suggested, at this point Tiberius, who has now left the city for good (4.58) and installed himself on Capri (4.67.1-3), begins to wage a metaphorical war on Rome and its people, whose suffering is described in a manner that suggests the depredations of an external enemy. This is even the case with events for which the emperor is not directly responsible, such as the collapse of the amphitheatre at Fidenae (4.62-3).⁹⁷

Meanwhile, when the Frisians' achievements become known in Rome, this news from the *imperii extrema* creates a *pavor internus* (4.74.1) amongst the senate. As the commentators note, this represents a complete inversion of *metus hostilis* in Rome, as now the report of foreign aggression is entirely eclipsed by domestic fear.⁹⁸ Such a response, to what is the last major episode in the extant Tiberian books to depict direct and hostile Roman interaction with foreigners (see pp. 236-9 below on 6.41.1), confirms that internal, and not external, conflict is Rome's major preoccupation. In contrast to their misdirected but not wholly inappropriate offer of honours to Tiberius at 3.47.3 after the conclusion of the Gallic revolt, the senators respond by voting altars of *clementia* and *amicitia* to Tiberius and Sejanus (4.74.2). This sycophantic act can be seen as the culmination of their detached ineffectiveness that has recurred throughout the hexad's central books.

The emperor's refusal to act on or even acknowledge what has happened is also a significant variation on his more shrewd response to those earlier suggested honours (see p. 210 above): *dissimulante Tiberio damna, ne cui bellum permetteret* (4.74.1). Given the Roman military incompetence that has just been displayed, a new appointment does look desirable on this occasion, but Tiberius' reluctance to grant the command to someone else

⁹⁷ See Woodman (1998d) 136-40, and also Keitel (1984) 324-5 on Sabinus' unsavoury entrapment at 4.68-70 (though cf. Rutledge (2001) 144-6).

⁹⁸ Martin and Woodman (1989) 259-60 *ad loc.*

prevents this.⁹⁹ Once again, his ability to perceive the risk of civil war seems to have gone awry (cf. pp. 121 and 157 above). In fearing a hypothetical rival, he seems blind to the presence of the real threat represented by Sejanus and, as will now be shown, the conflict already happening in Rome. Sejanus' influence is made graphically clear when Tacitus specifies the eagerness of Romans of all ranks to court him even more than the emperor himself (*anxii erga Seianum*, 4.74.3), when they are both absent from the city.

Tiberius' assault on his own citizens and indeed their attacks on each other continue to the end of his reign: Chapter 5 will examine its continuation and show that the civil war in Rome is not as one-sided as it may initially appear. As Book 4 draws to a close, moreover, the sense that civil strife has also broken out within the imperial house is striking. It has already been noted that there is irony in how the disruptive Sejanus himself accuses Agrippina of stirring up discord (see 4.12.3, 17.3 and pp. 171 above) and, once the narrative returns to Rome after the Thracian revolt, the location of this internal trouble is explicitly specified (*commota principis domo*, 4.52.1). Here too, foreign warfare yields to internal strife, and strife within the emperor's family at that. Sejanus continues harrying Germanicus' associates with a view to striking at Agrippina herself. Tacitus stresses how the latter is *atrox* (4.52.2). Like her late husband, however, although she is perceived by others as a threat, she does not seem a genuine source of civil war, even though she will ultimately try to fight back against Tiberius (cf. p. 244 below).¹⁰⁰ Tiberius sees her as an unruly figure, advising her that *non ideo laedi, quia non regnaret*

⁹⁹ Shotter (1989) 202 *ad loc.* suggests Tiberius sees a belligerent approach to Germany as potentially counterproductive (cf. 2.26), but the immediate narrative does not favour this interpretation. Note the contrast with 3.35, the emperor's attempts to induce the senate to select a commander for Africa (p. 152 above).

¹⁰⁰ cf. the *atrox bellum* that does not occur at 3.38.4, and n. 22 above; cf., however, nn. 103 below and 16 of Chapter 5.

(4.52.3: is this a sly comment on the principate as a *regnum?*), but it is piquant that he cautions her, when Sejanus is responsible.

Tacitus also goes on to stress the innocence of Nero, Agrippina and Germanicus' son. But although Sejanus harasses him as well as his mother, others consider his position to be more conducive to actual civil war. The divide between him and his brother Drusus is noted, with a reference to the latter's *cupidinem potentiae et solita fratribus odia* (4.60.3). This contrasts with the notable harmony between their father Germanicus and his brother Drusus (2.43.6) and suggests deterioration between generations, but also evokes the fundamental Roman civil war trope of fraternal discord.¹⁰¹ Nero seems to be the injured party, but his proximity to the succession is noted and his dependents are said to have urged that *velle id populum Romanum, cupere exercitus, neque ausurum contra Seianum* (4.59.3). Not only is he a more realistic replacement ruler than his mother, but his participation in treasonous actions is envisaged by individuals other than the malevolent Sejanus (although there have already been protests on Agrippina's behalf at 3.4). Sejanus will shortly try to entrap Nero and his mother by sending agents *qui monerent perfergere ad Germaniae exercitus vel celeberrimo fori effigiem divi Augusti amplecti populumque ac senatum auxilio vocare* (4.67.4).

So, at this point Sejanus, the 'second Catiline', attempts to destroy Germanicus' family and secure his own position; meanwhile, the perception of Germanicus as a figure abroad capable of leading troops on Rome is transferred to other members of his family, who are now in the city itself. Both elements seem to clash at the beginning of Book 5 after Livia's death, which is presented as a significant turning-point: *tunc velut frenis exsoluti proruperunt* (5.3.1). Further accusations are made against Agrippina and Nero,

¹⁰¹ See Bannon (1997) 149-58 and Fantham (2010) 214-17. Note too that the marriage of Germanicus' daughter – and Nero and Drusus' sister – Agrippina the younger is mentioned at 4.75. She too will be termed *atrox* at 13.13.3 and her son, another Nero of course, would represent further family degeneration and was not unacquainted with fratricide (13.16): cf. further p. 244 below.

although here the latter is not – yet – associated with *arma...rerum novarum studium* (5.3.2), and Tiberius is said not to dare to make false charges against the former. In any case, unprecedented indignation results in demonstrations: *populus effigies Agrippinae ac Neronis gerens circumstetit curiam...et principe invito exitium domui eius intendi clamitat* (5.4.2). Sejanus' response is, as ever, to accuse others of fomenting civil strife: he alleges that *descivisse populum; audiri iam et legi novas contiones, nova patrum consulta*,¹⁰² and that the discontented populace has all but taken Germanicus' relatives as *duces imperatoresque* (5.4.4).¹⁰³ Tiberius reacts vehemently, *repetitis adversum nepotem et nurum probris increpitaque per edictum plebe*, but he forbids the senate to act and defers his own decision: *integra tamen sibi cuncta postulavit* (5.5).

Once more, the emperor shows himself sensitive to the threat of civil war occurring during his reign, and indeed originating within his own household, but this means that the arc begun at his accession has reached an unfortunate conclusion. Initially Tiberius viewed Germanicus, and his position as commander on the Rhine, as a potential threat that looked forward to the ultimate implosion of the Julio-Claudian principate in AD 69; Germanicus' essential innocence did not detract from this symbolic importance, and his actions in Book 2 continued to prefigure civil war. As the hexad has advanced, however, Tiberius has seemed insensible to subsequent foreshadowings of the events described in the *Histories*, and to the model offered by the late-republican civil wars for events of his reign. The emperor's wary, but nuanced approach to Germanicus, who was a more realistic (if unrealised) usurper has been replaced by his angry readiness to believe

¹⁰² *novas contiones, nova patrum consulta* pick up the *rerum novarum studium* of which Nero is not accused at 5.3.2 but was, presumably, later on (cf. Suet. *Tib.* 54.2 and 6.24.1). See the next note.

¹⁰³ Martin and Woodman (1989) 229 *ad* 4.59.1 note the suggestions that Nero should take advantage of his popular and military support echo the German legions' offers to his father at 1.31.5; with Sejanus' words at 5.4.4, cf. *in suum cognomentum adscisci imperatores*. See Rutledge (2001) 138-46: it may have been that Agrippina and her family did represent a genuine threat of some kind to Tiberius, but Tacitus includes no explicit evidence. Original readers may have viewed the text with this additional knowledge, but it seems preferable now to focus on the figurative 'civil war' theme and the prefiguring of future developments.

that Germanicus' relations are about to capitalise on their military and popular support. Even though in Book 6 there will be a bilateral element to the struggle, his suspicions about their wider designs are clearly unfounded. At the same time, Tiberius fails to perceive the genuine threat presented by Sejanus, even as he willingly credits the latter's allegations about other sources of discord. The text of Book 5 breaks off at 5.5, with the emperor's rather pregnant postponement of action. When the narrative is restored at [5].6, events will have advanced to AD 31 and Sejanus will be dead.¹⁰⁴

Nevertheless, as Chapter 5 will show, Book 6 sees the full emergence of Tiberius' pursuit of Germanicus' relatives and the sufferings of other individuals at his hands, the resistance of both those groups to him, and the new strife that develops between fellow Romans. The final failure of *metus hostilis* will become clear. Civil war within the principate – and within the imperial family – has become a habit, just as it is a habit in Roman history, and it is only a matter of time before it breaks out again on a grander scale. At the same time, a new stress on the correspondences between Rome and Parthia will confirm that the recovery of *metus hostilis* is impossible. It will also illuminate the absence of *libertas* within the Roman principate, which has already been reflected by the unsuccessful attempts of foreigners in *Annals* 2, 3 and 4 to reclaim their freedom.

¹⁰⁴ As will Germanicus' son Nero, while the latter's mother Agrippina and brother Drusus will be in exile: their position will be discussed at pp. 242-4 below.

Chapter 5

Rome from the Outside

a. Introduction

As the last section of Chapter 4 has just shown, Tacitus' reference to Livia's death, which he reports at 5.1.1 at the beginning of AD 29, seems to mark a new phase in the narrative: *ex eo praerupta iam et urgens dominatio* (5.3.1; cf. the reference to Livia's demise as a turning point in Tiberius' obituary at 6.51.3, and p. 255 below). The text is shortly afterwards interrupted by a lacuna, resuming *in medias res* at [5].6 with a passage that describes the aftermath of Sejanus' death in AD 31 and is itself fragmented.¹ This combination of factors makes it hard not to think of *Annals* 6 as somewhat detached from the rest of the hexad, but there are also positive reasons why this book's narrative texture seems rather different from what has gone before. Syme characterised it as carrying 'a dreary epilogue down to the extinction of the old emperor, with many prosecutions and deaths, with little extraneous or antiquarian matter for variegation'.²

It is correct to highlight the sheer number of Roman victims, and similarly there is a dearth of foreign material of the kind that has hitherto been a central focus of this thesis. With the exception of one minor episode, the accounts of foreign resistance to Rome that have previously featured are replaced with an extended description of events east of the Euphrates, in which Rome's involvement is of a very different kind.³ This final chapter will focus on these two elements in Book 6: its depiction of the last, gloomy years of

¹ See McCulloch (1984) 152-4 and Martin (2001) 102-3 *ad loc.*

² Syme (1958b) 256. See also Martin (1990) 1549, Ash (1999) 117 and Keitel (1999) 429 and 437-41.

³ There are also a number of miscellaneous episodes that are somewhat detached from affairs in Rome: the history of the office of *praefectus urbi* (6.11), the extended report of the credit crisis of AD 33 with reference to earlier developments in Roman financial history (6.16-17), some philosophical reflections (6.22), and the discussion of the phoenix and its non-appearance (6.28).

Tiberius' principate, and its two foreign strands. It will demonstrate how, in this concluding part of the first hexad, the theme of *metus hostilis* and the tendency for its removal to lead to internal strife, which has recurred throughout the narrative in both Roman and foreign contexts, reaches a final conclusion. Once again, developments later in the Julio-Claudian principate and also its eventual implosion in civil war are foreshadowed.

The discussion will begin by considering the revolt of the Cietae at 6.41.1, the only section of *Annals* 6 that resembles the hostile encounters between Romans and non-Romans in Books 1-4. This time, however, the rebels do not lay claim to their independence and the Romans win easily. This short episode of low-level resistance confirms that Tiberian Rome is not subject to any serious external threats; it may well give a more representative impression of the nature and relative importance of the foreign opposition experienced by Rome in the first century AD than the more dramatically depicted rebellions, particularly the campaigns against the Germans, that feature earlier in the text (see pp. 9-10 above). 6.41.1 represents the end of *metus hostilis* under the principate, which seems to suggest that civil strife will accordingly be found in Rome.

The central section of this chapter will consider the different aspects of this civil war within the principate in *Annals* 6. In Books 1 and 2 Tacitus' presentation of Germanicus and also Piso illustrated the long-term potential for renewed civil war, while the Sallustian narrative elements in the 'long Book 3' recalled the late republic and underlined the recurring presence of such strife in Roman history. The appearance of Sejanus at the opening of Book 4, however, signalled the beginning of a more immediate kind of conflict in Rome, played out in the imperial house itself. Now these struggles become more tangible. Tiberius oversees the further development of the strife within the

imperial family; his harsh treatment of his relatives again contrasts with his more cautious approach to Germanicus, but now there are suggestions that they are individually fighting back. The emergence of Caligula is an additional reminder that these hostilities will continue after Tiberius' death. The emperor's aggression towards his subjects has also become a familiar theme in the text, but now they too begin to resist him, and his 'civil war' is waged by both sides. Moreover, the relentless and violent pursuit of Romans by other Romans in this part of the narrative looks distinctly like a real civil war, as Tacitus' account of events deploys tropes that recall other depictions of civil strife.

The final part of the discussion will focus on Tacitus' account of dynastic struggles in the east at 6.31-7 and 41.2-44: in response to local opposition to the Parthian king Artabanus and the latter's attempts to expand his dominions, Tiberius sends out a new Roman-sponsored king for Armenia and a nominee for the Parthian throne itself. Both are successfully installed, although Artabanus eventually manages to regain his position. This relatively lengthy narrative ostensibly serves as a respite from the grim and claustrophobic atmosphere in Rome, but a closer analysis will reveal that the pattern of difference and similarity between Rome and Parthia that originated at the beginning of Book 2 is resumed here. Tacitus makes the civil war and despotism that prevail in the east mirror what is concurrently happening in Rome, and here at the end of the Tiberian books the theme that the principate is a kind of *regnum* is brought to a climax. But the links between west and east also have a more complex dimension. Tiberius' conciliatory approach towards resolving the situation in the east seems to work, but it contrasts with his Parthian counterpart's belligerence towards outsiders, which can be seen as an attempt to restore *metus hostilis*. Both Parthia and Rome, however, are inextricably bound by a nexus of autocracy and civil war.

b. *Immota...aut modice laccessita pax* (4.32.2)

The only foreign episode in Book 6 comparable to the preceding narrative's direct confrontations between Romans and others is the single paragraph describing the response by the Cietae, a Cilician tribe, to the Cappadocian king Archelaus' efforts to make them *nostrum in modum deferre census, pati tributa* (6.41.1). Like the Thracians, the Gauls, and the Frisians who previously opposed Roman control, the Cietae protest against the authority to which they are subject, and its exactions.⁴ Moreover, in a manner similar to the Thracians at 4.47.1, the Cietae begin by retreating *in iuga Tauri montis* (6.41.1), and like both groups of Thracian rebels (3.38.4, 4.48.3) they then easily prevail over a client king's forces: *locorum...ingenio sese contra imbelles regis copias tutabatur* (6.41.1; cf. again the Thracians who are assisted by *praematura montis Haemi et saeva hiems* at 4.51.3). Roman troops are brought in and a siege ensues, again as in the case of the Thracians at 4.49.1: like their counterparts, some of the Cietae break out and are slaughtered, while others are compelled by thirst to surrender (6.41.1; cf. 4.49.3, 50.2-4).

