Thesis Approved

By

L. V. Jacks, Ph.D., Major Adviser

Raymond Walsh, M.D. Dean
COMPARISON BETWEEN THE HISTORIES OF TACITUS AND
SUETONIUS IN THEIR TREATMENT OF THE EMPEROR TIBERIUS

BY
GEORGE JOHN SZENLER

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"History concerns itself with the complex, unique evolution of man in his activities as a social being. It begins with the first traces of social life and will end only when society itself disappears from earth. Before knowledge can be thought, it must be written... and if it is to be valuable, it must be full, detailed and above all exact", writes Professor Fling in his book The Writing of History, giving a definition which could be generally accepted in the conglomeration of historical writings in world literature.

It is easy to say that history in itself is a science, but difficult to compare with chemistry, mathematics, or physics. "For one reason, these sciences are strictly impersonal, while history is violently personal; stars and planets have no loves and hates, while men do."

This personal element is one of the most important factors for a historian. He is obliged to conduct careful research in order to see clearly his evidence and "it is his duty to form judgements, but even


more his duty to avoid prejudging the evidence."^3

To evaluate the Roman historians according to this pattern is very difficult. In their time, history-writing had reasons, which were the writer's own. Caesar's description of *The Gallic Wars* is largely an effort to justify his own deeds; Sallust intended to obtain literary recognition; Suetonius furnished eminent gossip to the populace of Rome in the form of history, while Livy and Tacitus, great patriots and admirers of their country's greatness, tried to show the whole world the Roman super-man.

Their works were read by the well-educated circles of contemporary times. It is natural that they had to be careful in their literary form, especially in selecting the most effective plot and preparing the readers emotionally to accept the reasoning, which was often prejudiced and thus often far from the objective historical truth. Their "style" is still an outstanding study for both historians and literary people. Their work consists of more than the rotation of selected vocabulary or certain forms, for it encloses a manifestation of the inner thinking of the writer. Reading them, we can see clearly the evidence of the statement, "You are really what you write, for you write what you are."

^3Ibid., p. 43.
The problem of this paper is one of the most controversial in Roman history. My work is mostly based on two authors: Tacitus and Suetonius. Their trustworthiness is frequently questionable. Their histories are not "full, detailed, and exact", and the picture they paint of the Emperor Tiberius is too heavily emphasized on the bad side.
CHAPTER I

PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY OF CORNELIUS TACITUS

The person who reads Tacitus has the feeling that he wrote an interesting historical novel, but not a scientific work. To accept his word that he writes "sine ira ac studio", would be rash and unfounded, unless one knew his mentality and the governing factors of his life.

Few facts are known about his early life. According to Pliny, we could assume that he lived during the years around 54 or 55 to 120 A.D., and that his parents were well-to-do aristocrats. It is certain that he had a complete education in Rhetoric and was active as a public speaker until his middle age.

This training leaves a tremendous imprint on all his works. He uses short, abrupt sentences, just as though he were trying to make an impression on the soul of his listeners. He does not work always with weapons of the mind, rather wants to convince his listeners through emotion. (I would like to draw a comparison here between Tacitus and Cesar Franck, the great French composer and organist whose most beautiful works show that the composer was primarily an organist; for example, his violin sonatas.)

4 Tacitus, Annales, I. 1.

5 Tacitus, Dialogus de Oratoribus, II.
Tacitus succeeded also in gaining successively the usual offices in the government until he reached the consulate. 6

As a member of the highest Roman society, he was a truly intelligent specimen of his people. He had a keen mind, cynical in certain ways but full of human emotions. He was not perfectly in agreement with the imperium. "Igitur verso civitatis statu nihil usquam prisci et integri moris; omnes exuta aequalitate iussa principis aspecte, nulla in praesens formindine, dum Augustus aetate validus seque et donum et pacem sustentavit, postquam.... aderatque finis et spes novae psuci bone libertatis in essum disserere..." 7 He desired in the depths of his soul the great liberty and freedom of the old Republic, but he knew he could not alter existing conditions. He says it is necessary to unify the power in the hands of only one. 8 In other respects he is sure that the idea of the Principate can be reconciled with that of political liberty. 9

Actually this was his main reason for writing his history. He wanted to arouse the feelings of the Roman people from the depressive depth of immorality, and the careless, impassive attitude toward public matters, by citing examples of their glorious past:

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7Tacitus, Annales, I. 4.
8Tacitus, Hist. I. 1.
9Tacitus, De Vita Agricolae, III.
and the careless, impassive attitude toward public matters, by citing examples of their glorious past:

"Exequi sententias haud institui nisi insignes per honestum aut notabili dedecore, quod praeepuum munus annalium reor, ne virtutes sileantur, utque pravis dictis factisque ex posteritate et infamia metus sit."\(^{10}\)

To emphasize his aim he confesses a sound religious belief, and underlines it more when he says:

"Neque mala vel bona, quae vulgus putet: multos, qui... adversarils videantur, beatos, at plerosque, quamquam magnas per opes, miserrimos, si illi gravem fortunam constanter tolerent, hi prospera inconsulte utantur."\(^{11}\)

He knows that the gods are above, and that they direct the fate in everything.\(^{12}\) He is sure that the deities have to hold the most precious place in life of an individual and the empire.\(^{13}\)

On the other hand, he uses both rationalistic and emotional methods in constructing his theme, in order to arouse the feelings of his readers.

Right at the beginning of the *Annales* he launches into the whole history of Rome, recalling facts

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\(^{10}\) Tacitus, *Annales*, III. 65.

\(^{11}\) Ibid., VI. 22.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., IV. 1.

\(^{13}\) Tacitus, *Hist.* III. 72.
which he takes for granted that everyone knows.\textsuperscript{14} The contrast, which he effects in showing the character of the new emperor in the following chapter is an intelligent approach to solving his problem, for the reader is forced to make a comparison between Tiberius and the ancient Roman leaders.\textsuperscript{15} Emphasis upon the bad qualities in Tiberius' character and the purposeful avoidance of any elaborate discussion of good points, shows that Tacitus was conscientiously preparing for the climax of his story and always had his original motive in mind while writing.

On the other hand, Germanicus appears as the champion of the soldiers, outstanding in intelligence and simplicity — well suited in his heroic deeds to personalize the ancient Roman ideal, for he is placed in the light of the best positive qualities against Tiberius.

An historian with an objectively searching mind could not have any prejudice, not even against his mortal enemy. But still it is true that objective thinking, or writing without any prejudice, is one of the most difficult things, if not even impossible.

Tacitus can laugh cynically at the "...patres, quibus unus metus, si intelligere viderentur, in questus

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Annales}, I. 1. 2. 3.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, I. 4.
lacrimas vota effundi ..." and if he wants, he can be strikingly logical while not accepting the superstitious beliefs about the coincidence of the birth and death date of Augustus.

The form of the whole work shows the extraordinary skill of the "Writer". He organizes the material in a certain way, so that there is never a vacuum of interest between the different scenes; the reader is bound to the fascinating story, and actually this is what Tacitus wants primarily.

But we have to investigate our problem from another point of view, since no author could ever create anything great in literature, in the line of music or even moving pictures, unless he himself fully understood and felt the emotions which he wants his readers to feel in his work.

Tacitus is a master in this matter. A reader can scarcely recognize the fact, that his feelings are the same as the writer's.

His favorite hate is Tiberius. The writer tries to be impartial, especially in showing that the subject was humble and reluctant to accept titles and honors.

16 Ibid., I. 11.
17 Ibid., I. 9.
that in the beginning his government was just—but the description is short when compared to the lengthy mention of the "majestas" trials, and Tiberius' cruelty in the last years of his life.

The psychoanalysis he gives about Tiberius is correct, although he is not able to draw the conclusion that the emperor's actions can be easily explained by the circumstances. I will leave this matter for now, for I would like to talk of it in one of the following chapters.

In general, Tacitus shows a warm heart, as in the description of the wounded and crippled soldiers, "... et quidam prensa manu ejus per speciem exosculandi inseruerunt digitos, ut vacua dentibus ora contingeret; alii curvata senio membra ostendebant..."

"Ut seditionem attigit, ubi modestia militaris...quo centuriones exegissent, rogitans, nudant universi corpora, cicatrices ex vulneribus, verberum notas exprobrant..." and he cannot leave out a chance for a joke..."et miles ... strictum obtulit gladium, addito auctiorem esse."22

To make a scene more dramatic he uses superstition mixed with sentimental religiosity, "Illic signa

19Ibid., IV. 6.7.
20Ibid., VI. 51.
21Ibid., I. 34, 35.
22Ibid., I. 35.
et aquilam amplexus religione sese tutabatur, ac ni aquilifer Calpurnius vim extremam arcuisset, rerum etiam inter hostes, legatus populi Romani Romanis in castris sanguine suo altaria deum commaculavisset."23

The psychologist, "the knower of the human heart", writes, and not the historian, as he explains Germanicus’ private troubles; the dismissal of Agrippina, his wife: "Incedebat muliebre et miserabile agmen, profuga duxis uxor, parvulum sinu filium gerens, lamentates circum amicorum conjuges, quae simul trahebantur, nec minus tristes qui manebant."24

But Tacitus solves the problem, for the story has its happy ending, and the reader is content that the hero Germanicus came out of the trouble, because of his wits and intelligence.25

The speech of Germanicus deepens the effect: "Non mihi uxor aut filius patre et re publica cariores sunt, sed illum quidem sua maestas, imperium Romanum ceteri exercitus defendent..." - "... si mihi coniugem et filium redditis, discedite a contactu ac dividite turbidos; id stabile ad paenitentiam, id fidei vinculum erit."26

23Ibid., I. 39.
24Ibid., I. 40.
25Ibid., I. 33–45.
26Ibid., I. 42, 43.
Naturally, the speech is Tacitus' own. He could not have had any information of a speech of this kind, and so exactly. But the effect is marvelous. The passage still offers interesting reading material today— but whether it has any historical value or not remains questionable.

Our author seems to be fairly well informed in military matters, although he does not explain the historically important factors of the Roman-German encounters, but rather particular problems of the life, hardships, thoughts, opinions of the legions and their leaders.27

To sum up the character of Tacitus, we are sure that he is open-minded, or, more accurately, open-hearted. He never tries to mask his feelings, even though they are frequently varying.

"He appears to us as a cold, aristocratic Roman who sees everything in the dark... We feel that he looked into the depth of the human heart ... and is apt to think only bad about his subjects ... upon his whole exposition... he places a (kind of) melancholy ..."28

This, then, is the explanation of why his characters are either too good or too bad— according to his own judgement. He often approaches his problems subjectively, reading imaginary characteristics into his-

27 Ibid., I. 50. 70. 71.

torical personages in order to draw puritanical conclu-
sions, and this is why we wonder if he wrote a really
true account of historical facts.

For a writer of history, the critical selection
of his sources of information, and their evaluation is
one of the most important things.

Tacitus made use of two types of information:
(1) remains, (2) tradition.29

In the Annales he names Caius Pliny30 and
Agrippina, the mother of the Emperor Nero31 as his in-
formants. (He mentions also Pliny, Cluvius Fabius
Rusticus32 and Corbulo.33)

In comparison with other authors we see many
occurrences remarkably similar to those in Suetonius
and Dio Cassius, and we can only suspect that their
sources were the same.