Such details have a conventional quality; the parallels at 6.41.1 with previous episodes need not be startling.⁵ Nevertheless, certain striking differences can be discerned amid these thematic similarities. The revolt is described in very sparse detail, and when Roman forces arrive they easily defeat the Cietae. There is no suggestion here that the latter are a serious destabilising element (though the tribe will recur much later, at 12.55.1). The tone of 6.41.1 in fact echoes the impression Tacitus appears to give at 4.32-3 when he discusses the content of imperial historiography (p. 188 above). This swiftly-

⁴ See Martin (2001) 179 *ad* 6.41.1. The tribe's unhappiness at paying tribute echoes 3.40.3 and 4.72.1-2 (cf. Arminius' boast about German independence at 1.59.5), while at 1.31.2 Germanicus is taking a census in the (at that point) peaceful Gallic provinces.

⁵ See Martin and Woodman (1989) 206-15 *ad* 4.46-51; cf. Ash (1999) 116 on how Tacitus could have chosen to elaborate the account at 6.41.1.

concluded episode is clearly not an *ingens bellum* (4.32.1) of the kind attributed to republican history, and its brevity means that it is hardly a source of *situs gentium*, *varietates proeliorum* (4.33.3). Unlike the Thracian and Frisian rebellions, however, it does not offer an ironic perspective on the ‘old-fashioned’ topics mentioned at 4.32-3: *fosos...reges* (4.32.1) would perhaps serve to describe what happens to Rome’s ally Archelaus, but otherwise the account is a low-key depiction of Roman efficiency and success that in fact suggests the existence of *immota...aut modice lacessita pax* (4.32.2) under Tiberius.

It will be shown that *Annals* 6 contains many examples of the *maestae urbis res* implied to be peculiar to the principate at 4.32.2,⁶ and although the polyvalent nature of Tacitus’ subsequent references to *saeva iussa*, *continuas accusationes* (4.33.3) and other unfortunate events has been noted (see p. 194 above), such occurrences are especially prominent in this book. So while Chapter 4’s analysis of 4.32-3 in the context of Books 1-4 stressed the passage’s function as a subtle commentary on the continuities between past and present and on the altered nature of warfare under the principate as depicted in that part of the hexad, the single episode recounted at 6.41.1 and its position in the narrative fit the points superficially made in the digression about the subject-matter of historiography under the principate.⁷

Moreover, at 6.41.1 there is no suggestion that the Cietae are trying to reclaim their freedom, and they do not present much of a threat to the Roman troops. It is possible that this episode’s terseness is a comment on the repetition of common themes in the earlier revolts, an invitation to readers to supply predictable details for themselves, but the association between foreign rebels’ comparative independence, commitment to

⁶ See Tacitus’ characterisation of events as *maestum* at 6.7.5 (*quae ipsis nimia et maesta fuerant*); the only comparable use of the adjective in the hexad is at 4.31.1, where the authorial voice is much weaker.

⁷ Although a careful reading of 4.32-3 showed the impression given there to be somewhat misleading, it does not follow that what Tacitus chose to *appear* to say is not important too: cf. n. 13 of Chapter 4.

freedom and relative success against Rome apparent earlier in the hexad nevertheless appears to have been annulled. The Cietae do not continue the sequence formed by the Gauls, Thracians and Frisians in Books 2, 3 and 4 by faring even better than the last-named. They are also not said to be pursuing freedom, as those other groups and the Germans in Books 1 and 2 were; moreover, although they object to Archelaus' attempts to organise them *nostrum in modum*, Tacitus does not depict the effects of Roman influence on the Cietae, and they do not even protest directly against Rome. Tacitus' portrayals of the Romans' mixed fortunes against Germans, Gauls, Thracians and Frisians (along with Tacfarinas in north Africa) have been read as an exploration of the significance of *libertas* and of its disappearance that mirrors Rome under the principate in various telling ways, but it now turns out that the Romans' difficult encounter with the Frisians at 4.72-3 marked its last stage. 6.41.1 is the final extant account of relations between Romans and their subjects abroad in the first hexad: it gives the impression that, even if local trouble presents itself, this can be dealt with by Rome. In contrast to the worrying trends displayed earlier on, the Romans' control over their sphere of influence now appears to be fairly secure.⁸

It has already been noted that Tacitus' emphasis on anti-Roman movements and the difficulties experienced in suppressing them sets him apart from other sources for the first century AD. At the end of the hexad he presumably could have continued to interweave events in Rome and elsewhere, and interspersed the Tiberian principate's final years with unfortunate military episodes.⁹ That he has not done so, and that he has

⁸ Archelaus (on whom see Sullivan (1980) 1167-8) requires Roman help but he is not besieged as Rhoemetalces is at 3.38.4. His attempts to organise the Cietae do not appear that misguided and he does not seem an obviously poor choice as a client king, especially compared with the troublemaker Rhescuporis. See also Gowing (1990).

⁹ See pp. 9-10, and nn. 1 and 55 of Chapter 4, on Tacitus' distinctive stress on revolts (although note that Book 6's relative calm matches the initial observation that *bellum...nullum nisi adversus Germanos superat*, 1.3.6). So it cannot be determined if there were any foreign episodes in the lost portion of Book 5, even though other authors who describe the period include no likely material (see Martin (2001) 102-3).

presented the revolt of the Cietae in a manner that meets after all the ‘criteria’ for imperial historiography set out at 4.32-3, appear to be additional indications of Book 6’s separate nature. Moreover, notwithstanding the limitations in the sources for foreign affairs in this period, the episode may capture more realistically than the text’s other rebellions the relatively minor scale of most provincial problems in the early imperial period (see pp. 9-10 above). Nevertheless, the unprecedented implication at 6.41.1 that all is reasonably well abroad is found within a vivid account of the harshness of Tiberius’ rule over his subjects and of the turmoil and bloodshed in Rome. As will shortly become clear, in the last book of the Tiberian *Annals* external peace and internal trouble seem to correlate.

This clear juxtaposition of a lack of significant foreign enemies with the existence of domestic conflict echoes a theme that has recurred in Tacitus’ depictions of Romans and others throughout the hexad: *metus hostilis*, and how civil strife ensues when it is no longer in force.¹⁰ Indeed, Tacitus’ narrative of events in Rome itself in Book 6 makes clear that the civil war that has long been looming has now finally begun.

c. Civil War at the End of the Tiberian Principate

i) *Commota principis domo* (4.52.1) again

Chapter 3 examined Sejanus’ status as an initiator of civil war within the principate, and Chapter 4 considered his role in intensifying the strife in the imperial house itself. The conflict’s continuation after his death, however, suggests that he was not

¹⁰ Ash (1999) 131 makes the same point, but with reference to the diminished threat posed by the Parthians rather than the uncomplicated Roman victory over the Cietae.

its underlying cause. Tiberius himself now starts to seem the prime mover, but that does not mean that he is the sole reason for the existence of civil war within the principate, either. What is happening in Rome seems to take on a momentum of its own; having left the city at 4.58 (see p. 227 above), the emperor witnesses events unfolding from a distance (note *ut tamquam dimotis parietibus ostenderet nepotem sub verbere centurionis*, 6.24.3, and *quasi aspiciens undantem per domos sanguinem aut manus carnificum*, 6.39.2; cf. pp. 246-7 below). There is a sense that Romans are turning on each other independently of Tiberius himself. Moreover, Tacitus also hints how the conflict will continue after the *princeps*' death: it seems that future emperors too will be bound to wage war on their own relatives and on other Romans, before Rome itself is eventually engulfed by a wider conflict.

Tiberius, however, seems not to know, or not to care, about the effects of his and others' actions: his earlier anxious awareness of the possibility that civil war could originate 'elsewhere than in Rome' has receded, and been replaced by a blindness to the current strife in the city (cf. pp. 157 and 228 above). In Book 6, his response to the disquieting words of the commander of the legions in upper Germany, Lentulus Gaetulicus, confirms what has changed. Gaetulicus, who had betrothed his daughter to the son of Sejanus (6.30.2), nevertheless remained unaffected by the latter's downfall. As a commander, he was said to be *effusae clementiae, modicus severitate et proximo quoque exercitui per L. Apronium socerum non ingratus* (ibid.; Apronius was last seen faring badly against the Frisians at 4.73, but may have featured in Book 5). Tacitus then reports the rumour that Gaetulicus had refused to take personal responsibility for his adherence to Sejanus and had written to the emperor, promising that *sibi fidem integram et, si nullis insidiis peteretur, mansuram; successorem non aliter quam indicium mortis*

accepturum. firmarent velut foedus, quo princeps ceterarum rerum poteretur, ipse provinciam retineret (6.30.3).

This looks like a veiled threat: Gaetulicus will remain loyal as long as he is left alone in the north. The emperor's habit of keeping provincial governors in post for extended lengths of time is turned against him.¹¹ More importantly, here near the hexad's conclusion Gaetulicus' words draw attention again to the importance of the upper and lower German armies, which was initially signalled in Book 1 by Germanicus' position during the mutinies and Tacitus' echoes of the *Histories*. But the fact that Germanicus was innocent was stressed; by contrast, it was no doubt made clear in the complete *Annals* that Gaetulicus appears to have been somewhat less so. Although the veracity of the tradition that he led a conspiracy is not certain, and Caligula seems to have dealt with the situation, at the very least the popularity with his troops and determination to resist interference that Tacitus notes here led to his execution in AD 39. Readers may also have thought further ahead, to Scribonianus' revolt in Dalmatia against Claudius in 42.¹²

Whatever actually happened, Gaetulicus' status and his actions can nevertheless be seen as marking an intermediary point on the way to the origination of full civil war in the north in 69 (cf. pp. 52-3 above).¹³ Tiberius manages to defer this threat, but only by doing nothing: his active interference with Germanicus, although the latter was less than culpable, contrasts with the link drawn between his tolerance of the more threatening Gaetulicus and his own general weakness (*reputante Tiberio publicum sibi odium, extremam aetatem, magisque fama quam vi stare res suas*, 6.30.4). His detachment from

¹¹ See Goodyear (1981) 181-2 *ad* 1.80.1-3. At 6.27.3, Tacitus also refers to how for a decade Lucius Arruntius had been prevented by Tiberius from going out to Spain (*ob metum*, according to *H.* 2.65.2).

¹² See Suet., *Div. Clau.* 9.1 and Dio 59.22.5, who states that Gaetulicus was killed for being on familiar terms with his soldiers. His easy-going ways and popularity of course recall Germanicus: see pp. 48-9 above. See Simpson (1980) and, for other plots against Caligula, Rutledge (2001) 162-4.

¹³ Two participants in the conspiracy to assassinate Caligula in 41 (see n. 26 below), Annius Vinicianus and Marcus Vinicus (6.9.3, 15.1: cf. Jos. *AJ* 19.49-60, 251) are introduced in these chapters. On Scribonianus see n. 46 of Chapter 1.

a genuine threat to the principate presented by a possibly subversive general now matches his failure to act against – or even perceive – the civil war happening in Rome itself (cf. also p. 198 above on Cordus and Sejanus). Still, it is possible that there was a contrast between Tiberius' relative restraint and Caligula's more inflammatory behaviour, which induced Gaetulicus to take action. It will shortly be shown that the new emperor will incline towards more direct involvement in civil strife than his predecessor.

The discussion so far has referred to two distinct forms of civil war within the Tiberian principate: the dissension in the *domus Augusta*, and the sense that Tiberius is attacking his subjects. In Book 6 both these elements are developed further, but there is also a sense that those whom Tiberius is attacking are starting to fight back, and that the wider civil war he has kept up is generating conflicts between other citizens. First, then, the discord in the emperor's own family. Tacitus had already mentioned Sejanus' nefarious efforts to use Nero's brother Drusus against him (4.60.2-3; see p. 229 above), and the narrative of *Annals* 5 breaks off directly after Sejanus' accusatory response to the popular demonstrations in favour of Germanicus' widow Agrippina and their son Nero (5.4), and then the emperor's reported anger at this turn of events (5.5). In the lost section of the narrative Tacitus presumably described how Agrippina and Nero, as well as Drusus, were sent into exile,¹⁴ and Nero's subsequent forced suicide would have followed (Suet., *Tib.* 54.2). In Book 6 the campaign against Germanicus' surviving relatives does not abate.

It turns out that Sejanus' exploitation of Drusus' hostility towards his brother did not serve Drusus well for long. The latter's end is reported at 6.23-4 with shocking details of his final privations and the surveillance to which he was subject: slaves are reported to

¹⁴ cf. pp. 230-1 below.

have mistreated him, which may echo the *topos* of slaves turning on their masters in civil war.¹⁵

Although the support enjoyed by Germanicus' family and the theoretical possibility that they could represent a real challenge to Tiberius' position are made clear, there is no reference in the *Annals* to any actual efforts on their part to capitalise on this.¹⁶ Tiberius' sustained campaign against them thus contrasts with his more measured treatment of Germanicus himself, who if anything was in a better position to claim the throne, and serves as a further indicator of his detachment from the long-term threat to the principate. Nevertheless, as the domestic conflict develops further, the strife does look less one-sided than it did initially.

The description of Drusus' death begins with a reference to Tiberius' characteristic *saevitia* (6.23.2), and this heralds a kind of antagonistic set-piece, with an assault followed by a counter-assault. The emperor alleges that Drusus had been *exitiabilem in suos, infensum rei publicae* (6.24.1; the charge's reflexive applicability to himself is obvious),¹⁷ but Drusus is said to have struck back, declaring before his death that his uncle *nurum filiumque fratris et nepotes domumque omnem caedibus complevisset* (6.24.2). These understandably bitter words mirror how not only Tiberius' own actions but also the dynamics in the imperial family have changed during the hexad. Earlier, Germanicus seemed not to defend himself against Tiberius' suspicions about him, but his son Drusus goes on the attack against these allegations, although they seem less realistic than the possibility that Germanicus might have led his troops against Rome.

¹⁵ See App., *BC* 4.14 and 26, *H.* 1.2.3 (*corrupti in dominos servi...*) and Jal (1964) 412-3.

¹⁶ On the possibility (and how it cannot be proven), see n. 103 of Chapter 4, and cf. Damon (2010b) 264. Tacitus here refers to a tradition that Drusus was retained for Macro to install as a *dux, si arma ab Seiano temptarentur* (6.23.2; cf. Dio 58.13.1, and Suet. *Tib.* 65.2, who reports it as fact). Given Tiberius' unease about the support for Germanicus' family, this scenario seems implausible, but that it did not happen underlines how Sejanus is not directly responsible for the 'real' civil war now unfolding. cf. Shotter (1974) 45-6 and Tuplin (1987).

¹⁷ This twists Tiberius' earlier speech to Drusus and Nero: '*...bona malaque vestra ad rem publicam pertineant*' (4.8.5). On *exitiabilem in suos*, cf. how leading senators' willingness to serve as *delatores* is termed the characteristic of the period that was *maxime exitiabile* at 6.7.3: see pp. 253-4 below.

Moreover, although Tacitus did not directly suggest that Tiberius was involved in Germanicus' death (see p. 71 above), Drusus now represents the subtle ambiguities of the first half of the hexad in terms of the second half's stark antipathies, even though Agrippina and of course Drusus himself are not yet dead. When Agrippina's demise is presently reported, the *princeps'* unremitting *saevitia* (6.25.1) is again cited, but as in her son Drusus' case she appears to have fought back. The emperor's accusations about her *impudicitia* (6.25.2) are said to have been manifestly false, but Agrippina is characterised as *aequi impatiens, dominandi avida* (6.25.2). Her verbose vulnerability at 4.52-3 (see pp. 228-9) has been succeeded by this succinct and ominous characterisation, which echoes in the author's voice the apparently false charges originally laid against her by Sejanus and his stooges at 4.12.3 and 17.3 (cf. *inhiare dominationi*, 4.12.3, and p. 171 above).

The passage does not amount to a definite suggestion that Agrippina presented a concrete threat, but it attributes a mutual element to the war within the emperor's family. Moreover, it verbally prefigures the description of Agrippina's homonymous daughter at 12.7.3 (*nihil domi impudicum, nisi dominationi expediret*: see also p. 266 below on this passage);¹⁸ the younger Agrippina's desire for *mala dominatio* is also reported at 13.2.2. As will transpire now, the 'civil war' in Book 6 looks to the reigns of future emperors, and the elder Agrippina's position here foreshadows how her daughter will be a powerfully disruptive influence under both Claudius and Nero, and will continue the family conflict by bringing about her husband's death before falling to her own son's machinations (12.65-9; 14.5-9; see also pp. 87-8 above on the recurrence of *doli propinquorum* in the *Annals*).

Indeed, just as Sejanus' death did not end the pursuit of Germanicus' relations, their removal does not conclude the strife in the imperial family, which now seems to be

¹⁸ Martin (2001) 154 *ad* 6.25.2; cf. n. 101 of Chapter 4. See also Boddington (1963) 8-11 and Keitel (1978) 464-5. On the notion of the principate as a *dominatio* at the openings of Books 1 and 13, see Henderson (1989) 168.

gathering force independently of Tiberius. As the emperor's life nears its end, the imperial succession emerges as a theme. The future *princeps* Caligula, last glimpsed within the extant text as a young child at 1.44.1, reappears as a fixture of his grandfather's household on Capri. Once a factor in Tiberius' mistrust of both his parents (1.69.4; cf. 1.41.2), and tangentially mentioned in rather unsettling terms more recently (6.5.1, 9.2), he has now survived the elimination of his immediate family: *non damnatione matris, non exitio fratrum rupta voce* (6.20.1). Tacitus looks even further ahead here, proceeding to quote Tiberius' 'prophecy' about Galba (6.20.2),¹⁹ but the immediate Julio-Claudian future is more pressing.

Caligula is said to conceal his *immanem animum subdola modestia* (6.20.1), an expression echoing the Thracian kings at 2.64-5, whose presentation recalled several holders of imperial power in the first hexad, and beyond, and mirrored current and future developments in Tiberius' reign.²⁰ Caligula's accession is thus foreshadowed, and its imminence is confirmed when AD 37 opens with a reference to Macro: *nimia iam potentia Macronis, qui gratiam C. Caesaris numquam sibi neglectam acrius in dies fovebat* (6.45.3; cf. 48.2). It looks as if he may prove as subversive an influence under Caligula as Sejanus had been under Tiberius: it seems reasonable to posit that in the lost part of Book 5 Tacitus to some extent played on the similarities between Macro and his predecessor in his account of the latter's fall, in which Macro was of course involved.²¹

Expectations that Macro may prove a trigger of civil strife just like Sejanus, however, are challenged by the old emperor's prediction to Tiberius Gemellus: '*occides*

¹⁹ See Woodman (2006b) 183-4.

²⁰ See nn. 46 and 47 of Chapter 4. Passienus' aphorism, *neque meliorem unquam servum neque deteriorem dominum fuisse* (6.20.1), presumably looks to Caligula's future rule, implicitly termed a *dominatio*. See Hurley (1993) 30 *ad Suet., Cal.* 10.2, and also Keitel (1999) 435-6. Claudius is mentioned at 6.46.1 (cf. 6.32.4 on Lucius Vitellius' future career), and Nero's birth was prefigured at 4.75; cf. pp. 54 and 101-2 on Germanicus and Nero.

²¹ Note the detail that Sejanus *isdem artibus victus est* (4.1.2): Benario (1973) 292 suggests this refers to Macro. cf. Arruntius' equation of the two men at 6.48.1, and Sinclair (1995) 115.

hunc tu' inquit 'et te alius' (6.46.4). The conflict within Tiberius' own family that was apparently sparked by Sejanus and taken up by Tiberius will indeed be continued directly, without intermediaries, by the next emperor. There may even be some overlap, as at 6.50.5 Caligula is allegedly involved in hastening his predecessor's death with the help of Macro (whose own end will follow not long afterwards: see Suet., *Cal.* 26.1 and Dio 59.10.6). So the dying prayer of Drusus, Germanicus' son, that Tiberius *poenas nomini generique maiorum et posteris exsolveret* (6.24.2; cf. pp. 243-4 above), will come true, but what ensues will be due to Germanicus' relations rather than to Tiberius alone. The civil strife within the emperor's family and – as will be shown below – in Rome more generally that begins under Tiberius will continue under his successors. The emperor's dismissal of an alternative to the dynasty (*sin extra domum successor quaereretur, ne memoria Augusti, ne nomen Caesarum in ludibria et contumelias verterent, metuebat*, 6.46.2) suggests that for the moment there is no other way – even though *ludibria* in particular will become increasingly associated with the Julio-Claudians.²²

ii) Fighting in Rome?

This long-ranging domestic conflict, however, is not the only form of civil strife in the last stages of the Tiberian principate. The idea that the emperor is now waging a kind of war on his own people has already been noted (see p. 227 above), and near the beginning of *Annals* 6 there is a graphic account of the treatment of his numerous victims

²² An intriguing formulation, as Tacitus was writing when adoptive succession from outside the imperial family was becoming established: cf. *H.* 1.15 and Griffin (2000b) 94-6. On *ludibria* see 6.2.4 and 48.1, and cf. n. 98 of Chapter 1. Nero inflicts them (or plans to) at 15.44.4, 16.11.3 and 26.1, where Thrasea Paetus is thought to face *ludibria et contumelias*. Note too the reported hostile comment at 1.10.5 on Augustus' marriage to Livia (...*consulti per ludibrium pontifices*): the past act that ultimately led to Tiberius' succession and the confirmation of the dynasty prefigures the fears about the Julio-Claudians' future that he expresses at 6.46.2.

velut in captos (6.1.2), as he occupies the position of a besieger at the gates. His decision to dispatch all at once those who await trial for their association with Sejanus then leads to a scene of catastrophe: *iacuit immensa strages, omnis sexus, omnis aetas, inlustres ignobiles, dispersi aut aggerati* (6.19.2). Finally, at the end of the book he also waits outside the city and seems to oversee the bloodshed within (6.39.2; cf. p. 240 above).²³ But there are further aspects to this ‘war’: Tiberius’ aggression is not simply that of one man engaged in a campaign against the people of Rome. Just as with the imperial family itself, his struggle does not appear to be entirely unilateral. Moreover, at this point he is not the sole instigator of hostilities against other Romans. Both these details once again look to the future of the principate.

Directly after the reference to the emperor’s figurative siege at 6.1, the lowly senator Togonius Gallus invites him *deligere senatores, ex quis viginti sorte ducti et ferro accincti, quotiens curiam inisset, salutem eius defenderent* (6.2.3). The bland irony of *quotiens curiam inisset* – Tiberius has not entered the senate for some time – is developed by a reported sarcastic response from the emperor, *ludibria seriis permiscere solitus* (6.2.4). Nevertheless, Tacitus states that the proposal was inspired by a letter in which Tiberius had sought a consular escort *ut tutus a Capreis urbem peteret* (6.2.3), and he will soon make a request of his own similar to Togonius’, asking *ut...Macro praefectus tribunorumque et centurionum pauci secum introirent, quotiens curiam ingrederetur* (6.15.2). His continued absence means that the irony of such stipulations is again patent, and there also seems to be an element of tyrannical paranoia to his demand (see below).

The idea that he requires physical protection when entering the senate, however, echoes previous efforts by other leading figures to safeguard themselves, especially in the

²³ Keitel (1984) 307 and Woodman (1998d) 137; cf. Keitel (1999) 431-2. As Martin (2001) 142 *ad loc.* notes, *omnis sexus, omnis aetas* (6.19.2) echoes *non sexus, non aetas* in Tacitus’ account of the slaughter of the Marsi at 1.51.1 (see p. 57 above: the shift from external to internal conflict is confirmed, as Ash (1999) 131 notes) and of the Campanian plague at 16.13.2 (its victims have not, unlike here, been attacked by the emperor: see further n. 38 below on how the Tiberian ‘civil war’ is more intense than the Neronian one).

senate-house, at times of potential upheaval in Rome. Cicero in 63 let his breastplate be glimpsed, and Augustus in 19 BC wore armour under his toga and took a senatorial bodyguard (Plut., *Cic.* 14.7-8; Suet., *Div. Aug.* 35.1-2, Dio 54.12.3), while Julius Caesar's refusal to use the bodyguard offered him (Plut., *Caes.* 57.7, Dio 44.7.4), and his death, showed how such scenarios could alternatively end. So Tiberius' precautions echo tense situations in the late republic and early empire in which the possibility of violent dissent against the established regime by members of the senatorial order was perceived. Tacitus does not explicitly state that the emperor was under threat from senators, but the repercussions of the plot that Sejanus had supposedly laid against the emperor may be felt here.²⁴

More importantly, the future is foreshadowed. Tiberius was not assassinated by conspirators (though see p. 246 above on the tradition about his ambiguous death), but his successor Caligula was. The Romans' failure to protest against the principate has already been juxtaposed with foreign revolts against Roman control, and in any case this new development does not mark the beginning of the semi-formal opposition attested not least by Tacitus himself for the reigns of Claudius, Nero and later emperors,²⁵ but the later emergence of threats to the emperor personally is prefigured here. Claudius' reign was strongly marked by friction with senators, and although Nero's principate began with fairly good relations with the senate (13.4-5), these soon degenerated; the unsuccessful Pisonian conspiracy (15.48-71), which involved individuals of all ranks, was followed by

²⁴ On Julius Caesar, see Pelling (2011) 429-30 *ad* Plut., *Caes.* 57.7. Tiberius is aware of potential threats from early in his reign: see the episode with Quintus Haterius at 1.13.6. Rutledge (2001) 158-62 surveys Tacitus' references to possible plots against Tiberius; on Sejanus' 'conspiracy' see Boddington (1963) – who surveys the ancient evidence which suggests that it did happen – and Tuplin (1987) 796-800.

²⁵ Rutledge (2001) 85-6. The bibliography on senatorial opposition in the second half of the first century AD is extensive: see e.g. MacMullen (1966) 1-81, Rudich (1993) and Rutledge (2001) 111-36.

Vindex' more seriously destabilising revolt.²⁶ Tiberius' apparent awareness of the threat posed to an emperor by his peers looks somewhat prescient.

Furthermore, it is not only senators who are potentially opposed to the emperor. As has already been noted (pp. 107-9 and 193 above), the question of Rome's grain supply and its fragility recurs several times in the Tiberian hexad, in a manner that recalls episodes from both the past and the future. Tacitus has also drawn attention to Tiberius' poor relations with the Roman populace as a whole on several occasions. In Book 6, the situation turns markedly more serious:²⁷ *gravitate annonae iuxta seditionem ventum, multaque et plures per dies in theatro licentius efflagitata quam solitum adversum imperatorem* (6.13.1; cf. *saevitiam annonae incusante plebe*, 2.87, and *plebes acri quidem annona fatigabatur*, 4.6.4, where the emperor is not the direct target). Tiberius' subsequent criticism of the senators *quod non publica auctoritate populum coercuissent* (6.13.1) and the resultant *senatus consultum* that was drafted *prisca severitate* (6.13.2; the consuls also take separate action) recall the themes of senatorial attraction to the past and inability to adapt to the principate (see Chapter 3).

The unprecedented nature and strength of this popular discontent is nevertheless marked: later in Book 6, the Roman people will rejoice at Tiberius' death (*multo gratantum concursu*, 6.50.4; cf. Suet., *Tib.* 75 for what Tacitus may have gone on to describe). This state of affairs does not directly foreshadow further deterioration, as Tiberius' immediate successors were to enjoy rather better – if not continuously cordial –

²⁶ See n. 13 above for plots against Caligula, and for his death Jos. *AJ* 19.1-273, Suet., *Cal.* 60 and Low (forthcoming); cf. pp. 280-2 below. See McAlindon (1956) and Rutledge (2001) 164-5 on the troubled conditions of Claudius' principate, and note Suet., *Div. Clau.* 35 on how he had sick senators' bedrooms searched (as Hurley (2001) 212 *ad loc.* points out, Dio 57.11.7 shows Tiberius did not): Wiseman (1982) discusses what appears to be a representation of Claudius' reign as a civil war. At 15.36.4 Tacitus describes increasing hostility between Nero and the senate (cf. Rutledge (2001) 111-15 and 166-73). See n. 46 of Chapter 1 on Vindex.

²⁷ Note 1.54.2 and 3.4.1 (with pp. 138-9 above); cf. Yavetz (1988) 103-13. On 6.13 see Woodman (2006b) esp. 181.

relations with the lower orders.²⁸ It is telling, however, that the historian terms the situation at 6.13.1 as being close to *seditio*. This term is found throughout the *Annals*, but it is used most frequently by far of the mutinies in Book 1, which were characterised with reference to the events of 69.²⁹ *seditio* in Rome itself, moreover, will not recur in the extant text until Nero's time (14.42.2, 61.1). The end of the hexad echoes its beginning, and the real civil conflicts of the future are foreshadowed.³⁰

Those conflicts are also prefigured more directly, however, when in Book 6 other Romans join Tiberius in waging a form of war on Roman citizens, and a general atmosphere of civil strife begins to be discerned. The narrative is characterised by regular accusations and condemnations to a degree not previously in evidence, as the bulk of the trials for *maiestas* and other offences in *Annals* 1-6 are found here.³¹ Once again, this seems to originate with Sejanus, or at least with the reprisals to which his adherents are subject, and the extant part of the narrative begins when the first wave of this is over (cf. Dio 58.11-12): the decision is taken to execute Sejanus' son and daughter *vanescente quamquam plebis ira ac plerisque per priora supplicia lenitis* ([5].9.1). Significant numbers of Sejanus' supporters have already been dealt with, so the senate's decision to undertake further retaliation suggests that a propensity for Romans to attack their fellow-

²⁸ See the useful survey at Yavetz (1988) 113-29.