29Fling, Op. Cit., p. 44.
30Tacitus, Annales, I. 69.
31Ibid., IV. 53.
32Ibid., XIII. 20.
33Ibid., XV. 16.
It is a curious thing that Tacitus and Plutarch are almost the same in their account of Otho and Galba. "Bestimmtere Schlusserfolgerungen für die Quellenfrage schien die Betrachtung des Verhältnisses Zwischen Tacitus und Plutarch (für Galba und Otho) zu gewähren, erstreckende Übereinstimmung wurde die richtige Erklärung aufgestellt, dass beide aus einer gemeinsamen Quelle schöpfen..." - Further - this points out - that Tacitus in using the same source, gives to the material an easily readable form, and a certain unalienable charm.34

In the second place, he often makes only general remarks about his information. It is either written testimony of historians unknown to us, or oral tradition of many people. Naturally, the accuracy of those reports is different depending on the reliability of the individual.

1. Ann. I.1. "...sed veteris populi Romani prospera vel adversity claris scriptoribus memorata sunt..."
2. Ann. I.31 "... vix quicquam firmare ausim; adeo diversa non modo apud auctores..."
3. Ann. III.3. "... non apud auctores rerum..."
4. Ann. III.16 "... audire me memini..."
5. Ann. IV.11 "... nullo acutore certo firmantur..."

Lastly, a very important and reliable source was for him the "acta senatus"35 and the different "acta publica"36

35Tacitus, Annales, V. 4.
36Ibid., III. 3.
which he could probably use while preparing his research material.

We can easily see from these few examples that the problem is not easy to solve, for he apparently used many sources, and it is almost impossible to point them out one by one, or to show their absolute correctness.

This is how we come to the most important question "to be asked of every historical work, which is not: Is it interesting and well written? - but - Is it true?"37

One of the most curious qualities of the human being is the unexplainable force by which he tries to direct things according to his own interests, whether they be good or bad. This is especially significant in a writer, for in case he has a strong individuality his work will be directed by his own judgment, and it is almost inevitable that he imprints the mark of his own predilection on the materials with which he works.

There is no doubt about the individual genius of Tacitus. He had the ability to form a strong opinion

about his subjects, but went often too far in their characterization. He had the intelligence to lead his readers on the same path, or just simply left them to the difficult task of choosing - but it does not mean that he conscientiously falsified the truth, which according to his knowledge was the truth.

Professor Rand says: 38 "Tacitus, I should say, is interested primarily in the psychology of popular judgments, in the ability of the human mind, or group of minds, to twist facts into agreement with one's preconceptions."

This is true enough, but Mr. Rand failed to add that Tacitus himself is the best example of one who thus twists his facts.

Tacitus looked into the heart of the people, being an emotional man who, according to the standard Roman moral code of his life, was well above average. He must have despised: (1) the principate, (2) the prince -- and glorified anybody who was just a little bit closer to his way of life (e.g. Germanicus).

But we cannot say that he does not tell the truth. As I pointed out at the very beginning - he is rather rationalistic about Tiberius - or I would say dry. Yet he leaves the facts to the free judgment of his readers, but only the facts - and he tends to place them in a bad light while omitting the good sides.

We see in the handling of Germanicus’ case exactly the opposite. The author’s tone is warm and affectionate, and the reader is actually forced to follow his way of thinking.

He handled his two favorites with prejudices, but I would say he did not do any great harm to the truth, characterizing his subjects thus.

(There is always a danger in seeing in the powerful only the good side, especially if the whole existence of a nation is in their hands. And there are only a few who can swim against the stream, who can think differently in a massive wave of misconception. My opinion is that Tacitus is one of those few.)

One of the other problems lies in errors in matters in which we can see from his own text that the facts are contradictory.

But to find the answer is not very difficult. Those errors mostly concern military questions, or descriptions of battles. Although Tacitus, at first sight, seems to be very well informed about military matters, we are sure that he does not have the practical field experience, nor an intense first-hand knowledge of theory.

His military source of information:

1. Veterans of German wars
2. Agricola
3. He himself could have seen some service but not significant enough to mention.
One could quote many of these battles from the Annales. (e.g. I.50, 56, 61, 63, 64, 66) Each is so brilliantly explained that one does not stop to think about the different possibilities of strategy. The Roman reading those passages felt only an anxiety to know if the "heroes of the story", the Roman soldiers, are winning or not.

For demonstration I am going to take only a few lines from I.63.

"Sed Germanicus cedentem in avia Arminium secutus ubi primum copia fuit, eveni equites campumque, quem hostis insederat, eripi iubet... mox signum prorumpendi dedit iis, quos per saltus occultaverat. tunc nova acie turbatus eques, missaeque subsidiariae cohortes, et fugientium agmine impulsae auxerant consternationem, trudebanturque in paludem..." - while the Germans must have been in the forest, for he writes:

"... Arminius colligi suos et propinquare silvis... per saltus occultaverat..."

We have here many problems:

1. Where is the exact location of the battle?
2. What kind of terrain was there? (He mentions forests, marshes, while there is a possibility of flatland in the vicinity.)
3. What were the exact positions of the armies?
4. How did the Romans know about the marshes? Did they have scouts ahead of them? etc...
One could put questions like this in most of the cases. And the doubt is there almost spontaneously: How much of the whole thing can one believe?

The solution is easy. For a strategist or military expert this kind of presentation is unsatisfactory. But for the masses it was enough. Naturally it is bad that we do not have accurate answers for the problems above. The fact, that there was a battle between the legions and the Germans, is enough for the history. The failure of Tacitus, giving an exact disposition or his exciting presentation, cannot be held against our historian.

Some of the most serious problems concerning the historical truth arise in comparing Tacitus and Suetonius. From the many cases investigated critically in the next part of this work, I take now only one: the controversy about the birth of Caligula.

Tacitus writes: "... in castris genitus" while Suetonius shows an incredible research about Caligula's birthplace. He explains that the date is very uncertain, for many authors are of differing opinions. He quotes Lentulus Gaetulicus, who claims that he was born at

39 Tacitus, Annales, I. 41.
Tibur; Pliny the Younger, who agrees with Tacitus and gives a definite town for the birth, Ambitarulius, in the country of the Treviri, which is in Germany; inscriptions, and the well known verses: "in castris natus, patris nutritus in armis..."\(^{40}\), but the greatest is his research, when he says: "Ego in actis Anti editum invenio."\(^{41}\)

Suetonius' criticism about the four above named sources makes his own statement absolutely evident:

"Gaetulicum refellit Plinius quasi... per adulationem -- and says that -- ante annum fere natus Germanico filius Tiburi fuerat, appellatus et ipse C. Caesar ... Plinium arguit ratio temporum, nam qui res Augusti ... mandarunt, Germanicum exacto consalatu in Galliam missum consentiunt iam nato Gaio, nec... inscriptio... cum Agrippina bis in ea regione filias enixa sit... et Augusti epistula..."\(^{42}\)

and although I cannot accept Suetonius as more trustworthy historically than Tacitus, I am obliged to follow his line of thinking in this particular question:

"Sequenda est igitur, quae sola (auctor) restat et publici instrumenti auctoritas..."\(^{43}\)

\(^{40}\)Suetonius, Cal., VIII. 1.
\(^{41}\)Ibid., VIII. 2.
\(^{42}\)Ibid., VIII. 4.
\(^{43}\)Ibid., VIII. 5.
The source of information forTacitus, Suetonius, and possibly Plutarch is the same, according to T. E. Crosg: "Sueton hat die drei Biographien des Galba, Otho, und Vitellius hauptsächlich aus der gemeinsamen Quelle des Tacitus und Plutarch, aus Tacitus selbst, und mindestens noch einem dritten Bericht zusammengestellt."[44]

It is true that "die gemeinsame Quelle" would dismiss the possibility of mistakes in reporting the facts, but:

Two people, seeing or reporting the very same thing, at the very same time, from the same source, cannot give the very same account of happenings, or the same order because their personal interests, their minds, their education is different.

To sum all this up, it is true that we are not able to establish a foolproof evidence. But after considering the difficulties we can see that they are not significant enough so that, generally taken, we should doubt the trustworthiness of Tacitus as a historian.

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C. Suetonius Tranquillus is the second author I
would like to investigate critically. I would show a re-
lation between his life, character - and philosophy of
history.

About his life our information is very limited. Just as for Tacitus, the date of his birth and death
are unknown; only through circumstantial evidence given
in his works and in some of the letters of Pliny the
Younger, do we suppose that he lived between the years
about 75 and 160 A.D.

According to his own testimony, his father,
Suetonius Laetus, was "tertiae decimae legionis
tribunus angusticlaviius", but we are in the dark
about his educational background. We can follow some
of the general aspects of his life from Pliny. It was
possible that he held some offices in Rome, and it
is easy to see that his literary activity was well known,
since Pliny calls him "scholasticus", and urges him to
publish his writings. From the correspondence to Tra-
jan we discover that he had no family of his own, since
Hadrian gives him permission to the "ius trium liber-
orum". Mr. H.J. Roby explains that in his book
Roman Private Law:

45Suetonius, Otho., X. 1.
46C. Pliny, I. XVIII.
47Ibid., I. XXIV.
48Ibid., V. X.
"The grant of the privileges by the Papian law to the parentage of three or more children was sometimes made to individuals on petition." But what privilege this grant meant for Suetonius, we do not know.

How he had the means for living is a problem. We cannot be far from the truth if we suppose that he had some money of his own, although it could not have amounted to much.

In order to study his character we have to turn to his writings, since the meager sources about our author's life show only unimportant factors about his inner thoughts, desires, etc...

Throughout his work Suetonius shows himself a man of average intelligence, an emotionless, cold person, with the attitude of a newspaper reporter who is dispatched on duty with the local morals squad. The collecting of every kind of information must have filled his life, but he lacked the power of concentration and abstraction necessary to digest this material and to draw a conclusion of his own. The lack of philosophical background is evident, and the report-like presentation of his material resembles the style of a public speaker. This is one of the reasons why I state that his education was short and incomplete.

The absolute disregard for the moral code in describing the filth of the emperor's private life could be explained in the following terms:

1. Suetonius was an outspoken man, who was not afraid to tell the truth;

2. According to the Roman standard in his time, immorality was a very common occurrence especially in imperial circles, and his indulgence in describing it might be a sign of the laxity of his moral principles.

His works, especially the "Lives of the Caesars," are merely a collection of material without critical or independent divisions.

He follows a certain pattern, shown best in his second book:

"Propositae vitae eius velut summa parte(s) singilatim neque per tempora sed per species exequar, quo distinctius demonstrari cognoscique possint,"50

or: "Quoniam qualis in imperis ac magistratibus regendaque ... re p. (publica) fuerit, exposui, referam nunc interiorem ac familiarem eius vitam quibusque moribus atque fortuna domi et inter suas egerit a iuventa usque ad supremum vitae diem."51

On the other hand, they are lacking a picture of historical evolution, and the reader is in the dark about the governing factors of the time. It is true that he actually did not intend to write a history,

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50Suetonius, Divus Augustus, IX.
51Ibid., LIX.
since the name of his greatest work is *Vita Caesarum*, but even to call it biography would be too much, for according to Mr. Schanz's definition: "... (Das) organische Wachstum einer Persönlichkeit auf Grund einer gegebenen Naturanlage..." Suetonius never understood the motives and the force of circumstances in the life of any of his subjects.

Actually, it would not be difficult to classify him as a man of Philistine qualities with a hobby for collecting information about great men, in order to produce something memorable, worthy.

But the natural question would be: what were the motives which forced Suetonius for his rather excessive literary activity?

It is very difficult to say, since he fails to mention any reasons and we are forced to draw a conclusion from the general tone of his writings.