²⁹ 1.16.1, 17.1, 19.1, 20.1, 21.1, 22.1, 28.6, 29.3, 31.2, 31.5, 35.1, 36.2, 38.1, 39.2, 45.1, 48.3, 49.4, 51.3, 52.1 (cf. 44.2, 59.5, 69.4, 78.2; 2.15.1; 3.56.4; 4.18.2). The noun is used only eight other times in the extant first hexad, once also of the plebs at 1.77.2 (linked by the theatrical context to the recent mutinies: cf. 1.16.3). Note also the programmatic *opus adgredior...discors seditionibus* at *H.* 1.2.1: see Joseph (2012) 32-3.

³⁰ Note how the support for Germanicus' relatives (cf. p. 230 above) will be echoed by demonstrations that take Octavia's part at 14.61: see Keitel (2009) 131 and n. 13 (and 128-31 on Nero's attacks on his family).

³¹ Earlier comments about the increased frequency of prosecutions are not wholly supported by the narrative (see esp. 1.72.2, 74.1-2 with Goodyear (1981) 141-50 *ad* 1.72.2-74.6 and n. 70 of Chapter 4 on 3.44.3). See Walker (1952) 83-6 and Goodyear *op. cit.* 146-8 on whether the impression Tacitus gives of the situation in Book 6 does not match the details in the text (for current purposes, the atmosphere evoked is more important than the facts: see again n. 13 of Chapter 4). cf. Rutledge (2001) 90-7 and Woodman (2006b) 185.

citizens is developing, independently of the original motivation for such actions and even of the emperor himself.³²

The increased power of *delatores* and the prevalence of *maiestas* prosecutions evoke a scene of suspicion and turmoil, and of the ‘ghastly inversion of values under Tiberius’, reminiscent of literary accounts of civil wars.³³ These events also, once again, look to the future development of the dynasty and Nero’s reign in particular:³⁴ the initial conclusion to be drawn seems to be that from now on the Julio-Claudian principate will be subject to bouts of what can be termed a domestic conflict. But aspects of this last phase of Tiberius’ principate mark it out from the books to come, and suggest a particular link with the real civil wars that would break out in 69 and which have recurrently been alluded to throughout the hexad. A series of key passages signals the presence of internal discord in Rome.

First, it is significant that the end of the momentous year AD 31, in which Sejanus was destroyed and the reprisals against his followers begun, offers not closure but the prospect of more discord. At [5].10 the appearance of a man impersonating Drusus (i.e. Germanicus’ son, whose death will be recorded at 6.24; see pp. 243-4 above) in the Cyclades is noted, and Tacitus’ phrasing echoes his earlier account of the actions of a false Nero at *H.* 2.8-9. Here, he also mentions the rumour that the imposter was proceeding *ad paternos exercitus, Aegyptum aut Syriam invasurum* ([5].10.2); this move recalls the tension between Romans in these eastern locations described in *Annals* 2, where Germanicus’ and Piso’s behaviour echoed past conflicts but also increasingly

³² cf. pp. 239-40 above on how the ‘civil war’ continues without Sejanus and even Tiberius. As Martin (2001) 106-7 *ad loc.* notes, here Tacitus shows how the people’s desire for vengeance is sated but the senate remain eager. Note that Seneca (*Ben.* 3.26.1) refers to the period after Sejanus’ fall as *accusandi frequens et paene publica rabies, quae omni ciuili bello grauius togatam ciuitatem confecit* (cf. Goodyear (1981) 145-6 *ad* 1.72.2-74.6).

³³ cf. Jal (1964) 391-413, 460-73. The quotation is from Keitel (1999) 434.

³⁴ See Rutledge (2001) 103-20 on prosecutions under Caligula, Claudius and Nero.

suggested the events of 69 and the possibility that they might somehow begin early.³⁵ The false Drusus achieves even less than Piso, but the account ends on a distinctly open note (*neque nos originem finemve eius rei ultra comperimus*, [5].10.3; the two comparable passages end with the deaths of the impersonators at *H.* 2.9.2 and *A.* 2.40.3). This episode continues the sustained recollection of the *Histories* in *Annals* 1-6, and recalls how Tacitus has already signalled the conflicts of the future.

Moreover, in the following chapter the year AD 31 ends on a pessimistic note, with a clash between the consuls (*diu aucta discordia consulum erupit*, [5].11). The ostensible cause is Sejanus and the effects of his fall, but there also seems to be an underlying fracture that extends beyond that: *Trio, facilis capessendis inimicitii et foro exercitus, ut segnem Regulum ad opprimendos Seiani ministros oblique perstrinxerat; ille, nisi lacesseretur, modestiae retinens...* (ibid.; Regulus at least is still hostile at 6.4.3). Now, it has been convincingly suggested that Tacitus' calculated use of an annalistic structure in his work matches the principate's adherence to republican forms alone,³⁶ but those forms remain, even though it has been shown that little lies behind them (see Chapter 3). It is ominous, then, that the annalistic year should conclude with serious discord between Rome's highest-ranking magistrates: the most famous instance of such a state of affairs, which was in due course followed by serious internal conflict, was the consulship of Julius Caesar and Marcus Bibulus in 59 BC (*Suet. Div. Iul.* 19-20).³⁷

In fact, serious internal conflict of a kind does ensue. The references to Tiberius' 'civil war' have already been noted, but they do not only depict the emperor's aggression

³⁵ cf. n. 39 of Chapter 1 on *H.* 2.8-9 and *A.* 2.39-40; see also Martin (2001) 107-9 *ad loc.*, who in addition notes (108) that the journey made by Poppaeus Sabinus to investigate inverts the eastward voyage of Germanicus in Book 2. See too the discussion of Tuplin (1987).

³⁶ Notably by Ginsburg (1981); cf. McCulloch (1984) 136-75, esp. 156-7.

³⁷ See Syme (1958b) 267, who notes the significance of this passage as a conclusion to the account of Sejanus' fall, and cites a general parallel with republican history (cf. also Livy 22.38.6-40.4, where consular disagreement is a prelude to the battle of Cannae: a foreign disaster precedes the full internal strife of the first century BC).

towards his subjects; they also show Romans turning on each other, and draw on several historiographical tropes of civil strife. The initial reference to the onslaught on the unfortunates chosen to serve Tiberius' pleasure at 6.1 mentions the prominent role of slaves: the passage ends by emphasising their own abuse of the emperor's victims (*sua...ipsi libita velut in captos exercebant*, 6.1.2), another evocation of the social reversal entailed by civil war (see pp. 242-3 above).³⁸ Tacitus also mentions the *ignota antea vocabula reperta* (ibid.) given to Tiberius' favourites after the particularly choice nature of their perversions. This can be seen as a hint of the paradoxical and cruel scenarios generated by internal conflict, for which the *locus classicus* is Thucydides' account of the stasis at Corcyra in 427 BC (cf. ...τῶν τ' ἐπιχειρήσεων περιτεχνήσει καὶ τῶν τιμωρῶν ἀτοπίᾳ, Thuc. 3.82.3). Moreover, does such a reference to the invention of new terminology at this point in Tiberius' principate also gesture at the related Thucydidean notion of the instability of words in relation to actions in times of *stasis* (cf. καὶ τὴν εἰωθυῖαν ἀξίωσιν τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐς τὰ ἔργα ἀντήλλαξαν τῇ δικαιοῦσε ἰ, Thuc. 3.82.4)?³⁹

The possibility that thematic echoes of Thucydides' analysis of events in Corcyra (3.82-5) can be discerned in this part of the *Annals* is furthered when Tacitus goes on to comment on the escalation of prosecutions: *quod maxime exitiabile tulere illa tempora, cum primores senatus infimas etiam delationes exercebant, alii propalam, multi per occultum; neque discerneres alienos a coniunctis, amicos ab ignotis, quid repens aut*

³⁸ The passages under discussion refer in general terms to large groups of victims; this marks out Book 6 from analogous sections of the Neronian narrative, which focuses predominantly on individuals, as the historian admits at 16.16.2 (*detur hoc inlustrum virorum posteritati, ut, quo modo exsequiis a promisca sepultura separantur...*; the analogous passage at 6.7.5 refers only to *multorum pericula et poenas*). Under Nero the groups that are targeted are distinct, and this happens for a specific reason: see 14.45.1 (the slaves of Pedanius Secundus), 15.44.2-5 (Christians after the fire) and 15.71 (the aftermath of the Pisonian conspiracy).

³⁹ Note too two outstanding acts of inhumanity in Book 6, the treatment of Sejanus' children ([5].9) and the detail that *necata...est anus Vitia...quod filii necem flevisset* (6.10.1), and see McCulloch (1984) 58-9. See also the next note on such themes in Latin historiography prior to the *Annals*.

vetustate obscurum: perinde in foro, in convivio, quaquam de re locuti incusabantur, ut quis praevenire et reum destinare properat, pars ad subsidium sui, plures infecti quasi valetudine et contactu (6.7.3). Like Thucydides 3.82, this passage is an authorial aside in the midst of a chaotic section of the narrative. It does not include factionalism of the kind that broke out at Corcyra, but it similarly represents a situation in which judicial processes were used as a basis for a less inhibited and more violent struggle (cf. ...παντὶ δὲ τρόπῳ ἀγωνιζόμενοι ἀλλήλων περιγίγνεσθαι ἐτόλμησάν τε τὰ δεινότατα ἐπεξῆσαν τε τὰς τιμωρίας ἔτι μείζους, οὐ μέχρι τοῦ δικαίου καὶ τῆ πόλει ξυμφόρου προτιθέντες, ἐς δὲ τὸ ἑκατέρους που αἰεὶ ἡδονὴν ἔχον ὀρίζοντες, καὶ ἡ μετὰ ψήφου ἀδίκου καταγνώσεως ἢ χειρὶ κτώμενοι τὸ κρατεῖν ἐτοῖμοι ἦσαν τὴν αὐτίκα φιλονικίαν ἐκπιμπλάναι, Thuc. 3.82.8). It also considers how normal practice was altered for the worse under the influence of domestic conflict (cf. ὁ δὲ πόλεμος...βίαιος διδάσκαλος καὶ πρὸς τὰ παρόντα τὰς ὀργὰς τῶν πολλῶν ὁμοιοῖ, Thuc. 3.82.2). More general themes of moral confusion and upheaval, and the fragile boundaries between friends and enemies – note the switch of allegiance that follows when *Minucius et Servaeus damnati indicibus accessere* (6.7.4) – also feature here (cf. τὸ ξυγγενὲς τοῦ ἑταιρικοῦ ἄλλοτριώτερον ἐγένετο διὰ τὸ ἐτοιμότερον εἶναι ἀπροφασίστως τολμᾶν).⁴⁰

⁴⁰ The Corcyra passage enjoyed an extensive afterlife: see e.g. Hornblower (1995) 62, Mader (2000) 55-103 and Sementchenko (2010). It is echoed fairly directly by Sallust, especially at *BC* 10 (the growth of factional strife in Rome) and 52.11 (Cato states that *nos vera vocabula rerum amisimus*; cf. also Tac., *Hist.* 2.101.1): see Scanlon (1980) and Batstone (2010). In Book 6 Tacitus seems to draw on several aspects of the original passage that Sallust does not use, which suggests he had Thucydides himself (or an unknown intermediary source?) in mind as well as Sallust. See Strebel (1935) 27-40 on Thucydides and Roman authors, and 33 n. 124 for some (rather incidental) verbal parallels in Tacitus. Nevertheless, readers of the first hexad of the *Annals*, in which Sallust has already featured heavily, may well have remembered the passages in the *BC* too. On more general Roman civil war tropes, see Jal (1964) 460-73 and, again, *H.* 1.2.3.

At 6.19.2 Tacitus goes on to refer to the *immensa strages* generated by Tiberius' decision to have the remaining supporters of Sejanus killed. This scene is a key component of the emperor's own 'civil war', but the prevention of mourning for the victims is stressed (guards play a similar role to the slaves at 6.1.2). The situation is such that *interciderat sortis humanae commercium vi metus, quantumque saevitia glisceret, miseratio arcebatur* (6.19.3): violence between Romans is accompanied, again, by a breakdown in social norms. The *caedes continua* (6.29.1) carries on. Tiberius is said to oversee it, but again Tacitus stresses the complicity of others (*manus carnificum*, 6.39.2), and subsequently makes clear that what is happening in Rome is not dependent on the emperor himself: *futuris etiam post Tiberium caedibus semina iaciebantur* (6.47.1).⁴¹

The prospect of the continuation of civil war within the principate, under Tiberius' successors but also further in the future, is clearly signalled. *Annals* 1-6 began by evoking the events of AD 69 that would follow the implosion of the Julio-Claudian dynasty; now, the hexad ends by suggesting that strife in Rome is already underway and that its citizens are already taking sides and waging war on each other. Book 6 concludes with Tiberius' obituary, which divides his life into phases.⁴² The influence of Augustus, Drusus, Livia and Sejanus respectively is cited, but in his final years there was no one to determine the emperor's actions: *postquam remoto pudore et metu...* (6.51.3). This absence of constraints has been seen to echo Sallust's description of the disappearance of *metus hostilis* from Rome (*postquam remoto metu Punico*, Sall., *Hist.* 1.12M). As has already been noted, in Book 6 Tacitus makes clear that Rome itself no longer has external threats to fear.⁴³ The scene is set for the real wars of 69.

⁴¹ Martin (2001) 186 *ad loc.* notes that, despite the expectations raised, few of the individuals mentioned seem to have subsequently died unnaturally: is Tacitus carried away by the civil war narrative?

⁴² See Gill (1983) 485-7, Luce (1986) 152-7, Woodman (1998e) and Martin (2001) 192-6 *ad loc.* and 199-202.

⁴³ Schmidt (1982) 285 (quoted by Ash (1999) 131 n. 79). For the idea that Tiberius stands for the principate – if not Rome more generally – see Griffin (1995).

d. Rome and Parthia: the Story Continues

i) Civil War on Both Sides

The situation in Rome that Tacitus describes in Book 6 is grim indeed, but as it reaches a climax it is punctuated by two narrative sections (6.31-7 and 41.2-44) that describe events in Parthia and Roman involvement in them. Uniquely in the Tiberian hexad, these chapters offer a continuous account of what happened in two successive years; Tacitus informs his readers that he has adopted such a strategy to allow them some relief from events in Rome.⁴⁴ A superficial reading of these sections encourages his words to be taken at face value, as they provide an eventful narrative rather different from all other foreign episodes in the Tiberian books. Nevertheless, it will soon transpire that the situation in Parthia is distinctly reminiscent of what is happening at the centre of the empire, as the prevalence of civil war and tyrannical government in Rome are replicated amongst the Parthians. Moreover, while the Roman intervention in the east described here contrasts with Rome's aggressive encounters earlier in the hexad with other foreigners in the north, and is in fact fairly effective, Tiberius' diplomatic approach and its

⁴⁴ Ginsburg (1981) 21 and Martin (2001) 167 *ad* 6.31-7.

consequences in Parthia further mark the end of *metus hostilis*, the inevitability of civil war and indeed the impossibility of escaping autocracy.

At 6.31.1 Tacitus opens his account of AD 35 with a new development: *nobiles Parthi in urbem venere, ignaro rege Artabano*. A complex narrative follows. King Artabanus, who routed Vonones at 2.3.1 and was last seen communicating via ambassadors with Germanicus at 2.58 (see pp. 105-6 above), now becomes arrogant towards the Romans and cruel towards his subjects, although previously he had been *metu Germanici fidus Romanis, aequabilis in suos* (6.31.1). He is said to be desirous of securing Armenia, to the throne of which he had appointed his son Arsaces after the death of the successful Roman nominee Artaxias (*alias* Zeno, whose dynastic name is used here; cf. p. 103 above for his installation at 2.56), and to harbour plans to enlarge his domains significantly, not least by the annexation of territory once held by Cyrus and Alexander. In response, Parthian nobles covertly ask Tiberius to send to Parthia Phraates, son of the king Phraates who had previously dispatched his four sons, also including Vonones, to Rome (6.31.2; cf. 2.1-2 and p. 84 above).

Tiberius, *destinata retinens, consiliis et astu res externas moliri, arma procul habere* (6.32.1), proves amenable to this proposal, but the Parthian nobles' plan does not come to fruition, as their leaders are outmanoeuvred by Artabanus, while Phraates, rather like his brother, proves unequal to Parthian customs and soon dies (6.32.2). The emperor nevertheless chooses Tiridates to replace him and also selects the Iberian Mithridates as a candidate for the Armenian throne, while Lucius Vitellius is appointed governor of Syria with the brief of overseeing developments in the troubled region (6.32.3). Iberian forces invade Armenia (6.33.1), whereupon Artabanus appoints his son Orodes to oppose them; mercenaries are gathered and a rather chaotic battle ensues between Parthians and their auxiliaries on one side and Iberians, Albanians and Sarmatians on the other (6.34-5). The

Parthians are eventually defeated and Artabanus threatens reprisals, only to be warned off by the rumour spread by Vitellius that he is planning to invade Mesopotamia with his Roman forces (6.36.1). This lends renewed impetus to the internal movement against the Parthian king (6.36.2), and he is forced to flee towards the Scythian borderlands (6.36.3-4). Meanwhile Vitellius leads Tiridates across the Euphrates and, after offering some advice to him and his leading nobles, withdraws (6.37).

The story is then taken up again at 6.41.2. Tiridates is enjoying widespread support; he is particularly popular with the democratic element in Seleucia. He then proceeds with his coronation, despite the requests of Phraates and Hiero, important regional governors, for a delay (6.42). These murmurs of discontent, however, soon increase when Tiridates fails to establish control of the whole kingdom immediately, and Phraates, Hiero and others desert him for Artabanus (6.43.1). The latter is found in a distant tribal region, *inluvie obsitus et alimenta arcu expediens* (6.43.2). Recognising that his new adherents' objections to Tiridates are genuine, even if their support for him may not be, Artabanus prepares to reclaim his throne (6.44.1). Tiridates is unsure of how to proceed but eventually undertakes an inglorious retreat (6.44.3-5), and the narrative ends there, with Artabanus about to take power once again.⁴⁵

Chapter 2 examined the Parthian elements in the narrative of Book 2, with particular reference to its opening chapters (pp. 83-6 above). At that point Tacitus summarised recent relations between Rome and Parthia, surveying the circumstances that caused Vonones to be sent from Rome to become the new king of the Parthians, and their less than impressed reaction to him. Parthia seemed to mirror Rome but the nature of the reflections between the two was complex. The strong antipathy towards Vonones, whom

⁴⁵ It has been suggested (see Martin (1990) 1549) that the length of the Parthian 'interlude' (and of other digressive passages in Book 6; see n. 3 above) means Tacitus lacked material, but it seems reductive to assume he had no choice but to include it in this form. cf. p. 8 above for similar critical dismissals of the foreign sections in the *Annals*, and Ash (1999) 115-6 and 128-32 on the further implications of Tacitus' decision to narrate in some detail events that seem not to have been of major historical significance.

the Parthians saw as a virtual slave of Rome, marked them out from contemporary Romans and their lack of objections to the principate, but Tacitus also showed that Parthia, like Rome, had experienced a shift from external warfare to domestic conflicts. Indeed, a concluding reference at 2.4.1 to the Parthians' inability to exercise critical judgement towards foreign practices suggested that they were not to be seen – directly or in an inverted manner – as mere counterparts of Rome. This notion is reinforced in Book 6, in which the Parthians are neither wholly like nor wholly unlike the Romans.

Tacitus then went on to describe how Vonones was supplanted by Artabanus (2.3.1), and the latter's diplomatic relations with Germanicus, whose installation of Zeno as king of Armenia seems to have been accepted by the Parthians (2.56, 58; pp. 103-6 above). A broader, more speculative strand in Book 2 was also identified: the possibility that, in his account of Germanicus' travels in the east, Tacitus was offering a perspective on Trajan's contemporary campaigns against the Parthians and possibly endorsing a judicious, non-confrontational approach to the orient (see pp. 112-13 above).

Now, some aspects of Parthian relations with Rome that Tacitus mentioned at the beginning of Book 2 initially recur in *Annals* 6: in both cases envoys come from Parthia to Rome to summon a son of Phraates, whose foreign ways mean that he does not last long amongst his fellow countrymen (compare 2.2.1 with 6.31.1-2 and 2.2.2-3 with 6.32.2).⁴⁶ But despite this pattern, the chain of events that is sparked by the death of Phraates junior at 6.31.2 is rather different from what follows Vonones' ejection at 2.3.1. Vonones' flight to Armenia occasioned a tightly-structured account of Roman interventions in that kingdom at 2.3-4 (cf. pp. 87-90 above), but at 6.31.3 Tiberius'

⁴⁶ Martin (2001) 167-8 *ad* 6.31.1 compares 2.2.1, and cf. also *maiorum institutis* (2.2.3) and *instituta Parthorum* (6.32.2). The Parthians' distaste at Vonones' servitude (2.2.2) may also be echoed by the report that *barbaris cunctatio servilis... videtur* (6.32.1).

selection of Tiridates to go in Phraates' stead and Mithridates to be a potential new Armenian king gives rise to a dramatic narrative of battles and betrayals.

In fact, of all the military episodes in *Annals* 1-6, this relatively long account seems to come closest to including *ingentia...bella, expugnationes urbium, fusos captosque reges* and *situs gentium, varietates proeliorum, clari ducum exitus* (4.32.1, 33.3).⁴⁷ While the revolt of the Cietae at 6.41.1, which directly precedes the second section of the Parthian narrative, seemed to represent the belated fulfilment of Tacitus' vision of imperial historiography, now a vignette depicting events in the east recalls what he said about the works of republican historians at 4.32-3. The clear irony that Parthians are now providing this sort of material is heightened by the embedding of these passages in a gloomy sequence of events in Rome, and indeed by Tacitus' own admission that at 6.31-7 he has combined the events of two successive years, *quo requiesceret animus a domesticis malis* (6.38.1). Once again the Parthians are linked to the Roman past, and this narrative further marks out Book 6 from the rest of the Tiberian hexad, for it offers a perspective on 4.32-3 that is yet again different from that suggested by Books 1-4.

But the divide that appears to be drawn between Rome and Parthia is not as simple as it seems:⁴⁸ the involvement of various different tribes in the eastern conflicts and the existence of both Parthian and Armenian strands (6.33-5 is almost an excursus within an excursus) threaten to obscure the status of the Parthian sections in Book 6 as a narrative of civil war. The central theme is one of a struggle between Tiridates, a rival contender for the Parthian throne, and its incumbent, Artabanus. The latter, who was

⁴⁷ See Levene (2009) 232. Note the changing fortunes of Artabanus – and his rival Tiridates – and his picturesque description at 6.43.2, the battle at 6.34-5, which is marked by *varietas*, and the geographic (6.33.2) and ethnographic (6.34.2-3, 35.1: cf. Ash (1999) 119-24) detail. Tacitus' account is much more substantial than those at Jos. *AJ* 18.96-104 and Dio 58.26, 59.27 (cf. too Suet., *Tib.* 41 and 66): see Ash (1999) 117 and n. 15.

⁴⁸ See again n. 13 of Chapter 4 on the interplay of being and seeming in Tacitus. McCulloch (1984) 59 and 156-7 argues that the 'apology' at 6.37.1 actually serves to draw attention to the links between Rome and Parthia.

initially an acceptable ruler, not least as he feared Germanicus (*metu Germanici fidus Romanis*, 6.31.1), has markedly deteriorated and begun to display *saevitiam in populares* (ibid.; cf. 6.41.2). He is also said to have killed members of his family (*neminem gentis Arsacidarum summae rei imponere poterant, interfectis ab Artabano plerisque...*, 6.31.2). Such actions excite resistance amongst the Parthians: Artabanus' opponents choose Tiridates as an alternative king. Despite his efforts to check this (6.32.2), Artabanus subsequently loses virtually all support (note especially *adfluentibus paulatim qui metu magis quam benevolentia subiecti...*, 6.36.2).

So not only is civil war a key general theme in the Parthian narrative,⁴⁹ but the nature of the conflict clearly reflects the situation in Rome. In each case the state is now succumbing to strife: it has just been demonstrated that in *Annals* 6 Tacitus depicts civil war breaking out in full in the last years of Tiberius' principate. While both Artabanus and Tiberius were once afraid of Germanicus, there has more recently been a marked deterioration in their reigns: the reference to the Parthian king's *saevitia* also echoes how the same quality is regularly attributed to Tiberius.⁵⁰ Artabanus' enticement of Abdus *specie amicitiae* to a banquet, and his success in delaying Sinaces *dissimulatione* (6.32.2), similarly recall the treatment of others by Tiberius.⁵¹ Indeed, the two rulers seem ultimately to wage war on their subjects and even their relations; as has been shown, in

⁴⁹ There is also the fraternal discord between the Iberians Mithridates and Pharasmanes (6.32.3; see p. 229 above on Germanicus' sons), and the detailed reference to Seleucia's regular civil wars: *trecenti...delecti ut senatus, sua populo vis. et quotiens concordēs agunt, spernitur Parthus; ubi dissensere, dum sibi quisque contra aemulos subsidium vocant* (6.42.1). A notable comparison is Persia's role at the end of the Peloponnesian War, as described in Thucydides' Book 8, but the theme of dissenting sides calling in external help, as described at Thuc. 3.82.1, is also echoed. cf. pp. 253-4 below on the presence in *Annals* 6 of Thuc. 3.82-3.

⁵⁰ For Tiberius' fear of Germanicus see p. 41 above (and at 6.51.3 Germanicus is said to have restrained Tiberius; see also n. 42 above); for his *saevitia* see n. 25 of Chapter 1, pp. 199 above, on 4.35.5, and 265 below; cf. nn. 60-1 below.

⁵¹ See pp. 91-2 above on the use by Romans – including, though not limited to, Tiberius – of a *species amicitiae*, and the suggestion that Artabanus' actions here may not be as culpable as theirs. For Tiberian *dissimulatio* see again n. 25 of Chapter 1. cf. too pp. 202-3 on Rhescuporis, and n. 48 of Chapter 4 for the 'death at dinner' trope.

the last stages of Tiberius' principate there is a new sense that the Romans are fighting back, even as Artabanus faces opposition from the Parthians.⁵²

In this way the initial parallelism identified in Chapter 2 between Rome and Parthia, which suggested that both had fallen prey to the decline of *metus hostilis* and to the consequences of this, is resumed.⁵³ Events in the east reinforce the impression about the situation in Rome given in the hexad's last chapters: that the disappearance of *metus hostilis*, a theme that has recurred throughout the narrative in both Roman and foreign contexts, has reached a culmination. The presence of a notion that Rome and Parthia are equivalent powers, each occupying their own sphere, in historiographical texts of the first century AD has already been noted (see pp. 81-3 above), and Tacitus' revelation that both states are dogged by similar civil strife can be seen as a sardonic variation on this.

The account of hostilities in Parthia reflects the contemporaneous events in Rome, which are increasingly resembling a real civil war. The eastern narrative in Book 6 does not after all simply show 'republican-style' warfare happening outside the Roman sphere but, like the episodes depicting Romans fighting others in Books 1-4, hints at the state of affairs in Rome under the principate. In the later books of the *Annals*, the negative characterisation of events in the east will again focus attention on aspects of the similar situation in Rome.⁵⁴ But just as at 2.1-2 the Parthians appeared to be neither complete analogues nor complete opposites of the Romans, here at the other end of the hexad there is a continuing pattern of difference and similarity.

⁵² Note that while Keitel (1978) 473 n. 20 and McCulloch (1984) 59-61 identify a general correspondence between the monarchs and the strife in which they are involved, these specific points remain to be made.

⁵³ See again pp. 84-5 above: the absence of Artabanus' fear of Rome was clearly not identical to Rome's long-term degeneration but the symbolic parallelism was still striking, especially given the further echoes of Roman history at 2.3-4 (pp. 87-90). cf. how Ash (1999) 129 reads the battle at 6.34-5, in which Parthians face not Romans but less impressive enemies, as a demonstration of the failure of Parthian *metus hostilis*.

⁵⁴ See Gilmartin (1973) esp. 616-26 (Romans' and Parthians' concern for appearances) and Keitel (1978) (despotism, enslavement and intrigue are rife in both states); cf. Clark (2011).

ii) Regnum and Empire

. Diplomatic Resolutions

Indeed, there are points of comparison between Rome and Parthia, and their rulers, that extend beyond the basic theme of civil war. Aside from the fact that both Tiberius and Artabanus attack their families and seek to ensnare important and potentially dangerous individuals, the Roman and Parthian courts look notably similar. When he becomes aware of the machinations against him, Artabanus entices the eunuch Abdus to a banquet to be poisoned (6.32.1): the latter's power has already been emphasised (*non despectum id apud barbaros utroque potentiam habet*, 6.31.2). Other influential figures are Sinnaces, whom Artabanus does not kill but rather diverts to other duties (6.31.2, 32.2), and his father Abdagaeses, who becomes the *columen partium* (6.37.3) but whose authority under Tiridates is such that he eventually incurs jealousy and brings about a change for the worse in the new king's fortunes (6.43.1).

All the elements of this claustrophobic, suspicious and faintly exotic atmosphere find parallels in Rome. Tacitus has already noted the involvement of the eunuch Lygdu in Sejanus' scheming and especially in the death of Drusus, Germanicus' brother, by poison (see 4.10.2),⁵⁵ which Germanicus himself thought he had suffered at Piso's hands

⁵⁵ More recently, Caligula, ensconced on Capri, was alleged to be *incerta<e> virilitatis* at 6.5.1 (cf. 9.2).