Analysis of his character points to the possibility that Suetonius had a great ambition - which subconsciously governed his actions - to gain recognition as an intellect, a scholar, and writer. He united very good qualities which are all necessary in a good writer: desire to do research, style in writing; but these qualities were insufficient, for in the fight of

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his mediocrity to reach an intellectual height, he never became victorious. This desire on one hand, and the failure on the other to express a personal opinion, even if it is prejudiced, causes one to doubt the historical reliability of his writings.

Still it is too early to come to a conclusion without a knowledge of his source-material and the sincerity with which he treats his subjects.

Suetonius, like Tacitus, used two kinds of information: 1. remains; 2. tradition. He must have read everything he could obtain. He names numerous known authors and others whose works are lost to us, in the first part of the Vitae, e.g., Asinius Pollio, Cornelius Nepos, Hirtius, Oppius, Titus Amp(r)ius, Naso, Julius Marathus, Lucius

54 Suetonius, Julius Caesar, XXX LV.
55 Suetonius, Divus Augustus, LVII.
56 Julius Caesar, LVI.
57Ibid., LXXVII.
58Ibid., LII.
59Suetonius, Divus Augustus, LXXIX.
Saturninus. He studied very intensively the biographies and personal writing of the Emperors, even the originals. He quotes Cicero in connection with Julius Caesar, and it is certain that he used the "acta publica". On the other hand, he sometimes speaks loosely about his source: "alii... dicunt,... vulgo praedicarent..., quidam... putant..." 

In his more contemporary works, he received more readily the testimony of people who had seen, heard, or heard said, various things; and since it was either first-hand, or very closed to first-hand information, it was priceless, "Ipse ne vestigium quidem de hoc, quamvis satis curiose inquirerem, inveni;" or "nec quicquam ultra... repperi..." or "alii aliam et quidem diversissimam tradunt..."

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60 Suetonius, Julius Caesar, XII.
61 Suetonius, Divus Augustus, LXXVII.
62 Suetonius, Julius Caesar, XXX.
63 Ibid., XXX, p. 15.
64 Suetonius, Div. Vesp. I.
65 Suetonius, Div. Aug. II.
66 Suetonius, Div. Vit. I.
Naturally, an individual investigation of those sources would have been necessary, since the reliability depends greatly on the character of the person. Suetonius picked up without distinction every kind of rumor or the smallest bit of news which he thought could be useful for his work.

About the influence of Tacitus, I have already pointed out in the previous chapter that it is possible that their source of information is the same, although there is no absolute proof for the matter.

The question naturally follows now: How seriously can we take Suetonius? Is his writing "full, exact, and detailed?"

To answer that question, I would like to show some examples of the problems which occur in his writings:

1. Suetonius handles his information with indifference except in a few cases in the last part of the Lives of the Caesars: "... ego per adulatores... imperatoris Vitelli evenisse opiniar, nisi aliquanto prius de familia condicione varium esset..." 67 His sincerity is genuine most of the time (as in the description of Tiberius' escapades before he became emperor.) 68

But a painfully meticulous collection of material without the expression of any personal opinion does

67 Ibid.
68 Suetonius, Tiberius, XLII.
not necessarily mean that he falsified the facts. It might be an excellent indication of his intelligence - or even of his carefulness. This is why one cannot see any justification for doubting that he ever willfully falsified the information he received. Naturally his fault lies in the careless method which he employed in writing this information down. Here one is inclined to think that he accepted floating tales, and gossip, which were either false or contained only an insignificant part of the truth, and this is why a great part of his story is not acceptable.

2. His ignorance about the wars at the frontiers makes the Lives of the Caesars incomplete, and we are indebted to Tacitus and Dio Cassius for furnishing us with the necessary facts.

3. If we compare him with Tacitus, some problems arise, since their reports are different in certain passages. I would like to take two examples only, for in the following chapter my aim is a constant comparison between the two authors.

a. In the description of the mutiny of Germanicus' legions, Suetonius claims that Caligula was the final reason that the mutiny stopped: "Apud quos quantum... amore et gratia valuerit, maxime cognitum est, cum post excessum Augusti tumultuantis et in fureorem usque praecipites solus haud dubie ex conspectu
Tacitus gives a very elaborate, but somewhat different account of the happenings and writes that Germanicus' wife was the reason that the mutiny collapsed, and also the child in her hands for the soldiers' attitude changed at their sight: "... feminas inlustres, non centurionem ad tutelam, non militem... pudor inde et miseratio et patris Agrippae, Augusti avi memoria... ipsa insigni fecunditate, praeclara pudicitia..."70

The difference, though not great, is still significant. It shows the carelessness of Suetonius.

b. Another occurrence is the characterization of L. Domitius. The matter is rather important, not only because he was the grandfather of Nero, and well known in the German campaign, but also for showing the difference in mentality of our two authors. Tacitus mentions him first as an excellent engineer - officer: "Augustus is trames vastas inter paludes et quondam a L. Domitio aggeratus",71 and next as a proud Roman nobleman, and says nothing about his bad qualities:

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69 Suetonius, Caligula, IX.
70 Tacitus, Annals, I. 41.
71 Ibid., I. 63.
"Domitium decoravit pater civili bello maris potens... post exercitu flumen Albis transcensit longius penetrata Germania, quam quisquam priorum, easque ob res insignia triumphi aedeps est."\(^72\)

Dio Cassius only underlines Tacitus' statement:

"Somewhat earlier Domitius, while still governing the districts along the Ister... had crossed the Albis, meeting with no opposition, had made a friendly alliance with the barbarians on the further side..."\(^73\)

Suetonius, on the contrary, writes down all the obscenities of Domitius' private life, not even mentioning his crossing of the River Elbe, or his political genius, topics brought out by both Tacitus and Dio:

"... Domitius... non minus aurigandi arte in adolescetia clarus quam dein deinde ornamentis triumphalibus ex Germanico bello. Verum arrogans, profusus, immitis censorem L. Plancum via sibi decedere aedilis coegit... nescens fuerit Augusto clam frustra monitum edicto coercere..."\(^74\)

This is only one of the many similar cases, but here also, as in the previous one, the difference is visible though not substantial enough to doubt that Suetonius left us a falsified history of the Caesars.

\(^{72}\)Ibid., IV. 44.

\(^{73}\)Dio, Rom. Hist., LV. 10a

\(^{74}\)Suetonius, Nero, IV.
In general we receive very much which is valuable from Suetonius' writings, but we cannot accept him as a true historian.

I was obliged to go into such a lengthy discussion in order to reach the main problem: the comparison in Tacitus' and Suetonius' treatment of the reign of the Emperor Tiberius. This would be a difficult task without knowing the authors' character, leading motives, and the trustworthiness of their writings. Their information is our fundamental source for passing a judgment about Tiberius. And while we observe that individuals without the necessary training or an intelligent mind often exaggerate certain qualities of their race or nation, there is a possibility that their treatment is inaccurate, and prejudiced in the favor of their beloved nation.

I will proceed in two chapters: "Life of Tiberius," and "Character of Tiberius" — as shown in relation with his acquaintances, and his foreign and domestic policy.

As a source of information I used the first six books of Tacitus' Annales, and the Life of the Emperor Tiberius by Seutonius. I would like to quote Dio Cocceianus Cassius' very reliable Roman History and Vellius Paterculus' work Ad M. Vinicium, especially in cases where it seems doubtful which of our two historians is trustworthy.
CHAPTER XI
Life of Tiberius

According to Suetonius, Tiberius was born on the sixteenth of November, in about the year 39 B.C. But he himself is not very sure of this statement, for he brings testimony of "other writers" and claims that one year difference on either side is very possible.

Nevertheless, this date would be in accordance with both Tacitus' and Dio's testimony, who claim, in giving his death date, that he lived and died "seventy-eight years", or exactly "seventy-seven years, four months, and nine days."

The information about his early childhood is very limited, and found mostly in the writing of Suetonius, but even without any other proof it is difficult to doubt his words: "Infantis pueritiamque habuit laboriosam et exercitatem..." His father, I. Claudius Nero, and his mother, Livia Drusilla, came from a long line of nationally known patrician families, and probably he received an excellent edu-

75 Suetonius, Tiberius, V.
76 Tacitus, Annales, VI. 51.
77 Dio, Rom. Hist., LVIII. 28. 5.
78 Suetonius, Tiberius, VI.
79 Ibid., I.
cation, although it is very questionable "that he indeed delivered a funeral oration at his father's burial." A similar occurrence is reported by Suetonius in Augustus' life which only underlines the truth of the above passage.

His connection with Augustus began very early in his life, since Augustus "divorced Scribonia (his second wife, the third according to Suetonius) - the very day she bore him a daughter" - and married Livia, Tiberius' mother.

Dio writes that this happened in the year 39 B.C. and so Julia, Augustus' daughter, Tiberius' later wife, must have been actually the same age as Tiberius.

Another difficulty arises about his age, when Suetonius reports that he was supposed to ride the left-hand horse in front of the chariot of Augustus triumphantly returning from Actium. The battle of Actium was in the year 31 B.C.; so Tiberius could not have been more than nine years old, if I take 40 B.C. as the earliest possible limit of his birth-year.

At this time Augustus' greatest problem was the question of the succession. He did not have a son, and

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80 Ibid., VI.
81 Suetoniius, Div. Aug., VIII.
82 Ibid., LXII.
83 Dio, Rom. Hist., LXVIII. 34.
84 Suetonius, Tib. VI.
his daughter Julia was purposefully used as a factor in uniting by family ties the emperor-elect, chosen by Augustus, with the family of the Caesars. The first was Claudius Marcellus, his sister's son — report both Tacitus\textsuperscript{85} and Suetonius\textsuperscript{86} — then Marcus Agrippa after the death of Marcellus.\textsuperscript{87} At this point Suetonius overlooks an important point, for Tacitus furnishes the information that Augustus was not yet ready to accept his stepson Tiberius as a successor. He took the children of Agrippa, Caius and Lucius, into the house of the Caesars, named them "principes iuventutis", and everyone rightly supposed that they were designed as the rulers following Augustus.\textsuperscript{88} But both of them died, and no one but Tiberius remained.

This is the point where the stories of Suetonius and Tacitus meet in their continuation. "Nero (Tiberius) solus a privignis erat."\textsuperscript{89} "Tiberium privignum suum elegit..."\textsuperscript{90} Two scenes are described here in the works of our authors which are actually very important to show some of the influential factors in Tiberius' life:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{85}Tacitus, Ann. I. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{86}Suetonius, Div. Aug., LXIII.
\item \textsuperscript{87}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{88}Tacitus, Annales, I. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{89}Ibid., I. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{90}Suetonius, Div. Augustus, LXIII.
\end{itemize}
namely; the possibility that Lucius and Caius were killed with Livia’s (Tiberiug’s mother) noble assistance.91 92 93 (Suetonius and Dio do mention their death only, but with complete ignorance of Tacitus’ hint.) - The other is the fact that Augustus actually forced Tiberius to divorce his pregnant wife Agrippa, the daughter of Marcus Agrippa94, whom he loved very much in order to marry Julia, his daughter.95

The way to the top for Tiberius was treacherous, difficult, and in many instances, similar to the path of dictators in ancient and modern times. His life, from his early teenage years, to this point, shows a tendency toward this final goal, but I have to turn to Suetonius for information, for Tacitus is silent about the private enterprises of the young prince before he became emperor.

The "toga virilis" put him fully into public affairs since Augustus dignified him with "imperial titles" in his early youth,96 it was easy for him to entertain the people with gladiatorial plays honoring the death of his father and grandfather,97 at the expense of his relatives, and to be successful as a

91Tacitus, Annales, I. 3.
92Suetonius, Div. Augustus, LXIV.
94Suetonius, Tiberius, VII.
95Suetonius, Div. Aug., LXIII.
96Tacitus, Annales, I. 3.
97Suetonius, Tiberius, VII.
defense lawyer before the Senate. He became questor "five years before the regular age" in 24 B.C., then shortly after, praetor. He commenced his first consulship in 13 B.C. (with P. Quintilius Varus) and the second in 7 B.C. (with Calpurnius Gm. Piso), while in the following year Augustus "bestowed upon Tiberius the tribunician power for five years..."

The affairs of the empire were still in Augustus' hands, and Tiberius had a not very desirable position. Personal intrigue, and keen diplomatic maneuvering was necessary to reach a post and keep it. Still it was a curious thing when in 6 B.C. he silently departed to Rhodes, for studying, apparently. Some claimed he was in the way of the two oncoming princes, M. Agrippa's sons, Gaius and Lucius, and was expelled by Augustus. According to another version, it was his own decision to leave his scandalous wife behind.

His relation with his wife gives us a fine insight into the soul of Tiberius, if we can accept Suetonius' testimony. Julia's lewd character is absolutely proved by

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98 Ibid., VIII.
99 Dio, Rom. Hist., LIII.28
100 Suetonius, Tiberius, IX.
103 Suetonius, Tiberius, IX.
105 Suetonius, Tiberius, X.
Tacitus, Dio and Suetonius and it is natural that Tiberius kept the bond of marriage only because of Augustus. Still, his great love for Agrippina shows simple, noble quality which is very difficult to compromise with his later emotionally disturbed behavior. I am far from suggesting mental disturbance at this time by Tiberius, but I am certain that his forced, unhappy second marriage had led to a certain psychological unbalance at the end of his life. I will show the argument for this in the following chapter.

Finally, during Tiberius' exile Augustus "discovered that his daughter Julia was so dissolute in her conduct as actually to take part in revels and drinking bouts at night in the Forum..." and was obliged to banish her to the island of Panda-teria. Tiberius returned to Rome after eight years, in 4 A.D., at the intervention of Julia "who had now been restored from banishment", reports Dio.

106Tacitus, Annales, I. 53., III. 24., IV. 44.
107Dio, Rom. Hist., LV. 10
Suetonius, Tib., VII., X.
108Ibid., VII.
109Tacitus, Annales, VI. 1.
110Suetonius, Tib., XLIII.
112Ibid.
113Suetonius, Div. Aug., LXV.
So Augustus, who did not have any other alternative but Tiberius as a successor, designed him as a "filius, collega imperii, consors tribuniciae potestatis..." the man of the future.

This could easily mean that Julia's charges were revoked, and she was allowed to return.Tacitus, contrary to Dio, writes agreeing with Suetonius, that Tiberius never recalled her, and she died after fourteen years of exile.116

Evidence given by other authors is slightly different, although it amounts to the same: "... lege... lata, ut provincias cum Augusto communiter administraret simulque censum augeret..." - writes Suetonius.117

He speaks only about the provinces, nothing about a full voice in reigning. "Taking census" might mean anything, but we are not very far from "potestas tribunicia." Velleius' words could be accepted as a hint for the same problem: "Eadem virtus et fortuna subsequenti tempore ingressi Germaniam imperatoris Tiberi fuit, quae initio fuerat..."118

He was very active in military matters, for a nobleman of his time had only two roads to glory and honor—either in political life or in the military field.

115Tacitus, Annales, I. 3.
116Ibid., I. 52.
Suetonius, Tib., I.
117Ibid., XXI.
118Velleius, Pat., Hist. Rom., II. 121.
During the Cantabrian War he fought as "tribunus militum"\textsuperscript{119} then as a victorious army commander "regnum Armeniae Tigrani restituit",\textsuperscript{120} and brought back from the Parthians the standards which they captured from M. Crassus\textsuperscript{121} -- He successfully commanded his army in wars against the Alpine peoples of the Rhaetians and Vindelicians, in Pannonia against the Breuci and Dalmatians, while from Germany he forcefully evacuated 40,000 of the subjugated enemy into Gallia.\textsuperscript{122} Through these actions his fame became great and he was honored "novo nec antea cuiquam tributo genere honoris."\textsuperscript{123}

But his military genius shows only after he became "collega imperii". I have to turn to Velleius Paterculus now for, curiously enough, both Tacitus and Suetonius are vague in their account of this period. Velleius' report has an extraordinary value as first-hand information, although its historical accuracy is at times questionable, for the author's prejudice.

\textsuperscript{119} Suetonius, \textit{Tiberius}, IX.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{123} Velleius, \textit{Hist. Rom.}, II. 104.
against Tiberius is prevalent throughout the work. I would like to call the reader's attention to the fact that the following account treats of one of the most important parts of Tiberius' life, for it shows certain aspects which are fundamental to a correct psycho-analysis, contrary to Tacitus' and Suetonius' opinion.

After Tiberius was presented to the soldiers\textsuperscript{124} their overjoyed feeling at seeing him again is remarkable.\textsuperscript{125} But he did not waste time, he went at once with his legions to Germany, and in a quick campaign was victorious over the Canninefates, the Attuarii, then the Bructeri, and Cherusci. He crossed the River Weser (Visurgis) and put his winter-camp on German soil.\textsuperscript{126} In the summer of the following year, he subdued the rebellious Chauci again, then the Langobards. He crossed the Rhine River with his troops and marched as far as the upper Elbe region, and was victorious over many tribes which were mostly unknown up to that time.\textsuperscript{127} Since nothing remained in Germany to subdue except the Marcomanni, Tiberius prepared for a war against them, but a rebellion broke out in Pannonia.

\textsuperscript{125}Vell. Pat., Hist. Rom., II. 104.
\textsuperscript{126}Ibid., II. 105.
\textsuperscript{127}Ibid., II. 106.
Tiberius turned his united forces against this problem, and after two years of fighting finally subjected that whole region to the empire. Hearing the news of Varus' defeat, Tiberius returned to Rome, and, receiving new orders, crossed the Rhine River again and defeated the Cimbri and the Teutones.

While on the way to his next assignment in Illyricum he received dispatches that Augustus was dying in Nola, and wanted to see him to bequeath him the empire.

This incident is reported by both Tacitus and Suetonius. Still, in comparing the death of Augustus, which actually meant the beginning of a new era under theegis of Tiberius, the reader finds varying accounts in the two authors, which only shows their attitude toward exactness and the way in which they evaluated their information.

1. The first such instance occurs in the information about the date of the death of Augustus. The difference is a mere eight days, which however, is of importance for a writer of correct history.

128 Ibid., II. 110-116.
129 Suetonius, Tib., XVI.
130 Vell. Pat., Hist. Rom., II. 120.
131 Suetonius, Tib., XVIII
132 Vell. Pat., Hist. Rom., II. 123.
133 Tacitus, Annales, I. 5.
134 Suetonius, Tib., XXI.
Both Suetonius and Tacitus agree on the month of August; Suetonius however, claims that Augustus "Testamentum... III. Non. Apriles, ante annum et quattuor menses quam decederet, factum..." 135

According to this, he should have died on the eleventh of August. He confirms this statement: "Fuit et qui suaderet, appellationem mensis Augusti in Septembrem transferendam, quod hoc genitus Augustus, illo defunctus esset." 136

Tacitus, on the contrary: "...idem dies accepti quondam imperii princeps et vitae supremus," 137 which was very likely August nineteenth, the anniversary of his first consulship.

The date of obtaining his full power is the same by Suetonius: "In cujus ordinations Sextilem mensem e suo cognomine nuncupavit magis quam Septembrem quo erat natus, quod hoc sibi et primus consulatus... et insignes victoriae optigissent," 138—but he does not mention the accidental occurrence of the same date of his death.

Dio Cassius confirms Tacitus' statement, giving the exact day of his birth: "οὐ̓ν ἐν ἑγαγαζΣης κατηγένεσθαι τοῦ Αὐγουστοῦ" 139 "the day on which he had first become consul, he passed away." 140

135 Suetonius, Div. Aug., CI.
136 Ibid., C.
137 Tacitus, Annales, I. 9.
139 Dio, Rom. Hist., LVI. 30.5.
140 Ibid., LVI
So in this case I am inclined to accept Tacitus rather than Suetonius.

Velleius Paterculus puts this day on the nineteenth of September: "consulatumque initit Caesar... decime Kal. Octobris" - but there is no indication whatsoever for the truth of this statement.

2. The second problem is: Was Augustus dead by the time of the meeting of Nola, or not? Tacitus is not able to decide: "...neque satis conpertum est, spirantem adhuc Augustum... an exanimem repperit." 141

Suetonius, either from lack of research, or from some not explicitly given information, or just because he needed the time element in his hand to complete "the plot of his story", is certain that Augustus talked a full day to Tiberius and was very much alive: "...iam quidem adfectum, sed tamen spirantem adhuc Augustum repperit fuitque una secreto per totum diem." 142

Velleius follows Suetonius: "Revocavit filium... commendans illi sua atque ipsius opera..." 143

Dio is sure that he was dead, and Tiberius could not see him alive: "His death, however, was not immediately made public: for Livia, fearing that as Tiberius was still in Dalmatia, there might be some uprising,

141Tacitus, Annales, I. 5.
142Suetonius, Tib., XXI.
143Velleius Pat., Hist. Rom., II. 123.
concealed the fact until he arrived..." 144 although he mentions that there are some not trustworthy authors who claim: "Tiberius was present during the Emperor's illness". 145

3. In the description of the funeral of Augustus both agree in generalities, except Tacitus claims that Tiberius was very modest in his proclamation for the occasion: "... de honoribus parentis consulturum, neque absedere a corpore idque unum ex publicis muneriibus usurpare..." 146

Suetonius, in Divus Augustus C, ignores the fact and emphasizes rather little happenings that have no bearing upon the true picture.

It is regrettable that this particular passage is missing from Dio Cassius' work, in the original source, the Codex Peirescianus in the library of Tours, published in 1634 by Henri de Valois. 147

Both in the second and the third case Tacitus is most objective, and Suetonius shows a very limited historical value only.

4. A. The last will of Augustus affords

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145 Ibid., LVI. 31. 1.
146 Tacitus, Annales, I. 7.
another controversial problem, which does not consist in the question who were the "heredes primo gradu", but rather springs from what the two authors say about the bequests to the Roman people.

Tacitus claims that he left "Populo et plebi quadringentiens triciens quinquiens".\textsuperscript{148}

Suetonius makes a distinction in the very same sum: "Legavit populo Romano quadringenties, tribubus tricies quinquies sesterclum."\textsuperscript{149}

In this case actually a very small amount of money would have been distributed among the members of the thirty-five tribes, for the greater part of this sum would have gone into the treasury. Tacitus indicates a similar occurrence during the reign of Nero: "Plebeique congiarium quadrigeni nummi viritim dati, et sestertium quadringenties aerario inlatum est."\textsuperscript{150}

Dio writes that there was a year's delay in distributing the bequests, although he recognizes the fact that "Some (authors) indeed, state that this payment was made in the previous year,"\textsuperscript{151} and is sure that every one of the people (using the word \textit{εἷς ἄνθρωπος}).

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{148} Tacitus, Annales, I. 8.
  \item \textsuperscript{149} Suetonius, Div. Aug., Cl. 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{150} Tacitus, Annales, XIII. 31.
  \item \textsuperscript{151} Dio, Rom. Hist., LVII. 14. 2.
\end{itemize}
received the sum of "two hundred and sixty sesterces apiece." 152

But if we accept the statement that the share was 260 sesterces per person, then Suetonius' statement is an error, for the sum would not have been enough for the entire population. I rather suspect that Tacitus' "plebi" stays closer to the truth, for it meant the lower class of the people, including the very poorest.