(*lenta...veneficia*, 2.70.1; cf. *lento veneno*, 6.32.2). More prominent poisonings will occur later in the *Annals* (see especially 12.67 and 13.16).⁵⁶ Artabanus' treatment of Sinnaces may indeed echo Tiberius' habit of not letting able and potentially threatening Romans go out to govern provinces (see p. 241 above), but more striking is the existence at both courts of dominant 'ministers' with great influence, not least over who will succeed to the throne. At this stage in the Roman narrative, the repercussions of the fall and death of the once all-powerful Sejanus, who may have plotted against Tiberius, are still strongly felt, and, Macro, a new figure who will be instrumental in Caligula's accession, has also emerged.⁵⁷

So Romans and Parthians resemble each other in additional unsavoury ways. Moreover, while the use of subordinates, already an important theme in the Tiberian hexad (see p. 162), and poisoning, which will become more common as the Julio-Claudian narrative continues, may not be distinctively Parthian traits only now applicable to Rome, Tacitus has already remarked that the presence of a eunuch at the heart of an imperial household is peculiar to the east. The appearance of Lygdus, then, may suggest that Rome is acquiring certain eastern qualities rather than that Rome and Parthia simply look like each other. A further angle on this possibility is offered by developments in Tiberius' presentation in *Annals* 6. Tacitus quotes a letter from the emperor to the senate in which the former is said to have written of his mental torment, and comments that *adeo facinora atque flagitia sua ipsi quoque in supplicium verterant* (6.6.1). He goes on to refer to Plato's strictures on the *tyrannorum mentes*, said to be rent by *saevitia, libidine, malis consultis* (6.6.2).

⁵⁶ At 1.5.4 Tacitus seems to allude to the tradition that Augustus was poisoned and imply similarities with Nero's accession. See Goodyear (1972) 125-7 *ad* 1.5-6, and pp. 87-8 above on how imperial figures recurrently die *dolo propinquorum*.

⁵⁷ cf. McCulloch (1984) 61; see pp. 245-6 above.

Without quite saying so overtly,⁵⁸ the historian hints that Tiberius has become a tyrant: the tendencies here attributed to such autocrats are clearly displayed by the emperor in this part of the narrative.⁵⁹ His general cruelty towards his subjects has already been considered, while *saevitia* and *libidines* are both repeatedly applied to his behaviour and recur at the very end of the hexad in the retrospective on his incremental deterioration (*intestabilis saevitia, sed obiectis libidinibus, dum Seianum dilexit timuitve*, 6.51.3).⁶⁰ This implication of the *princeps*' tyranny, which reaches a climax in his obituary, is a telling indictment of the principate in itself, and final confirmation of the deceptive nature of its republican façade (see Chapter 3). But it is notable that *saevitia* and *libidines* also feature in the Parthian narrative in *Annals* 6. It has already been remarked that Artabanus' *saevitia* is a key reason for his subjects' resentment.⁶¹ Moreover, when outlining the state of affairs in Seleucia, Tacitus explains the Parthian king's support of the oligarchic party there by stating that *populi imperium iuxta libertatem, paucorum dominatio regiae libidini propior est* (6.42.2).

The resonance of this statement for Rome is evident,⁶² but it is also significant that monarchic *saevitia* and *libido* should be found in the east even as these qualities are being displayed more and more strongly by the Roman Tiberius. They do not only make the emperor look like a tyrant in the Greek and Roman historiographical tradition but also

⁵⁸ Would a direct comparison be inelegant and obvious? cf. how, as this chapter shows, Tacitus subtly suggests that Rome is like Parthia and the principate like a civil war, but does not draw explicit parallels.

⁵⁹ Walker (1952) 204-14, Dunkle (1971) 17-18 and Woodman (2006b) esp. 184-9; cf. Keitel (1984) 309. Tiberius' request for a bodyguard at 6.15.2 is also relevant: see again Pelling (2011) 429 *ad* Plut., *Caes.* 57.7.

⁶⁰ Indeed, he is said to show *saevitia* from the outset (1.4.3), while *libidines* appear openly only at 6.1.1 (though note 4.57.1, *...saevitiam ac libidinem, cum factis promeret, locis occultantem*). cf. Dunkle (1971) 17-18, n. 85 of Chapter 4 on *libido*, and p. 255 above on the obituary at 6.51.3.

⁶¹ See pp. 260-1. Note too that, while at 6.31.1 Artabanus' *saevitia* is said to be new, at 6.41.2 his Scythian upbringing is blamed for it. This seems to hint that, like Tiberius (1.4.3), he may have always been like that.

⁶² See p. 89 above on the principate as *dominatio*, but note also *populi imperium iuxta libertatem* (and the Sallustian *paucorum*, as found at e.g. Sall., *BC* 39.1): does this echo Tacitus' earlier implications about the origins of the principate – and so the loss of liberty – in the late republic? See Chapter 2.

suggest that he resembles an eastern autocrat,⁶³ not least as the orientalist aspects of his court and other parallels with Parthia have already been noted. Moreover, at the end of the digressive section 4.32-5 Tacitus comments how futile it is for *externi reges aut qui eadem saevitia usi sunt* to try to suppress free speech (4.35.5). Scholars have already remarked that this reference to *saevitia* seems to apply to Tiberius (see p. 199 above): in Book 6 *saevitia* has now become a key aspect of the equivalence between the emperor and Artabanus, an *externus rex*, that Tacitus seems to suggest (note how in one of his *libidines*, his pursuit of noble young people, Tiberius is said to be acting *more regio*, 6.1.1).

Once again, the wider literary notion that Rome and Parthia are alike is given a twist. The association of the *princeps* not only with tyranny in general, but with the Parthian king, recapitulates the notion that the principate can be characterised as a *regnum*, and Tiberius' increasingly autocratic behaviour confirms that it is reasonable to consider the imperial system an overt monarchy. The 'principate as *regnum*' idea was introduced with Tacitus' ironic stipulation at 1.9.5 about what the Augustan principate was not, but it was developed by the portrayal of Arminius and Germanicus, two figures whose association with freedom and political independence was shown to be ultimately rather hollow, and by the latter's obituary (see pp. 70-3 and 124-7 above). Now, at the end of the hexad, it reaches its conclusion. In the rest of the extant text, *regnum* will be used without comment of the pursuit of the principate by Agrippina on Nero's behalf (see 12.7.3, 65.2, 66.2; cf. 13.14.4).⁶⁴ Nero will represent both the Julio-Claudian dynasty's

⁶³ See Dunkle (1971) esp. 12-13 on tyrannical tropes, and on the eastern connotations of *regnum* in Tacitus generally Benario (1964) 102 and Keitel (1978) 464. *regia libido* (6.42.2) is more abstract than Tiberius' *libidines* but cf. again n. 85 of Chapter 4 on how when used in one context the term may evoke another. cf. Hartog (1988) 324-5 on monarchy as a 'barbarian' attribute, although see too Pelling (1997) 53-4.

⁶⁴ See Benario (1964) 102-3, who also cites *H.* 1.22.1, Keitel (1978) 464-5 and Griffin (2009) 182. cf. too how the adjective *regius* is applied to Nero at 14.16.2 (cf. 13.42.4), and the ambiguous *quasi regio facinore* (does Nero mean to act like a king, or to impress king Tiridates?) at 16.23.2. Questa (1957) 319-20 discusses Tacitus' use of *regius*. As ever, the applicability of this theme in the *Annals* to the Trajanic

nadir and the final departure from the principate's republican facade, while Agrippina will mark a significant deterioration from her homonymous mother (cf. p. 244 above); Tiberius' reign describes the development of the conditions that allowed them to flourish.

Rome and Parthia now appear to be linked by important themes: civil war and the decline of *metus hostilis*, and autocracy. It has already been recalled, however, that at 2.1-2 Tacitus originally implied that the relationship between the two powers entailed both difference and similarity. In addition to the reflections of affairs in Rome in the Parthian narrative in Book 6, there are contrasts between Roman and Parthian behaviour which have wide-ranging repercussions for Tacitus' portrayal of the principate in Books 1-6 and beyond. In both states the brutal behaviour of an autocratic ruler is followed by the outbreak of civil war, but there are some notable differences in the way in which the two leaders behave.

Throughout the hexad, Tiberius seems to have followed the *consilium coercendi intra terminos imperii* (1.11.4) laid down by Augustus. His cautious approach to the Germans contrasted with Germanicus' bold eagerness and proved well founded (see p. 66 above), although then Germanicus also proved to be an astute diplomatist in the east, especially with his installation of Zeno at 2.56.2-3. In *Annals* 6, Tiberius' wish to deal with new developments in the region in a similarly non-confrontational manner is stressed (*destinata retinens, consiliis et astu res externas moliri*, 6.32.1) and once again this policy is vindicated by the narrative. Although the attempt to replace Artabanus with Tiridates fails, there is no discernible disadvantage to Rome: ultimately a Roman nominee, Mithridates, is left reigning in Armenia (6.36.1-2) and no Roman blood has been spilt in the process. The way in which this marks out the Romans from the Parthians

present is not clear, but see Laederich (2001) 356-7 on the potential for contemporary criticism of Trajan's increasingly autocratic ways.

will be considered shortly, but it is striking that while Tiberius' and Germanicus' approaches to the east parallel those of Augustus and other emperors, these various imperial figures are not equally effective.

Augustus' problematic eastern interventions are mentioned at 2.2.2-4.2 (see pp. 84-8 above). Meanwhile, *Annals* 7 no doubt referred to the formal meeting between Vitellius and Artabanus on the banks of the Euphrates that seems to have taken place after Tiberius' death (see Suet., *Cal.* 14.3 and Dio 59.27.3). In the lost section of the text, however, Tacitus is also likely to have described Caligula's famous bridge of boats over the Bay of Naples (cf. Suet. *Cal.* 19), a possible emulation of Xerxes' bridging of the Hellespont, which some scholars have suggested was an advertisement of the success of the Parthian negotiations or at least an effort to surpass Artabanus' own bridge over the Euphrates.⁶⁵ If Tacitus had made anything of this eastern aspect – note that at 6.37.3 Tiridates also bridges the river – the considered strategy pursued during Tiberius' principate would have had the potential to contrast with Caligula's megalomaniac self-aggrandisement, and also with the eastern involvement of the next emperor, Claudius. The latter also sends out a new Parthian king at the Parthians' own request (12.10.1), but Meherdates proves a poor choice who is soon defeated (12.12.2-3, 14.2-3). His failure to establish himself echoes the brief reigns of Vonones in Parthia and the other short-lived Augustan nominees in Armenia alluded to at the beginning of Book 2 rather than Germanicus' choice, Zeno, and Tiberius' choice in Book 6, Tiridates. It may not be coincidental that Claudius sees himself as following Augustan rather than Tiberian precedent (*se... divo Augusto adaequabat, petitum ab eo regem referens, omissa Tiberii memoria, quamquam is quoque miserat*, 12.11.1). He says so in a speech of which the ironic relevance to imperial Rome and his own situation has been ably analysed (compare

⁶⁵ See Martin (2001) 183 *ad* 6.44.5 on the meeting between Vitellius and Artabanus, and Wardle (1994) 195 *ad* Suet., *Cal.* 19.3 for interpretations of Caligula's bridge; cf. Clark (2011) 219-21.

Vitellius' blander and less arch advice to Tiridates at 6.37.4).⁶⁶ Tiberius' and Germanicus' actions seem extremely judicious by comparison.⁶⁷

Tacitus' account of the Roman response under Nero to the Parthian king Vologaeses' attempt to install his brother Tiridates as king of Armenia (13.6-9, 34.2-41; 14.23-6; 15.1-17, 24-31) is on a much greater scale than the narrative in Book 6, and Nero's selection of Corbulo as a commander in the east admittedly does him credit.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Tigranes, whom Nero chooses as an alternative king of Armenia, is a former Roman hostage and *usque ad servilem patientiam demissus* (14.26.1), like other Roman royal nominees in the *Annals* (cf. p. 85 above) but unlike the Tiridates dispatched by Tiberius at 6.32.3, whose Roman links are if anything seen as desirable by the Parthians (6.41.2). Moreover, after various vicissitudes in the east, the text of Book 16 breaks off with the new Tiridates about to reach Rome to accept the Armenian crown from Nero, who is said to plan for the visit to coincide with the condemnation of Barea Soranus *ut <versis> ad externa rumoribus intestinum scelus obscuraretur, an ut magnitudinem imperatoriam caede insignium virorum quasi regio facinore ostentaret* (16.23.2; cf. how Soranus is joined with Thræsea Paetus to represent *virtus ipsa* at 16.21.1).⁶⁹

Not only is Nero even more ruthless than Tiberius at this point, but unlike the latter, and unlike Germanicus, who crowns Zeno in Armenia (see p. 103 above), he parades the results of his eastern negotiations in Rome itself and forcibly juxtaposes them

⁶⁶ Keitel (1978) 466-7 and *passim*; see too Clark (2011) 223-6. Note that Meherdates is negatively characterised (12.12.3) in a way that Tiridates is not, and his choice of a final battle at 12.14.2 leads him to fall into his rival's hands, unlike Tiridates' shrewd retreat at 6.44.5. It is also the case that while Tiberius successfully reconciles Mithridates and Pharasmanes at 6.32.3, under Claudius at 12.44-8 they engage in a bloody familial conflict.

⁶⁷ Note that Tacitus also compares Vitellius' success carrying out Tiberius' policy in the east with the *turpe servitium* he performed in Rome under Caligula and Claudius (6.32.4).

⁶⁸ Although Corbulo and the Roman campaigns more generally are not devoid of ambiguity: see Gilmartin (1973) and Ash (2006) 364-75, and more generally Laederich (2001) 191-244.

⁶⁹ Again, this recalls Book 6, and *Vitellius ostentasse Romana arma satis ratus* (6.37.4), but there the context is neutral rather than negative. cf. Gilmartin (1973) on the importance of *species* in the east.

with brutality towards his subjects. The oriental diplomacy practised in the Tiberian hexad therefore looks ahead to the dynasty's future degeneration, which will be depicted in the later books of the *Annals*. The Parthian narrative as a whole in Book 6, with its mirroring of Roman civil war and despotism, is in some respects highly unflattering to Tiberius, and it is also true that the reign of his candidate, Tiridates, is not long. But while Tiberius' involvement, and that of Germanicus, with eastern peoples in Books 1-6 has certain elements in common with the policy of future emperors, their execution of it is significantly better. The further implications of this will be considered shortly.

At this point, however, it is also worth returning to Trajan. In Chapter 2 it was suggested that, while it was not possible to determine to what extent Tacitus was aware of Trajan's campaigns in the east when he wrote the *Annals*, several passages in Book 2 appear to imply the wisdom of deploying diplomacy rather than aggression in that region, and indeed of not engaging in direct confrontation with Parthia. Along with a general implication that a Roman war with Parthia would be ill advised, Germanicus' treatment of Zeno contrasted with Trajan's reported behaviour towards Parthamasiris, and he displayed a cautious politeness to the Parthian king's ambassadors (see pp. 105-6 above). These themes recur in Book 6; Tiberius' considered approach, implemented by an intermediary who shows respect to the Parthians, continues the contrast with Trajan's more direct belligerence, whether his campaigns were being planned, already underway or concluded when Tacitus was writing. In *Annals* 6 there are also hints that the Romans under Tiberius do well to avoid proper hostilities with Parthia. Vitellius makes use of the mere rumour of a Roman invasion of Mesopotamia to create *metum Romani belli* (6.36.1; see further below), a prospect serious enough to drive Artabanus from Armenia, and then will ostentatiously go no further than the eastern bank of the Euphrates (6.37.4; cf. 2.58.1

and p. 106 above). A full war with Parthia is clearly a serious undertaking that is not to be engaged in lightly – or even at all.