We come nearer to the correctness of Tacitus' statement if we realize that a good part of the "plebs" meant some of the well-to-do middle class people, mostly professionals, and there was a possibility that a great part of them refused the payment in order that the poor of the "plebs urbana" could have received this imperial gift.

B. In the case of the premium given to the soldiers both Suetonius and Tacitus agree153 — and Dio only underlines their statement.154

The only difficulty could be drawn from by Tacitus, who speaks about " legionariis aut cohortibus" against Suetonius' "legionaris", or Dio's "καὶ ἐκ λουτρών"

152 Ibid.
Suetonius, Div. Aug., Cl. 2.
154Dio, Rom. Hist., LVI. 32. 2.
But if we consider Tacitus' style and his desire to express everything as briefly as possible we can easily translate the passage: to the soldiers either enrolled in the legions or in the cohorts on special duty.

The political last will of Augustus was read in the Senate by Tiberius: "... proferrī libellum recitarique iussit," writes Tacitus. The contents of this "libellum" are very elaborately explained by Suetonius as written in "tribus voluminibus", but he is silent about a matter which could be very important to a student of the character of Augustus: "addideratque consilium coercendī intra terminos imperii, incertum metu, an per invidiam." This last point also shows that Tacitus used great efforts to report the facts as accurately as possible.

The second and most important part of Tiberius' life is the twenty-four years following Augustus' death. Throughout this time a gradual change can be observed both in his life and in the government from a fairly democratic attitude to a passionate despotism, which was more the fault of the circumstances than his own.

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The first thing was for him to secure his position with the murder of Agrippa — Augustus' grandson. One who reads Tacitus and Suetonius on this point, is doubtful who gave the order for the murder. I would rather accept Tacitus' sober explanation, although this statement cannot be proved without doubt: "...facinus... fuit Postumi Agrippae caedes, quem... centurio... confecit. Nihil de ea re Tiberius apud senatum disseruit: patris iussa simulabat..." For Suetonius is uncertain about a written order put into the hands of a "tribunus" but: "dubium fuit, Augustus ne moriens reliquisset, ... an nomine Augusti Livia et ea consocio Tiberio an ignaro, dictasset." It is almost certain that Suetonius was influenced in this passage by Tacitus, for the answer which Tiberius gives to the reporting "centurion" (and not tribunus) is the same word for word.

Tacitus' words are the following: "...nuntiandi centurioni, ut mos militiae, factum esse quod imperasset, neque imperasse sese et rationem facti reddendam apud senatum respondit." 

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158 Ibid., I. 6.
159 Ibid.
160 Suetonius, Tib., XXII.
Suetonius almost quotes him: "...Tiberius renuntianti tribuno, factum esse quod imperasset, neque imperasse se et redditurum omnem senatum rationem respondit..." 162 Tacitus' tone is controlled, and although he fails to give his sources for this scene, his report is more acceptable than Suetonius'.

Suetonius obviously at this point is reporting conversations which increased as they passed from one person to the other, and his usual fault is to believe too readily that the mouse is an elephant, when in reality it is a mouse only.

Somehow fear and uncertainty overshadowed Tiberius' first actions. Soldiers followed him everywhere 163, 164 and before the Senate he made a careful display of humble leadership both in words and deeds. He refused to take the name of "Augustus" or "imperator" and only after long deliberation did he accept the supreme power. 165, 166, 167

The beginning of his rule was utterly democratic and peaceful; he moved about as a private citizen, was

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162 Suetonius, Tib., XXII.
164 Suetonius, Tib., XXIV.
165 Tacitus, Ann., I 11-14.
166 Suetonius, Tib., XXIV.
sympathetic to the people of the streets, and showed genuine regard for the institutions of the state. He was "extremely easy to approach and easy to address," and, in general, his behavior was simple both in the public and in private life. Still he was careful to defend his authority against anybody, even against his mother, Livia, who desired a part of the government and on several occasions tried to influence Tiberius' decisions. He visited her not once during her illness, and after her death denied her all the honors, by which the Senate proposed to acclaim her as the "great wife of Augustus." 

He was very much disturbed by the popularity of Germanicus, the son of his brother Drusus, since right after his accession, mutiny broke out among the legions in Illyricum and another in the area of

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168 Ibid., LVII. 11.
169 Tacitus, Ann., I. 75.
170 Suetonius, Tib., XXVII. XXVIII.
172 Tacitus, Ann., III., 64. IV. 57
173 Suetonius, Tib., L, LI.
175 Tacitus, Ann., V. 1. 2.
Suetonius, Tib., LI.
177 Tacitus, Ann., I. 16-38.
the Rhine River. He suspected correctly that the main reason for this was, among others, that the troops wanted Germanicus as their emperor. "Thus, though Germanicus might have obtained the imperial power... he refused it. For this Tiberius praised him... but feared him all the more because he had won the attachment of the legions."  

Suetonius goes even as far as saying that Tiberius "...simulavit et valuitudinem, quo aequior animo Germanicus celerem successionem vel certe societatem principatus opperiretur..."  

The victories which followed this incident only increased the suspicion in Tiberius' soul, for Germanicus subdued the Chatti, who under the leadership of Arminius united with the Cherusii and other German tribes and began to harass the northern provinces of the empire.

Tiberius, using the pretense of a consulship, recalled Germanicus, but after honoring him with

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179 Tacitus, Annales, I. 40-44.
180 Dio, Rom. Hist., LVII. 5.
181 Suetonius, Tib., XXV.
183 Suetonius, Tib., XXV.
184 Tacitus, Annales, I. 55.
185 Ibid., I. 60
186 Tacitus, Annales, II. 26.
triumphal celebrations, decided to remove him to another command, for he was afraid of the growing sentiment of the people. So Germanicus was sent with the Senate's approval to Armenia for "ne posse motum Orientem nisi Germanici sapientia componi; nam suam aetatem vergere, Drusus- (son of Tiberius)- nondum satis adolevisse", while Drusus became the commander of the Illyrian army.

Germanicus' tour was successful. His intelligence and diplomacy brought peace to Armenia. While on his way back to Rome he became seriously ill. The popular belief was that his great enemy Piso poisoned him, for he died shortly after.

The people in Rome openly talked about their last hope for freedom being lost by the assassination of Germanicus.
This very important part of the history is ignored by Suetonius and Dio. Suetonius makes only a short note about the death of Germanicus, but his explanation is rather a character picture of Tiberius, for he cannot abstain from mentioning the fact that, "...etiam causa mortisuisse eipen Ch. Pisonem legatum Syriae creditur." 195

Finally Tiberius was happy. Now that Germanicus was dead, he was more powerful than ever. 196, 197 His fear disappeared, his actions became more confident, he "...changed his course in many respects," 198 and "now, when he no longer had a rival biding his chance, he changed... his previous conduct, which had included much that was good." 199

The Emperor began only now to show his real face. Dictatorship under the disguise of freedom became day by day more apparent. 200

He revived some of the old laws and enforced them with an always increasing cruelty. The first such occurrence is probably the case of "lex majestatis" against Fasanius and Rubrius, two Roman knights.

195 Suetonius, Tib., LII
196 Tacitus, Annales, III. 3.
198 Ibid., LVII. 13.
199 Ibid., LVII. 19.
200 Tacitus, Annales, I. 81
Reading the description of this and twenty-six other similar trials, one can see the tremendous importance of the renewal of this law. For it pushes aside everything else, and one could easily think that there were not any other serious problems in the administration of the greatest Empire in the world.

(There is a difference between Suetonius' and Tacitus' accounts in this matter, but I would like to analyze the whole question in one of the following chapters.)

He renewed the law against excessive luxury (sumptuary law) \(^{201}\) while at the same time he relaxed the strictness of the "Poppaea" \(^{202}\) and simplified the ancient marriage law. \(^{203}\)

A mysterious role was played at this time by L. Helius Sejanus, who wormed himself into the confidence of the Emperor and was his one and only close advisor. He had a fortunate combination of intelligence and physical qualities, and he was ambitious, but without scruples. \(^{204}\) He was always at the right places at the right time, and with good maneuvering he came higher in the Emperor's esteem. People of servile souls

\(^{201}\) Ibid., III. 53, 54, 55.

\(^{202}\) Ibid., III. 25, 28.

\(^{203}\) Ibid., IV. 16.

\(^{204}\) Ibid., IV. 1. 2.
as well as the Senate began to pay honors to him as a friend of Tiberius. They were afraid of him and did not want to neglect such a powerful associate of the Emperor.

He set no limits to his efforts to obtain the highest power. This was the reason why he betrothed his daughter to Drusus, the future emperor Claudius' son and poisoned Drusus, the son of Tiberius. The fact that he once saved the life of Caesar just strengthened the confidence in him. But he went too far in asking for the hand of Livia, the sister of Germanicus. Tiberius began to see clearly his plot, and refused it.

Sejanus became alarmed, and in 26 A.D. suggested

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205 *Ibid.*, III. 72
206 *Tacitus, Annales*, IV. 74.
207 *Suetonius, Claudius*, XXVII.
208 *Tacitus, Annales*, III. 29.
211 *Suetonius, Tib.*, XXXIX.
212 *Dio, Rom. Hist.*, LVIII. 5.
that the emperor should retire from Rome,215,216,217
for he realized that it would be advantageous for him:
"Sus in manu editus litterarumque magan ex parte se
arbitrum fore... max Caesarem vergente iam senecta
secrcteque loci mollitum munis imperii facilius
tramissurum."218 Tiberius indeed left Rome, and never
returned until his death, but this was the beginning
of Sejanus' downfall.

There is a trifling difference at
this point between Tacitus and
Suetonius, which is of no particular
importance historically. They agree
in the fundamental part of his
departure, but Suetonius, according
to his usual style, gives a subjective
psychoanalytical picture rather than
and objective description.

Tacitus' information is very easy to place into
the life of Tiberius: "Profectio arto comitatu fuit:
umus senator... eques Romanus... ceteri liberalibus
studiis praediti, ferme Graeci, quorum sermonibus
levaretur."219

Even with the best good will one is unable to
agree with the notion of Suetonius, who puts all his
effort into a characterization of Tiberius and de-

215Ibid., IV. 57.
216Suetonius, Tib., LX.
217Dio, Rom. Hist., LVIII. I.
218Tacitus, Ann., IV. 41.
219Ibid., IV. 58.
molishes the historical value of the scene: "Pecuniae parcus... comites peregrinationum... cibaris tantum sustentavit, una modo... cum tribus classibus factis pro dignitate cuiusque, primae sesenta sestercia, secundae quadringenta distribuit, ducenta tertiae, quam non amicorum sed Graecorum appellabat." 220

He omits the names of the members of Tiberius' court: "Cocceius Nerva... Sejanus... Curtius Atticus," 221 and the very important date in Tiberius' life, namely that this was the beginning of his eleven years absence from Rome. 222 But he was well informed about the matter, for the happenings in Tacitus' following chapter are easily discovered in another part of Suetonius' work, but without any specifically given time element. 223,224

At this point the greater part of Tacitus' fifth book of the Annales is missing. Suetonius is confused and illogical in following the happenings, and I have to turn to Dio Cassius for the reconstruction of the decline and end of Sejanus' power.