. Fear and Fearlessness, West and East

A direct comparison between Tiberius and Artabanus also shows that the Roman emperor's diplomatic approach sets him apart from his Parthian counterpart as well as from his imperial successors. Tacitus presents Tiberius' intervention in the east as the product of a sort of disinterested concern as opposed to an explicit wish to advance Roman interests, but Artabanus is said to have shown *superbiam in nos* (6.31.1),⁷⁰ sparked not least by his successful prosecution of wars against *circumiectas nationes*. He proceeds to lay claim to Armenia and demand the return of treasure left by Vonones in Syria and Cilicia, and is even said to harbour greater designs: *simul veteres Persarum ac Macedonum terminos seque invasurum possessa Cyro et post Alexandro per vaniloquentiam ac minas iaciebat* (6.31.1). His grand plans are a factor in his domestic unpopularity, and his subsequent failures further undermine his position and lead to his deposition (note *regem...adversis proeliorum exitiosum*, 6.36.2). By contrast, Tiberius'

⁷⁰ See Suet., *Tib.* 66, the detail that Tiberius *Artabani Parthorum regis laceratus est litteris parricidia et caedes et ignaviam et luxuriam obicientis*. Tacitus does not have the Parthian accuse his Roman analogue, although cf. pp. 202-4 above on the correspondence between Tiberius and Rhescuporis, who resemble each other in several ways.

involvement in the east not only results in relative success but it also does not serve as a point of contention in his relations with his subjects.

Artabanus' example furthers the implication that a conciliatory foreign policy is likely to be more beneficial at home and abroad than an aggressive approach. That conclusion, however, becomes more complicated in the light of *metus hostilis*, and the consequences of its disappearance. It has been suggested that both Rome and Parthia have fallen victim to this, and now Artabanus' actions can be seen as a response to Parthia's lack of external enemies and an attempt to re-establish hostile relations with foreigners (note the reference at 2.1 to Parthia's defeat of the Romans and the internal discord that followed; see p. 84 above). Indeed, in Book 6 explicit traces of *metus hostilis* in Parthia can be identified: king Phraates' actions *haud...nostri metu* (2.1.2) have been replaced by Artabanus' flight in response to the *metum Romani belli* (6.31.1) that Vitellius spreads. Conversely, although the Romans under Germanicus proved unable to conquer the Germans, the latter did not threaten Rome itself, and it was stressed earlier how even the mixed fortunes experienced by Roman troops when fighting other foreigners do not really detract from overall Roman dominance. In the *Annals*, then, there is no sense that Rome is truly afraid of any external threat.

The Parthians' unreciprocated fear of Rome therefore draws attention to Rome's lack of foreign enemies under the principate: the Roman approach to Parthia cannot but be benevolent and diplomatic. At the same time, however, the concurrent absence of *metus hostilis* is resulting in civil war in Rome. Rome's empire is at peace, but at the same time a dearth of foreign conquests, and the blunting of the Roman army's military prowess, are accompanied by strife at home.⁷¹ Now, juxtaposing eastern policy under

⁷¹ See Ash (1999) 129-31 on the 'two conflicting ideologies' (130), open war and a more devious foreign policy. Moreover, although the revolt of the Cietae confirms that the Romans are in control, events in the hexad as a whole do not suggest that Roman troops could have achieved as much in the east as the *princeps*' diplomacy.

Tiberius with that of his past and future imperial counterparts seems to indicate that skilled and tactful diplomacy is likely to be conducive to good order in the region and to ensure a satisfactory outcome for Rome; it seems preferable to the alternative. Nevertheless, even if Tiberius' and Germanicus' improvement on Augustus' actions is a sign of increased imperial confidence,⁷² the fact that their policies will be implemented less effectively by their successors matches the future Julio-Claudian degeneration foreshadowed in the first hexad, especially Book 6. Moreover, despite their success in the east, both Tiberius and Germanicus have been strongly linked to civil strife: Germanicus was perceived by many as a potential rebel while, as Tiberius pursues his diplomatic approach at the end of the hexad, the conflict in Rome is at its worst. Their portrayal confirms what happens when *metus hostilis* is no more.⁷³

So is there any way of restoring this useful fear of foreign enemies? Germanicus' lack of full success against the Germans at the beginning of the hexad programmatically hinted that there is not, and the example of the Parthians, who have already mirrored other unsavoury aspects of Rome in Book 6, confirms this. Artabanus' initial boasts that he will reclaim *possessa Cyro et post Alexandro* (6.31.1) are quickly shown to be hollow (and it is even not clear that the Parthians as a whole, as opposed to him alone, are subject to *metum Romani belli* at 6.36.1). This passing reference to Alexander in fact recalls how the echoes of the Macedonian in Book 2 may also reflect Trajan, and the latter's efforts to present himself as a successor of Alexander going east (see p. 101 above).⁷⁴ Once again, the dating of the *Annals* cannot be determined for sure, but Artabanus' manifest failure is

⁷² For once Tiberius improves on his predecessor's policy, but is this because under Augustus' successor the principate is revealed as an autocracy, and so is adept at dealing with other monarchies? cf. Chapter 3.

⁷³ Tiberius and Germanicus are hardly similar in all respects, but in Chapters 1 and 2 Germanicus' embodiment of key imperial qualities was stressed, so this link between him and an actual emperor makes sense. But cf. also n. 37 of Chapter 2 on how from an external perspective the differences between Roman imperial figures may be minimised.

⁷⁴ See pp. 125-7 on the role of Alexander in Germanicus' obituary; cf. again Syme (1958b) 494-5. See also p. 113 on 2.60.4, a passage that evokes the fragility of empires.

striking in the light of Trajan's Parthian campaigns, which demonstrated the risk-ridden nature of attempting further conquests beyond the empire's eastern boundaries.⁷⁵

In Rome and Parthia alike, it is impossible to return to a time when *metus hostilis* functioned as it should: Tiberius' eastern negotiations are accompanied by the escalation of civil strife within the principate, but Artabanus' efforts to reanimate Parthian aggression against foreigners also lead to domestic discord. Moreover, in Book 6 Tacitus also makes it clear that autocracy now prevails in Rome and Parthia, and the *Annals* as a whole has already shown that in both cases this state of affairs came about as a result of previous episodes of civil strife: the principate emerged after the wars of the first century BC, and at 2.1 Phraates was said to have established himself after civil war.⁷⁶ This situation too cannot be altered.

It is the intervention of Rome and Tiberius – who sends out Tiridates in the place of the dead Phraates, reconciles Mithridates and Pharasmanes, and appoints Lucius Vitellius (6.32.3) – that plays on Artabanus' fear of Rome and makes his overthrow by internal opponents possible. Parthia, by contrast, has no power to deploy any form of influence in Rome; the theoretical possibility of intervention against Tiberius by Parthians is out of the question.⁷⁷ Although opposition to Tiberius in Book 6 has been discerned, it clearly does not constitute a concrete movement of the kind that operates in Parthia.⁷⁸ In any case, while the Roman aid given to Tiridates and his supporters is effective at first, the new king is eventually undone by his own mistakes (*ac si statim*

⁷⁵ This recalls how the Roman mutineers attempt to obviate their internal conflict with a cathartic foreign war and also some Romans' response to the Gallic revolt (1.49.3, 3.44.2; see pp. 55-6 and 210-12 above – and 285 below).

⁷⁶ Historically this is more obviously true of Rome, but cf. how Tacitus also stresses the role of autocracy in Rome's earlier history (see pp. 148-9).

⁷⁷ Nevertheless, note how Rubrius Fabatus is mysteriously put into custody *tamquam desperatis rebus Romanis Parthorum ad misericordiam fugeret* (6.14.2). It is as if he sees that the only hope for Rome now is Parthia.

⁷⁸ See pp. 240-2 for the foreshadowing of Gaetulicus' insurrection and 248 above for Sejanus' plot. Neither 'conspiracy', whatever its exact nature, succeeded. Another way of reading the different levels of opposition to Artabanus and Tiberius is to recall how the Parthians reacted more strongly to the Roman-reared Vonones at 2.2.2-3 than the Romans did to Vonones' 'analogue' Augustus (pp. 84-5 above).

interiora ceterasque nationes petivisset, oppressa cunctantium dubitatio et omnes in unum cedebant, 6.43.1), and Artabanus is restored to his original position. Not only is there no suggestion that the Parthians sought to alter the nature of their autocratic government – not surprisingly, given Parthia’s history – but even their efforts to replace one ruler with another come to nothing. They ultimately fought their civil war in vain.

This mirrors, once more, the situation in Rome. As Tiberius himself sees at 6.46.2 (see p. 246 above), even when he is near death there is no alternative to the Julio-Claudians. Meanwhile, in AD 69 the Roman civil wars will give rise to several new *principes* but no prospect of an alternative to the principate itself.⁷⁹ Those wars saw one recorded attempt by Parthians to intervene in Roman affairs: the embassy from Vologaeses to Vespasian offering forty thousand Parthian cavalry to join the struggle against Vitellius (*H.* 4.51.1; cf. *Suet. Vesp.* 6.4).⁸⁰ This shortly follows the battle of Cremona and Vitellius’ loss of power, however. The proposal comes too late, and Vespasian would not have needed it anyway. The Flavian dynasty had already emerged, and when in due course it came to an end other emperors would succeed.

⁷⁹ See pp. 280-2 below.

⁸⁰ At *H.* 2.82.3 Vespasian had sent embassies to Parthia and Armenia to forestall any attack from that quarter. cf. too how Labienus led Parthians against Rome in the civil wars of the late republic (see *Dio* 48.24-26, 39-40).

Conclusion

non Samnis, non Poeni, non Hispaniae Galliaeve, ne Parthi quidem saepius admonuere: quippe regno Arsacis acrior est Germanorum libertas (Ger. 37.3).

Towards the end of the *Germania*, in a brief retrospective that compresses several centuries of Roman history, Tacitus juxtaposes the Romans' acquisition of an empire, via their ability to defeat or contain several major enemies, with their inability to conquer the Germans. Within a monograph written in the late AD 90s, at least a decade before the *Annals*, the historian succinctly expresses ideas that have recurred repeatedly in this discussion of the Tiberian books.¹ He implies that the Germans possess *libertas*, and they cannot be properly incorporated into the Roman empire; the Parthians and their *regnum* have presented substantial challenges to Rome, but ultimately they have been less fearsome rivals than the Germans. The historian's brief statement in his earlier work thus looks forward to the multivalent notion of the 'mirror of Tacitus',² which this thesis has used to focus on the Germans and the Parthians, and the other foreigners in the Tiberian books of the *Annals*, and show how these peoples are represented as both like and unlike the Romans. Their current situation and historical development reflect Rome's own past, present and future and, just as the Parthians and Germans are contrasted at *Ger. 37.3*, in *Annals* 1-6 the respective autocracy and freedom of these two peoples structure Tacitus' representation of imperial Rome.

¹ See Rives (1999) 47 on the *Germania*'s dating (with Woodman (2009c) 31) and 275-6 *ad loc.* on this passage; cf. n. 8 of Chapter 2 for the possibility that it challenges perceptions about the Parthians held by some of Tacitus' contemporaries, and pp. 80-2 for Roman relations with Parthia in the early imperial era.

² Tacitus does not refer to his earlier monograph in the *Annals* and any conclusions about their relationship must be speculative: see n. 75 of Chapter 1. The *Germania* has of course previously been read as a text in which the Germans reflect Rome's past and present: see O'Gorman (1993) and pp. 23-4 above.

The Germans and the Parthians, and the Gauls, Thracians, north Africans and Frisians, are not of course the only non-Romans who feature in the *Annals*. It was noted in the Introduction that scholars have already discussed many of the foreign episodes in the rest of the extant text and suggested that, in the later books as well, northern barbarians reflect the Romans' own lack of liberty and their failure to resist the principate, while Rome's dealings with eastern royalty further illuminate aspects of the imperial court.³ Critical work has also considered the extension of the 'civil war within the principate', and demonstrated how Tacitus continues to imply that the Julio-Claudian era is an interlude, characterised by civil strife of an alternative kind, between two periods of serious domestic turmoil.⁴ Familiar patterns will recur in the rest of the *Annals*, in which Tacitus depicts the acute degeneration in the principates of first Claudius and then Nero, for readers who are familiar with the themes of freedom, autocracy and civil war prominent in the Tiberian books.

Chapter 5 emphasised how those themes reach a climax in Book 6: the end of the hexad looks forward to the end of the *Annals*, at which point Nero's despotism would have given way to civil strife that convulsed the Roman world. Once Book 6 has been concluded, however, less than half of the narrative has elapsed: three emperors and over thirty years remain to be covered.⁵ In Tacitus' depiction of Tiberius' reign, the republican aspects of the Augustan principate are shown to be a mere front for its true monarchic nature, and the underlying potential for the imperial system to dissolve in civil war is highlighted, but after the first hexad has made these fundamental points, rather different emphases emerge in the rest of the text. Scholars have regularly noted the altered narrative organisation of the surviving later books, which move further away from the

³ On the north, see Roberts (1988) and Lavan (2013) 147-53; on the east, Gilmartin (1973), Keitel (1978) and Clark (2011). cf. in general p. 9 above.

⁴ See Keitel (1984) esp. 307-9 and Woodman (1998f) 184-5.

⁵ cf. pp. 30-1 above on the ending of the *Annals*, and again Syme (1958b) 256-60 and 686-7 and McCulloch (1984) 169-75 on its putative hexadic structure.

annalistic format, with its implications of the principate's hypocrisy, and towards an arrangement that emphasises key events in emperors' reigns and hints that Roman history is now shaped by the actions of *principes* and those around them. The last two Julio-Claudians have distinctive propensities and weaknesses of their own.⁶

Nevertheless, the account of Caligula's reign and of the first six years of Claudius' principate, which would have formed the transition between these two parts of the *Annals*, has not survived. Books 7-10 are missing and the narrative only resumes in AD 47, part of the way through Book 11. Other sources are required to reconstruct what happened in the interim, beginning with the initial popularity of the youthful Caligula, his ensuing paranoia and megalomaniac tendencies, and his assassination; Claudius' accession, the internal threats he faced, and his efforts to expand the empire would then have followed. Chapter 5 showed how some of those events seem to be foreshadowed in the last part of the first hexad (which does not itself survive in its entirety; cf. p. 233 above). The account of Tiberius' eastern diplomacy no doubt looks forward to the actions of his successors, Caligula first of all, in the region, while Caligula himself and his looming accession become an insistent theme in Book 6. Moreover, the brief account at 6.30.2-4 of Lentulus Gaetulicus' position presumably foreshadows the events that led to his execution in 39, and even the subsequent insurrection of Scribonianus against Claudius (see pp. 240-2 above).