Tiberius advanced slowly at first, refusing him

220 Suetonius, Tib., XLVI.
221 Tacitus, Ann., IV. 58
222 Ibid.
223 Suetonius, Tib., XXIX.
224 Tacitus, Ann., IV. 59.
permission to see his bride, forbade honors, and sacrifices offered to him and kept his man in continuous suspense — praising him at one moment, and denouncing him in another. Still he appointed him as a consul, but the actual reason was to remove him from among his close associates to Rome, and make preparations from the coup de grâce. The people began to hold Sejanus more and more in contempt, in fact they even avoided meeting him. Tiberius learned of this, he took courage, believing that he should have the populace and the Senate on his side, and attacked him. He sent a letter to the Senate denouncing him, and after reading it publicly, Sejanus was put into jail, tried, and executed the same day.

The after-effects were destructive to the aging Emperor's mentality. He became cruel in pursuing trails against all the acquaintances of Sejanus: first his

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226 Ibid., LVIII. 6.
227 Ibid., LVIII. 7. 8. 9.
228 Suetonius, Tib., LXV
230 Suetonius, Tib., LXV.
232 Dio, Rom. Hist., LVIII. 11
children than all his relatives and associates. He became more afraid, and his mistrust toward friends only grew. Death, misery, persecution filled Rome, and the terror of an insane power filled the soul of everybody. His death in 37 A.D. meant a general rejoicing among the favor-seekers of the new Emperor, Caligula.

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234 Ibid., VI. 3.
235 Suetonius, Tib*, LXI.
237 Tacitus, Ann*, VI. 50.
CHAPTER III

CHARACTER OF TIBERIUS

A psychoanalysis of Tiberius' character is a very complex proposition, since besides his life, we have to investigate the subconscious elements of his soul derived from his individual and collective activities - directed toward his nation, family, and the general public.

Tacitus gives us a short summary of his character: "Morum quoque tempora illi diversa: egregium vita famaque, quoad privatus vel in imperii sub Augusto fuit; occultum ac subdolum fingendiis virtutibus, donec Germanicus ac Drusus superfuere; idem inter bona malaque mixtus incolumi matre; intestabilis saevitia sed obtectis libidinibus, dum Seianum dilexit timuitve: postremo in scelera simul ac dedocra prorupit, postquam remoto pudore et metu suo tantum ingenio utebatur." 239

The author realizes the great difference between his early life and the time shortly before his death but does not understand the motive behind this change. He knows, just as Suetonius or Dio, that cruelties and despotism are against the freedom and the peace of a nation, and rightly supposes that the basic subconscious

239 Tacitus, Ann., VI, 51.
factors of the Emperor's character made this possible.
In the following I would like to show that the two historians followed the popular belief and did not realize that Tiberius could have been a victim of the circumstances.

At this point I have to remark that in the psychological evaluation of Tiberius I depended upon the assistance of the books, Josephus Donat, S.J.; Psychologie, Ceniponte, (Innsbruck, F. Rauch, 1914), Experimentelle Triebdiagnostik, Dr. med. L. Szondi; (Huber, Bern, Switzerland, 1947), and the guidance of Dr. med. Franz Plewa, the psychiatrist of Boys Town, Boys Town, Nebraska.

I. The most important person in his life is Augustus. From his early childhood he honored or even, I could say, liked him as a father. His strong attachment appears in many little instances, like the refusal of the name of Gallius, who adopted him as heir, but was in opposition to Augustus. On the other hand, Augustus shows the same feeling toward the young, intelligent boy. He lets the adolescent Tiberius ride his left-hand horse, after the victory of Actium, and

\[240\text{Suetonius, Tib., VI}\]
lets him preside over the triumphal games at the same time. The successful public appearances of Tiberius made the father, Augustus, only too proud, and the imperial honors bestowed upon him only deepened the filial affection. It was only natural that after he became the celebrated hero of two triumphs, this feeling only increased with the addition of another factor, the sense of duty toward his beloved commander in chief, and the nation, which deified the same person: Augustus.

I would like to emphasize here the importance of the fact that this devotional sense of duty made a tremendous imprint on the life of Tiberius. This was the motive which forced him to act against his own wishes for the sake of Augustus or the Empire; and ultimately meant the destruction of his spirit.

A. His attitude lacks sinful ambition when the possibility arises that he should become the

\[^{241}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{242}\text{Suetonius, Tib., VIII}\]
\[^{243}\text{Vell. Pat., Hist. Rom., II. XCIX}\]
\[^{244}\text{Tacitus, Ann., I. 3.}\]
\[^{245}\text{Vell. Pat., Hist. Rom., II. XCIX}\]
successor to the power, and it shows rather a humble intelligence, combined with a blind sense of duty.

I use here as an argument Velleius Paterculus' remarkable description of the circumstances of his departure to Rhodes — which is very different from Tacitus' and Suetonius'. He openly states that Tiberius:

"aequatus Augusto fama, fortunaque celeberrimus et vere alterum rei publicae lumen et caput, mira quaedam et incredibili atque innarrabili pieta, cuius causae mox detectae sunt" — then he proceeds to explain that:

(1) he did not want to stay with his glory in the way of Gaius and Lucius, the selectees of Augustus;
(2) the popular feeling desired that he remain in order to take over the imperium; (3) but in spite of this, he preferred to live as a private citizen because of his affection for Augustus.

Both Tacitus and Suetonius, as I pointed out in the previous chapter, tried to find different and hardly believable causes. and although Velleius' account seems overdone

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246 Ibid.
249Tacitus, Ann., I. 53.
250Suetonius, Tib., X.
at places, I would prefer to believe his word against the uncertain probability of the description of the other two.

B. A remark of Suetonius' is of tremendous importance to show that after unwillingly accepting the empire, Tiberius thought that his duty was a burden only, and contemplated retiring at the first opportunity: "Tandem... querens miseram et onerosam iniungi sibi servitutem, recept imperium; nec tamen aliter, quam ut depositurum se quandoque speret. Ipsius verba sunt: 'Dum veniam ad id tempus, quo vobis aequum possit videri dare vos aliquam senectuti meae requiem.'"²⁵¹

C. This high regard of duty shows in his first actions, when in spite of the rather strong difference between the character of Augustus and Tiberius, the latter tries to follow in the footsteps of the former, for he realizes that any change would throw off balance the peace of the empire obtained through so much difficulty.

Augustus' main weapon was politics. He used his intelligence instead of sheer force, for he realized that in order to gain supreme power, he should proceed in a kind and human manner, fulfilling the people's desire for "panem et circenses", giving them peace and, with the least possible changes in the laws of the

²⁵¹Suetonius, Tib., XXIV.
His egotism and self-esteem is expressed at best by his own words in *The Acts of Augustus*: "At the age of nineteen, on my own initiative, and at my own expense, I raised an army by means of which I restored liberty to the Republic, which had been oppressed by the tyranny of a faction. ... When victorious I spared all citizens who sued for pardon... The number of Roman citizens who bound themselves to me by military oath was about 500,000... Twice I triumphed with an ovation, thrice I celebrated curule triumphs, and was saluted as imperator twenty-one times... The Senate on fifty-five occasions decreed thanks to the immortal gods... I had been thirteen times consul, and (am) in the thirty-seventh year of my tribunician power... I did not accept... the dictatorship offered me by my people... the consulship, either yearly, or for life, then offered me, I did not accept."²⁵² Tacitus even claims that he chose Tiberius in order to gain more glory and honor for himself, showing a contrast of character and mentality in his successor.

Both Tacitus and Suetonius agree that Augustus did not think much about Tiberius as a future emperor. Their description is almost the same, only the time element is different.

While Suetonius uses his full theatrical treatment to make his theme more interesting: "Scio... egresso ... Tiberio vox Augusti ... excepta sit: miserum populum R., qui sub tam lentis maxillis erit. Ne illud... ignoro... Augustum palam... morum eius diritatem ... improbasse... expugnatum... adoptionem non abnussee..." proving the absolute correctness of Tacitus' statement.

Still, Tiberius' devotion for Augustus was very strong. The possible reason for this might be that he subconsciously sensed in the man all those qualities which were lacking in him.

The basic difference between the two was that Tiberius was straightforward, and not a "diplomat". The fact that he never produced any great, outstanding deed during his political activity in Rome is proof for this statement. His true ego showed in his victorious field experiences in which he became successful, intelligently combining the confidence of his soldiers with organizational ability and the rugged harshness of a military leader.

254Suetonius, Tīb., XXI.
I am inclined to say that he was republican at heart, a fact shown especially in the first years of his reign. But he never intended to do anything against the current form of government.

1. His loyalty to Augustus, and possibly the lack of the necessary strength eliminated even the smallest chance for him to think about revolution.

2. He saw that a fundamental change would be catastrophic to a nation which breathed the air of peace for the first time under comparatively prosperous circumstances after the lengthy civil wars.

3. So, at the moment the troubles of the Empire fell on his shoulders, he decided to take it as a duty, against his better judgment - but, on the other hand, to try to turn back the form of government, with the smooth, diplomatic method of Augustus, into its original, Republican constitution.

Both Tacitus and Suetonius agree that the first eight years of his reign were absolutely perfect, and thus give a proof about his good will and honesty, although they cannot understand it, and, for the sake of their plot, talk about "hypocrisy."

In the remarks of Tacitus we can easily see that his first actions, after obtaining the supreme power, were so much on the constitutional level that they bewildered the senators, and the flatterers, who were

already looking for favors from the new Emperor:
"Cuncta per consules incipiebat, tamquam vetere in
generi publici, et ambiguum imperandi... ne edictum
quidem... nisi tribuniciae postetatis praescriptione
posuit sub Augusto acceptae..." 256

Tacitus claims, however, that he sent
letters to most of the army commanders,
announcing to them the great news,
while he showed himself undecided only
before the Senate. 257 I do not think
this matter would impose serious diffi­
culty upon the continuity of my thought,
for it is natural that an army man, who
has the best reminiscences of his life
among the troops, would send letters to
his friends, if a serious change occurs
in his life, important to both him and
his friends.

His deep affection for Augustus is expressed
in a very beautiful, human way against the hypocritical
adulation of the fathers, for he reminds them of the
value of moderation, simplicity in their feelings. 258

The only extravagance— namely the soldiers at the
funeral of Augustus — is misinterpreted by Tacitus and
Suetonius, since I would think it is natural for an old
army hand to furnish a military honor guard for the last
rites of the man who was his supreme commander. 259

256 Ibid., I. 7.
257 Ibid.
258 Ibid., I. 7.8.11.
259 Ibid., I. 8.
At the recent funeral of the former English Monarch, George VI, military detachments lined both sides of the route and the hearse was manned by members of a regular army cavalry unit, but nobody thought that it was a sign of unconstitutional despotism on the part of his successor.

Both Tacitus' and Suetonius' statements about the show of reluctance and moderation on the part of Tiberius only strengthens my opinion that they misjudged Tiberius' character:

a. In spite of the oath taken by the whole populace, Tiberius remained humble.

b. Neither of the authors could see a connection with his later deeds, and could not even think of the possibility that Tiberius was genuinely sincere at the beginning of his reign. They could offer only one explanation, that Tiberius was fundamentally wicked, and so his early behavior had to be hypocritical.

c. Finally they followed sources which were probably written, or explained by the people who also did not understand that Tiberius was under a great mental pressure. His motive was only to do his duty.

But no one can live for a long time a life contrary to his own character, because the soul is always free, and sooner or later demands its freedom.

260 Ibid., I. 7.
Consequently, the acceptance of the power on Tiberius' part proved to be fatal.

II. He acted against his preference also in his married life, which is the second factor in importance on the way toward his sorrowful end. At the wish of Augustus, he divorced his much beloved wife Vipsania (Agrippina, or Agrippa) in order to marry Julia, whom he despised with his whole heart. He continued loving his former wife, and "...Agrippinam et abegisse post divorcium doluit et semel omnino ex occursu visam adeo contentis et (t)umentibus oculis prosecutus est, ut custoditum sit ne umquam in conspectum ei posthac veniret." For a long time after his divorce, he jealously hated the man who married Vipsania - reports Tacitus. After a comparatively short, quiet married life with Julia he separated and never again took up any form of connection with her, because of her immoral

261Ibid., I. 12
262Suetonius, Tib., VII.
264Suetonius, Tib., VII.
265Tacitus, Ann., I. 12.
I can feel nothing but deep sympathy for a man who is ready to offer his family and happiness to an ominous call of duty. It is possible that Tiberius was so much in the dark that he was not able to foresee the consequences of his blind obedience in this case, or I would think that he preferred the good of the empire before everything else.

It is a most regrettable thing that neither Tacitus nor Suetonius paid more attention to explaining this difficult and, without question, the most burning problem in the life of Tiberius.

Summing it up, I could say that the beginning of a psychological breakdown by Tiberius was established by the two factors: on the one hand, the forced acceptance of the imperium against his personal wishes and free decision, and on the other hand, the criminal break-up of his family life against his free will. Both of them point toward a slow killing of all basic emotions, which process was only helped by his stupidly consequent devotion toward Augustus. It is natural that this forced

266Suetonius, Tib., VII.
267Dio, Rom. Hist., LV. 10
268Vell. Pat., Hist. Rom., IX. C.
269Tacitus, Ann., III. 24
270Ibid., I. 53.
state of mind came to a certain unbalance, which showed itself at the end of his life in an acute form.

III. At this point I have to talk about a third person who did not play such an important role in Tiberius' life as the previous two, but was definitely helping, by her behavior, the aging Tiberius on his way to a psychological breakdown. She is Livia, the wife of Augustus, Tiberius' mother.

One thing is predominant in her life: an anxious ambition to be an associate in the power of her husband and later of her son. Her marriage to Augustus was the climax of this ambition. She was beautiful, intelligent, and in diplomacy Augustus' equal. "When someone asked her how and by what course of action she had obtained such a commanding influence over Augustus, she answered that it was by being scrupulously chaste herself, doing gladly whatever pleased him, not meddling with any of his affairs, and, in particular, by pretending neither to hear of nor to notice the favorites that were the objects of his passion" - Dio informs us about her character.271 She was the great lady in Augustus' life,272

272 Ibid., LV. 15-20
and he often listened to her suggestions.\textsuperscript{273,274}

She could not have had much moral scruple, since all three authors agree that she "influenced" Tiberius' way to the top with the murders of Marcellus,\textsuperscript{275,276} Caius and Lucius\textsuperscript{277,278} and Tacitus even mentions that some people suspected that Livia had an active part in the death of Augustus.

Suetonius holds a contrary opinion: "Repente \textit{in osculis Liviae et in hac voce defecit: Livia, nostri coniugii memor vive, ac vale.}\textsuperscript{279}

After her son became Emperor, it was a popular belief that she was behind the death of Germanicus.\textsuperscript{280,281}

It was only natural then, that as a reward, she asked for an equal share in the matters of government.\textsuperscript{282,283}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{273}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{274}Suetonius, \textit{Aug.}, XL.
\item \textsuperscript{275}Dio, \textit{Rom. Hist.}, LIII. 33.
\item \textsuperscript{276}Tacitus, \textit{Ann.}, I. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{277}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{278}Dio, \textit{Rom. Hist.}, LV. 11.
\item \textsuperscript{279}Suetonius, \textit{Div. Aug.}, XCVI.
\item \textsuperscript{280}Tacitus, \textit{Ann.}, II. 43.
\item \textsuperscript{281}Dio, \textit{Rom. Hist.}, LVII. 18
\item \textsuperscript{282}Suetonius, \textit{Tib.}, L.
\item \textsuperscript{283}Dio, \textit{Rom. Hist.}, LVII. 3.
\end{itemize}
But later she went too far. Because "... in the time of Augustus, she had possessed the greatest influence, and she always declared that it was she who made Tiberius emperor... she was not satisfied to rule on equal terms with him, but wished to take precedence over him." 284

Tiberius' reaction, after realizing that her excessive interest could be dangerous, was rather harsh and cruel. With military strategy he began to undermine her power more and more. First of all, he carefully avoided seeing her, or even talking to her: "ne consiliis, quibus tamen interdum et egere et uti solebat, regi videretur." 285 As the Senate proposed to honor her in an extraordinary way, Tiberius refused it, 286, 287, 288 and took it as a personal insult when someone thought that he should take "the Son of Livia" among his other titles. Finally, he removed her entirely from public affairs, "... Then as she was troublesome even ... he

285 Suetonius, Tib., L.
287 Suetonius, Tib., L.
removed her to Capreae. 289 During her retirement, he never visited her, and was indifferent at the news of her death. 290, 291

Undoubtedly, it would be easy to point out that the treatment of Livia shows Tiberius in the worst possible light, as the killer of his mother, a person without the most elementary human emotion: the love of parents.

However, I am inclined to oppose this opinion, for I think that it rather shows his strong individuality, his egotism, the expression of his growing desire for more power, the first sign of persecution complex. But those signs are actually the symptoms of "paranoid schizophrenia", according to Dr. Szondi 292 while he explains that "It happens most of the time with highly talented people who are unable to unfold their talent... they accuse one of the parents of being willfully against their development... They often build an imaginary relation with this parent, in which they play the part of a person, ready at any time for patricide." 293

289 Ibid., LVII. 12.
290 Suetonius, Tib. LI.
292 Dr. med. L. Szondi, Experimentelle Triebdiagnostik, Huber, Bern, Switzerland, 1947. Tabelle 2, p. 16.
293 Ibid., p. 77.
We can see now that Tiberius was forced by circumstances (Augustus' influence, the intrigue of Livia, and his unhappy marriage) which were beyond his control and which led finally to his complete breakdown.

Recognizing the origin of his psychological troubles, we can more easily make apparent the process of this gradual change in Tiberius' character if we carefully read the two accounts given about his reign by Tacitus and Suetonius. Tacitus sees clearly three phases during this period: (1) his unerring ability as a ruler, (2) under his mother's influence, the mixture of good and evil, (3) the final desolation.\(^{294}\)

Both authors agree that the first eight years of his government were just, for Tiberius was honest, sincere, and his main weapon was - common sense. If we are to believe Tacitus' summary of the events, Rome had the most democratic and human emperor in its history.\(^{295}\)

The form of government was more strongly based on ancient constitution than during the time of Augustus. All public and private matters were in the hand of the Senate. The consul and praetor had the same power as in the times before, and the magistrates exercised their

\(^{294}\)T. Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI. 51

\(^{295}\)Tbid., IV. 6.
duty without fear of retaliation.

Suetonius even mentions a case when in the Senate, the majority of the senators, without fear and hesitation, voted against Tiberius who agreed in his opinion with the minority. Also, the author seems to know that he gave to the consuls the customary honor of standing up when they approached. He held the consulship only four times in contrast to Augustus, who according to his words: "(consul fueram terdecies)."

Tacitus is rather obscure about the four consulships of Tiberius. Disregarding the first consulship, he mentions his second only: "...Ceterum Tiberius... seque collegam consulatur ei (Germanici) destinavit..." and then the controversial third: "Sequens annum Tiberium tertium, Germanicum iterum consules habuit." Suetonius definitely states that he had only three: "Nec amplius quam mox tres consulatus, unum paucis diebus, alterum tribus mensibus, tertium absens usque in Idus Maias gessit" although there is absolutely no proof that Tiberius was out of Rome during the time of his third consulship.

A rather interesting problem arises when Tacitus

296 Ibid.  
297 Suetonius, Tib. XXIX, XXX.  
298 Ibid., XXXI.  
300 Tacitus, Ann., II. 42.  
301 Ibid., II. 53.  
302 Suetonius, Tib., XXVI
mentions his fourth consulship: "Sequitur Tiberi quartus... consulatus... eius anni principio Tiberius... in Campanian concessit..." but between his second and third term there is three years difference according to Tacitus. It is rather understandable that in case the two authors used the same sources, Suetonius could have easily taken the fourth term as his third. The problem is solved by Dio Cassius who mentions all four consulships:

Dio:  First consulship, B.C. 13
Second consulship, B.C. 7
Third consulship is missing from the manuscript. The text is a combination of Zonares II. 2*, Xiphilinus 134 (32-135), and Petrus Patricius: Excerpta Vaticana
Fourth consulship

In his foreign policy he displayed wisdom and understanding. To many Asiatic towns, stricken by an earthquake he granted a loan of 10,000,000 sesterces, and exempted them from taxes. By not relieving his

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305 Ibid., LV. 8.
306 Ibid., LVII. 13.
307 Ibid.
308 Ibid., LVII. 20.
309 Tacitus, Ann., II. 47.
officials from their appointed place, he solved one of the greatest problems of the provinces. When someone suggested that the provinces should be taxed more heavily, he answered: "Boni pastoris esse tendgere pecus, non deglubere." He showed common sense in letting the Germans straighten out alone their own affairs and saved his troops from unnecessary bloodshed, when he captured Maroboduus and later Rhesiaporis.

The case of Archelaus is a controversial question, since Tacitus reports that he was ordered to Rome, arraigned before the Senate, and committed suicide with the full knowledge of the "pitiless Emperor." Tacitus fails to name any specific charges, and shows Tiberius as a cruel and unjust person. But against this, I bring Dio Cassius' description, who claims that Tiberius did not even take a place among the judges, that Archelaus' case was dismissed although his charges were rebellion against the Emperor. I would think that in this case Tacitus overstepped the historical truth with his usual prejudice.

310 Ibid., I. 80
311 Suetonius, Tib., XXXII.
312 Tacitus, Ann., II. 26
313 Ibid., II. 63.
314 Ibid., II. 64-67
315 Ibid., II. 42.
He reduced the budget of the state, and some people who depended for their profit on liberal financial transactions were greatly afraid of the oncoming reforms. 317, 318 He tried to impose upon the Roman society the idea of simple living, and gave an example himself. Only a few houses were in use for his own purpose, with limited number of servants. 319 Suetonius naturally reports one of the anecdotes of those days: the guests of the Emperor often received at the banquet remnants of the meal from the previous day, 320 but I would not be surprised at all if this were true. Fairness, and hate for corruption, show in his generosity to some, and in his hate for spendthrifts. 321 When the buildings on Mount Caelius burned down, Tiberius distributed money freely 322 and lent gratis money to anyone who wanted to borrow it. 323 Tacitus reports that:

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317 Tacitus, Ann., III. 52.
318 Suetonius, Tib., XXXIV
319 Tacitus, Ann., IV. 7.
320 Suetonius, Tib., XXXIV.
321 Tacitus, Ann., II. 48. IV. 64.
322 Ibid., IV. 64.
323 Dio, Rom. Hist., LVIII. 27.
Suetonius is of different opinion, and I am ready to accept his statement as a trustworthy one, for Tacitus' description is rather fantastic: "Quod tamen beneficium tanti aestimavit, ut montem Caesalem appellatam mutata vocari Augustum iussisset." 325

His strictness in enforcing moral laws shows his high, noble principles. He prosecuted with full force any adultery or corruption 326 and went even so far as to prohibit people from kissing each other, when they met. 327

-Still justice was kept impartial and human, for during this time "leges - bono in usu" and corporal punishment or the confiscation of private property were utterly unknown. 328

Certainly it is to the credit of the two authors that they agree

324 Tacitus, Ann., IV. 64.
325 Suetonius, Tib., XLVIII.
326 Suetonius, Tib., XXXV.
327 Ibid., XXXIV.
that the first part of Tiberius' administration was according to the best tradition of the old Roman democratic way of life.