These points must remain provisional, for the text's incomplete state means that it is impossible to determine fully the relationship between the account of Tiberius' principate and the Caligulan and early Claudian narratives. Nevertheless, this thesis will now conclude with some conjectures about how, in the lost middle books of the *Annals*,

⁶ See Syme (1958b) 269-70, Griffin (2009) 182-3 and Malloch (2009) 119-20 on the later narrative, and also pp. 266-7 and n. 64 of Chapter 5 on how the idea of the principate as a regal institution recurs in the Neronian *Annals* especially. Malloch (2009) and Keitel (2009) offer helpful introductions to the Claudian and Neronian books.

Tacitus may have developed some of the key ideas that originate in the first hexad, and in what ways these books would have served to link the two extant sections of the work.

The missing account has been reconstructed by Syme in his characteristic style,⁷ but two episodes in particular invite further speculation about how Tacitus may have treated them: the attempts to ‘restore the republic’ that seem to have been made after the assassination of Caligula in 41, and the invasion of Britain undertaken by Claudius in 43.

Tacitus’ reference to Cassius Chaerea, *mox caede C. Caesaris memoriam apud posteros adeptus, tum adulescens et animi ferox* (1.32.2), in his account of the German mutiny, when the future emperor Caligula is still a mere infant (1.41.2; cf. p. 49 above), serves as an early reminder of the ultimate fate that lies in store for him. At no point in the extant first hexad, however, does the historian look ahead to what happened after Caligula’s death at the hands of Chaerea, along with other praetorian officers and leading senators who had conspired with him. Josephus, Suetonius and Dio report that, once the *princeps* had been killed, the conspirators and the consuls sought to abolish the principate. The senate met and afterwards the consuls gave out the daily watchword, as they had done in republican times, to the urban cohorts: they chose ‘*libertas*’. Meanwhile Claudius was found and acclaimed emperor by the praetorian guard, and the knowledge of this military backing overawed most of the senators. Nevertheless, when the urban cohorts demanded an emperor, a number of senators did come forward, but their candidatures were not tenable. After the urban cohorts joined the praetorians, the senate had no choice but to submit to Claudius.⁸

⁷ Syme (1958b) 256-9; cf. also O’Gorman (2006) 297 n. 46.

⁸ See Jos., *BJ* 2.204-14 and esp. *AJ* 19.1-273, Suet., *Cal.* 56-60 and *Div. Clau.* 10-11.1, and Dio 59.29-30 and 60.1. For a survey of these sources which argues that, *pace* the neglect of much modern scholarship, they describe genuine efforts to effect constitutional change of some kind in 41, see Low (forthcoming), which makes some of these points at greater length. See also the important discussion of Wiseman (1991).

This attempt to change the system by which imperial Rome was governed seems to have been unique in the principate's history. It is highly likely that Tacitus would have described what happened in some detail, but it also seems probable that his presentation of it would have been especially arch in the light of the way in which Rome's transition from republic to empire is presented in Books 1-6. Not only does he show that the principate's republican façade was hollow, and concealed (increasingly poorly) an autocracy, but he makes clear that people who thought that leading figures might be inclined to restore the republic were mistaken. The aftermath of Caligula's death would have allowed him to hone further that sense of hypocrisy and delusion. In the first hexad he stresses Germanicus' status as an embodiment of the principate rather than a would-be republican, and suggests that various late-republican figures are more appropriately linked to the principate than to the system that preceded it. Accordingly it seems probable that he would have cast doubt on the motives of at least some of those who sought to reinstitute republicanism in 41, especially at the point when alternative imperial candidates came forward.⁹ Moreover, his earlier implications about the continuities between the late republic and the principate, and about the propensity for civil war to result in rule by one man, do not suggest that he believed it would have been possible to effect a return to the republic. Even if Tacitus did treat the conspirators sympathetically, it seems unlikely that he would have represented their aspirations as anything more than naive: he may have relished, for example, describing how the consul Saturninus makes a stirring speech in favour of liberty while wearing a ring that bears the emperor's image (it is then smashed: see Jos., *AJ* 19.185).¹⁰

⁹ Still, would these have been cast as *capaces imperii*, and did Tacitus speculate about the possibility of an alternative to the Julio-Claudian dynasty that they afforded?

¹⁰ Tacitus may too have noted that the urban cohorts, to whom the consuls give the watchword '*libertas*', did not exist under the republic (Wiseman (1991) 80). His treatment of the Pisonian conspiracy at 15.48-71, even though it did not seek to restore the republic (this possibility is explicitly excluded at 15.52.3), may

The pivotal role played by the praetorians in selecting Claudius as emperor, meanwhile, no doubt generated echoes of their ultimate desertion of Sejanus for Macro, and Tiberius, in the lost part of Book 5, but more broadly their and the urban cohorts' involvement fits a key theme in the *Annals*: that of the gradual revelation of the power of armies to determine who becomes emperor. This was already hinted at by the mutinies, which look forward to the struggles between different imperial contenders and their legions in 69; the events of 41 presumably served to highlight the decisive position that soldiers could occupy in Rome itself, in a civil war of the kind that had not yet broken out but in due course would.¹¹ Within the *Annals* as a whole, then, the attempts to restore the republic after Caligula's assassination are likely to have served as dramatic punctuation. Tacitus' account would have confirmed all that he had implied in the first hexad about the irrecoverable nature of the republic and the meaninglessness of republicanism under the principate, but it would also have looked ahead to what happened subsequent to Nero's death, when no one seems to have even considered abolishing the principate.¹²

So after several chapters that were, presumably, devoted to the turmoil that followed Caligula's assassination, the beginning of Claudius' reign would have been described. In the extant text, the new emperor's passivity and his manipulation by his wives and freedmen are dominant elements, while both Tacitus and other sources stress his poor relations with the senate, which may have been aggravated by the circumstances of his accession: his attempts to secure his position are likely to have featured in the early part of the Claudian narrative, which would also have encompassed Scribonianus' revolt.

hint at his presentation of the events of 41: it highlights individual heroism, sometimes in unexpected places, but is generally harsh in its assessment of the conspirators' chances. cf. O'Gorman (2006) 286-8.

¹¹ Illustrated by the struggle between Galba and Otho for the favour of soldiers in Rome at *H.* 1.23-51 (note 1.46.1, *omnia deinde arbitrio militum acta*); cf. *H.* 1.80-2. cf. p. 51 above and, again, Pelling (1993) 69.

¹² Syme (1958b) 256 suggests that Caligula's death would have been at the end of Book 8, so it would not have marked the middle of the work (unless, perhaps, there were sixteen and not eighteen books: cf. *id.* 686-7), but it would have been close to it.

In 43, however, Claudius undertook an invasion of Britain, and it has been speculated that this would have served as ‘a climax or turning-point in the narration – and perhaps in [his] reign.’¹³

The other British episodes in the *Annals*, the war against the Silures that sees the capture of the heroic Caractacus (12.31-40) and the further hostilities that include Boudicca’s revolt (14.29-39), provide something of a contrast to the situation in Rome,¹⁴ even if that only serves to highlight the oppression and lack of freedom at the heart of the empire. Other accounts of Claudius’ invasion (Suet., *Div. Clau.* 17; Dio 60.19-21), however, suggest that Tacitus’ own narrative may not have been especially rich in such stirring material.¹⁵ They stress the ludicrous aspects of the emperor’s actions, which Tacitus may well have used to enhance his own less than admiring portrait of Claudius:¹⁶ the desire for military glory that made him choose Britain as a location for a triumph almost at random (*Div. Clau.* 17.1), the soldiers’ mocking reaction to his freedman Narcissus’ attempt to induce them to cross the Channel (Dio 60.19.2-3; cf. the depiction of Polyclitus at 14.39.1-2), the fact that the capable commander Aulus Plautius was instructed to summon the emperor in the event of serious resistance (Dio 60.21.1-2). It also seems plausible that Tacitus described the campaign in terms that archly echoed the activities of Julius Caesar in Britain and indeed played on the fact that the less than warlike Claudius had surpassed his predecessor Caesar’s relatively modest incursions on British soil.¹⁷

¹³ Syme (1958b) 260, who suggests that it may have been placed at the end of Book 9. See nn. 25 and 26 of Chapter 5 for the problems experienced by Claudius as emperor, and for Scribonianus n. 46 of Chapter 1.

¹⁴ See n. 3 above and Malloch (2009) 120-2 for discussions, and cf. again Clarke (2001) on the *Agricola*.

¹⁵ Dio’s account singles out no especially heroic Britons, in comparison with his presentation of Boudicca at 62.2-7, which is much more ornate than Tacitus’ at 14.35; Suetonius is also terse, and at *Agr.* 13.4-5 Tacitus’ own reference to Claudius’ expedition is strikingly – no doubt tellingly – brief. It is preceded by a note about Caligula’s abortive British campaign, which no doubt also featured in the *Annals*.

¹⁶ Dickison (1977) considers the comic overtones in Tacitus’ extant account of Claudius’ principate.

¹⁷ See Caes., *BG* 4.20-38, pp. 208-11 above on Tacitus’ use of the *BG* in *Annals* 3, and Morgan (1994) 113-17 on *H.* 1.61-70. See also n. 69 of Chapter 1 on Germanicus, and note how that at 11.20.1 Claudius prevents Corbulo from continuing to campaign across the Rhine (cf. however, n. 92 of Chapter 1).

The ironic potential of the British expedition seems clear, but it is worth considering whether there might have been further aspects to Tacitus' presentation. With the exception of Germanicus' campaigns in Books 1 and 2, which have in any case been seen as following on from earlier acts of warmongering against the Germans,¹⁸ it seems to have been the only discrete episode in the *Annals* that depicts the Roman conquest of new territory. Moreover, despite some early but not very costly setbacks, the Romans ultimately do reasonably well: the individual successes of the future emperor Vespasian, and one Gnaeus Hosidius Geta, are followed by a resounding Roman victory once the emperor has arrived to take charge (Dio 60.20.3-4, 21.4-5).

It seems unlikely that Tacitus would have portrayed the British resistance in the way that he presented the foreign rebels in Books 1-4; if the episode resembles any part of the first hexad, it may be the brief rebellion of the Cietae at 6.41.1 (pp. 236-9 above). But just as that event, even though it demonstrated Roman martial prowess, was offset by the wider Roman narrative, so the expedition to Britain is likely to have presented a striking contrast with events in Rome itself. Tacitus almost certainly followed Suetonius in particular in detailing Claudius' elaborate triumph, apparently out of all proportion to the campaign itself (*Div. Clau.* 17.2-3, Dio 60.23), in which he went as far as to affix a naval crown to his Palatine house, *traiecti et quasi domiti Oceani insigne* (*Div. Clau.* 17.3). The emperor thus seems to have presented himself as a conqueror of the known world, and beyond, and attempted to show by his triumph that he was continuing the grand martial traditions of Rome's past: once again, Tacitus may have implicitly compared him with Julius Caesar.

Such claims, however, were hardly justified: there was plenty of fighting left for the Romans in Britain, as Tacitus had already shown in the *Agricola* (and even the results

¹⁸ On the German campaigns see n. 56 of Chapter 1.

of that did not last, as *perdomita Britannia et statim missa* at *H.* 1.2.1 admits). Claudius' triumph would have been easy for the historian to subvert,¹⁹ but it can also be speculated that in the text it would have represented a further recurrence of a theme that this thesis has repeatedly identified in Books 1-6: *metus hostilis*, and what happens when it fails. Tacitus may have hinted that Claudius' extension of the empire by fighting foreign enemies was a final effort to recreate *metus hostilis* and return to Rome's great, and internally untroubled, past. But the Tiberian hexad depicts Romans and foreigners engaging in similar attempts to turn back time, and failing, on several occasions (see pp. 55-6, 209-12 and 271-4 above); readers are unlikely to have expected Claudius to be any more successful, and indeed he was not.²⁰ His reign was marked by strife with his subjects and indeed in his own family, as Agrippina schemed to ensure her son Nero would become the next emperor: there is a case for seeing the Claudian books as an extension of the 'civil war within the principate'.²¹ Not only that, but at the end of Nero's own principate a real civil war broke out – at last.

These speculations offer a modest preview of how the approach taken in the preceding five chapters – which have sought to integrate readings of Tacitus' representations of foreign peoples into a study of the Tiberian books as a whole, and to consider the interaction between Romans and non-Romans in the light of Rome's republican and imperial history – might be extended to complement pre-existing studies of the later books of the *Annals*. There are numerous further reflections of Romans and

¹⁹ This celebration of a less than major northern victory may have been made to recall Pompey's extravagant triumph after his wide-ranging eastern campaigns (Pliny, *NH* 7.97).

²⁰ Tacitus may well have noted that the Britons were not unified and independent but divided under warring kings (Dio 60.20.2), although they do subsequently unite before being defeated (60.21.1). Could this have been yet another mirrored illustration of the failure of *metus hostilis*?

²¹ cf. nn. 4 and 13 above and p. 30. The fate of Britannicus (13.15.3-5), named for his father's victories, was perhaps symbolic of their only transient importance.

foreigners, past and present and future, selves and others, to be discerned in the text. The mirror of Tacitus continues to draw our gaze.

Appendix I: verbal parallels between the mutinies in *Histories 1* and *Annals 1* (cf. p. 49 above)

<p><i>flagrantibus iam militum animis velut faces...</i> (H. 1.24.1)</p> <p><i>motas iam mentes</i> (H. 1.26.1)</p> <p><i>exosculari Othonis manum</i> (H. 1.45.1)</p> <p><i>infructuosam et asperam militiam</i> (H. 1.51.2)</p> <p><i>nullo...pro Galba nitente</i> (H. 1.55.4)</p> <p><i>lymphatis caeco pavore animis</i> (H. 1.82.1)</p> <p><i>deiecti in terram militum vultus ac plus tristitiae quam paenitentiae</i> (H. 1.82.2)</p> <p><i>...optimus quisque remedium praesentis licentiae posceret, vulgus et plures seditionibus et ambitioso imperio laeti per turbas et raptus facilius ad civile bellum impellerentur</i> (H. 1.83.1) [cf. also H. 1.51.1-1-2 on the German legions' preference for plundering over regular service, and for the relaxed conditions brought by civil war]</p> <p>More generally, <i>licentia</i> bookmarks the Pannonian and German mutinies, occurring at A. 1.16.1 and 1.49.2, and in the same sense it is found repeatedly in <i>Histories 1</i>, generally applied to Otho's soldiers.</p>	<p><i>flagrantior inde vis, plures seditioni duces</i> (A. 1.22.1)</p> <p><i>percussae semel mentes</i> (A. 1.28.2)</p> <p><i>per speciem exosculandi inseruerunt digitos</i> (A. 1.34.2) [<i>exosculari</i> here links Otho and Germanicus (and its only other use in Tacitus, at H. 2.49.3, is also of the former), although the soldiers' attitude to their commander in each case is rather different]</p> <p><i>militiam...infructuosam</i> (A. 1.17.4)</p> <p><i>sed Germanicus...pro Tiberio niti</i> (A. 1.34.1) [cf. Ross (1973) 214 on how A. 1.33 has not roused the expectation that Germanicus will make such an effort.]</p> <p><i>lymphati dstrictis gladiis</i> (A. 1.32.1)</p> <p><i>deiectis in terram oculis velut paenitentia</i> (A. 1.34.1)</p> <p><i>...mutatus princeps licentiam turbarum et ex civili bello spem praemiorum ostendebat</i> (A. 1.16.1)</p>
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