Tiberius' character shows here his fundamental greatness. He was a man of willpower with a natural ability to organize and build on excellent general principles. Still he was not the rationalist, because of his capability for human feelings and kindliness. I am very close to the truth, if I say that he was subconsciously an idealist. He enjoyed the feeling of power, but he used it justly and with ability, which made him, in my opinion, greater than Augustus himself.

However, it was unfortunate both for him and the empire that in the second period of his administration, the strain of extraordinary mental pressure begins to show. He is not able to distinguish between revolutionary feelings, overgrown ambition, and simple joking, and after possessing a comparatively slow and lenient attitude, he develops a feeling that everything is an interference with his power an always stronger persecution complex, and through this, ruins the already shaky structure of his soul.

The revival of the "lex majestatis" is the best proof of this final process. The renewal of the law was met with silent disapproval by most of the Roman
people, although some of the first trials were initiated by over-anxious senators, and Tiberius showed remarkable justice. 329

According to the law of the Twelve Tables, one was prohibited from composing "famosi libelli" against anyone. (Cicero informs us: "...duodecem Tabulae... hanc quoque sanciendam putaverunt, si quis actavit sive carmen condidisset quod infamiam faceret flagitiumve alteri precareetur..." 330 Tacitus states that Augustus was the first in a long time to give attention to this law. Suetonius agrees in this with him: "...etiam sparsos de se in curia famosos libellos nec expavit... cognoscendum posthac de illis, qui libellos aut carmina ad infamiam cuiusiam sub alieno nomine edant," 331 and goes further in his agreement with Tacitus when he explains Tiberius' actions very elaborately with the curiosity of a professional informer, and he quotes Tacitus almost word for word: "Sub idem tempus, consulente praetore an judicia maiestatis cogi iuberet, exercendas esse leges respondit et atrociissime exercuit." 332

330 Cicero, *De Republ.*, IV. 10
331 Suetonius, *Div. Aug.*, LV.
332 Suetonius, *Tib.*, LVIII.
Tacitus reports single cases of "majestas" very faithfully all together in twenty-seven cases during the reign of Tiberius, like the trials of Caesius Cordus and Antistius Vetus\textsuperscript{333} Considius Aequus and Coelius Cursor\textsuperscript{334}; C. Silanus.\textsuperscript{335}

Suetonius is very sparse in his account of the happenings. We cannot suppose that Tacitus gives us a complete list, but compared with Suetonius, I can find only two actual cases in which the similarity of the occurrences makes it possible to draw a close parallel. At the beginning, Tiberius was just, and showed absolutely no sign of mental disorder:

L. Tacitus is very accurate: "Nec multo post Crassum Marcellum, Praetorem Bithyniae quaestor... maiestatis postulavit... (Crispinus) Marcellum insimulabat sinistros de Tiberio sermones habuisse, inevitabile crimen, cum 'ex moribus principis foedissima quaeque deligeret accusator objectaretque rec... addidit Hispo statuam Marcelli altius quam Caesarum sitam, et alia in statuam amputato capite Augusti effigiem Tiberii inditam..."\textsuperscript{336}

\textsuperscript{333} Tacitus, Ann., III. 38.
\textsuperscript{334} Ibid., III. 37.
\textsuperscript{335} Ibid., III. 66.
\textsuperscript{336} Ibid., I. 74.
Suetonius speaks in generalities: "Statuae quidam Augusti caput dempserat, ut alterius imponeret." He fails to give the name of the person, but finds it important that the witnesses were tortured, and knows that the party has been found guilty and condemned. Tacitus, on the contrary, explicitly says that "Paenitentia patiens tulit absolvit reum criminibus maiestatis." The misunderstanding on Suetonius' part might easily come from Marcellus' second charge: "De pecuniis repetundis ad recipiadores itum est." The turning point in Tiberius' leniency is the behavior of Livia. After getting rid of her, he began to suspect murder in every corner. His first unjust act is against Cordus Cresutus, who is tried, and although not convicted, is forced into suicide by the Emperor's act.

The crime, according to Cresutus' own words, is given by Tacitus: "Verba mea, patres conscripti, arguuntur... sed neque haec in principem aut principis

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337 Suetonius, Tib., LVIII.
338 Ibid.
340 Ibid.
Suetonius fails to name the "criminal" and says only: "Objectum et historico, quod Brutum Cassiumque ultimos Romanorum dixisset; animadvertum statim... scriptaque abolita..."342

Dio Cassius also reports the same thing: "Cremutius Cordus... was accused of having praised Cassius and Brutus... and this it was that caused his death..."343

Cremutius Cordus was actually the first victim of the madness of the Emperor.

It is of interest to point out that according to Tacitus, Cordus finished his life with suicide by starvation,344 while Dio also mentions the suicide,345 and Suetonius absolutely ignores the fact.

Tiberius begins to show different qualities in his character: hate towards his family (in the case of Livia), a search for a new trustee (Sejanus) and antisociableness. Under the influence of Sejanus he shows tendencies of passionate jealousy (against the

341Ibid., IV. 34.
342Suetonius, Tib., LXX.
344Tacitus, Ann., IV. 35.
children of Germanicus).\textsuperscript{346,347} At times he is congenial and shows the sharpest logic (in handling some licentious players\textsuperscript{348}) but at times he becomes raving mad, and hate overcomes his otherwise clear reasoning (mostly punishing defendants, often for long-forgotten sins, under the "lex majestatis" without mercy.)\textsuperscript{349}

These qualities are diagnosed by Dr. Plewa as "Preparanoid psychopathy, or paranoid pseudobémecility."

Still, he points out, it is easy in the initial stages to change the attitude of the person, for this behavior covers unsatisfied, egotistic desires. It is only a matter of taking away the patient's present circumstances, and he returns to his former tendencies.

But this was impossible for Tiberius. His end was inevitable. There was one instance at the end of his life when I think Tiberius subconsciously tried to free his soul from such an unbearable burden. His retirement to the island Capri might be regarded as the last flame of his will power, to satisfy his desire for privacy and quiet far away from the troubles of the government, since the empire was at peace, and his duty

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{346} Tacitus, \textit{Ann.}, IV. 8.
  \item \textsuperscript{347} Suetonius, \textit{Tib.}, LIV.
  \item \textsuperscript{348} Tacitus, \textit{Ann.}, IV. 14.
  \item \textsuperscript{349} \textit{Ibid.}, IV. 20. IV. 29.
\end{itemize}
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346 Tacitus, Ann., IV. 8.
347 Suetonius, Tib., LIV.
349 Ibid., IV. 20. IV. 29.
This idea may be absurd to us, but as a comparison I would like to bring the example of Mr. Atatürk, greatest statesman of Turkey since Sulejaman, who — after reforming his Asiatic country to Western standards, retired to a small place, and was absolutely content living the life of an average citizen.

It was most unfortunate under those circumstances that he took Sejanus with him. Through his influence Tiberius was still connected with administrative matters, and could not escape from the realization that Sejanus also, the man of his final confidence, was against him.

This was the last point in Tiberius’ complete breakdown. The symptoms of paranoia were more and more apparent. With an abnormally overgrown egotism he thought everyone was against him.350 Actually, this is the persecution complex which leads him to unprovoked, unreasonable killings of everyone connected with Sejanus.351,352 We may take those already as symptoms of a diseased mind, because they were so incongruous with

350 Ibid., V. 5.
351 Ibid., V. 7. 8. 9.
352 Suetonius, Tib., LXI.
his previous character. His soul was under a great weight of depression;\textsuperscript{353} he was very irritable, his orders were often confused,\textsuperscript{354} and he showed an absolute change in his once correct moral control.\textsuperscript{355}

I have to turn again to Dr. Plewa's analysis, since he designs this state of mind as "senile deterioration" which is a form of insanity.

Summing up the character of Tiberius, it is impossible to make a full psychological evaluation, for we have to rely on authors who did not live during his life, and thus their information at best is second-hand only. Still, after reading their books, I am inclined to say that it is possible to see a definite pathological disintegration in Tiberius' personality. He grew up in power and he was used to it all his life, although he tried to escape it. His blind sense of duty and the forceful divorce from the woman whom he loved, and who probably was the only person who understood him, meant a turning point in his soul. Naturally, as the son and heir of the Emperor, he was surrounded by flatterers

\textsuperscript{353}Tacitus, \textit{Ann.}, VI. 6.


\textsuperscript{355}Suetonius, \textit{Tib.} XLIII. XLIV.
Tacitus, \textit{Ann.}, VI. 1. p. 171
who never understood his sincerity, and not by critical friends; they used the tendencies of Tiberius for their own ends, and consequently helped Tiberius on his way down. I think it is very possible that it was then that Tiberius, through the excessive use of the "lex majestatis" became dependent on their opinion and developed an always stronger persecution complex, for it meant that the change in his mind was in an irreversible stage of development, filled with what was to his character definitely strange, unreasonable paranoid ideas. There was no way back for Tiberius from this point, for according to the internationally famous psychiatrist Mr. Kretschmar: "Paranoia of long standing becomes irreversible, because it changes the whole character structure of a man."356

Still it would be difficult to explain all his actions psychologically perfectly. Only because of the great changes in his character, and because of his apparently controversial qualities, for example, the complete breakdown of his moral character, or the loss of his good judgment to the point that he destroyed his reputation - lead us to the supposition that he was by the reason of senile deterioration of the brain, very near to insanity at the end of his life.

356In his Inauguration Speech at the University of Vienna (Austria), according the oral information of Dr. Flewa.
CONCLUSION

Nearly two thousand years after the death of Tiberius, it is not easy to write about him. I think that his problem is one of the most difficult for a historian to handle, for the writer has to study and understand his character in order to produce a history which is "full, detailed, and above all exact."

In Tacitus' and Suetonius' description of the life and administration of Tiberius, we see two absolutely different compositions, and different approaches to the problem. Tacitus at least makes an honest effort toward a solution of Tiberius' character, but neither of the authors understood his background, his motives, and his unhappy life.

The often prejudiced opinions of Tacitus can be easily explained by the fact that he wrote at a time which generally accepted Tiberius' reign as something distasteful, and under the influence of the popular belief, he did not even think of searching deeper for the true motives. Still, his effort to understand the absolutely contrary factors of Tiberius' soul is noteworthy, although I cannot accept his hypothesis that Tiberius was fundamentally wicked and hypocritical.

Suetonius, on the other hand, gives us only the plain facts. His work shows that he never understood
Tiberius, and never tried to find an answer to solve the problem. He often mixes good and bad qualities in the same chapter, and anybody reading his work without knowing the truth from other authors would be completely in the dark about the true historical facts. -He never forms an opinion - he reports equally both the favorable and unfavorable facts, and I think his description only strengthens my hypothesis that Tiberius must have gone slowly to insanity.

History in itself cannot be merely a collection of facts. "History is violently personal; stars and planets have no loves and hates, while men do." This is the reason why the writer has to be a psychologist, for he could never understand human beings and would never be able to write a full account through cold reasoning, or with a plain, rationalistic report of the facts. He has to live, feel, and think together with his characters. He has to know their emotions, and only if he combines this knowledge with the facts, will his history become valuable and complete.
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