



READINGS FROM  
**TACITUS**

READ IN LATIN BY  
JOHN F. C. RICHARDS  
FOLKWAYS RECORDS FL9971

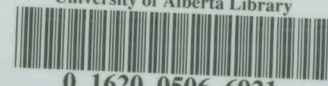
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FOLKWAYS RECORDS FL9971

READINGS FROM

TACITUS

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Correct spelling should be ROMAM, not ROMAN as listed

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Correct spelling should be THRASEAM, not THRASEAN as listed

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# READINGS FROM TACITUS

Read in Latin by John F.C. Richards

Tacitus

(c. A.D. 55 - after 115)

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Agricola translated by Maurice Hutton, 1914

Histories Books 1-3 translated by Clifford H. Moore, 1925.

Histories Books 4-5 translated by Clifford H. Moore and

Annals Books 1-3 translated by John Jackson, 1931.

Annals Books 4-6, 11-12 and Annals Books 13-16 translated by John Jackson, 1937.

The sixteen books of the *Annals* originally described the principates of Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero (A.D. 14-69), but books 7-10, dealing with Caligula and part of the reign of Claudius, are missing and book 16 ends in A.D. 66 before Nero's death. Book 1 starts with a short account of the reign of Augustus, though the title of the *Annals* shows that the work begins with his death. In *Annals* 2.61 Tacitus says that the boundaries of the Roman Empire had reached the Persian Gulf. This was only true for the years 115-117, so that Tacitus must have died after 115.

The *Histories*, which were written before the *Annals*, began with the events of the year 69 and probably ended with Domitian's death in 96. They described the reigns of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, and the

three Flavian emperors, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian. But only books 1-4 and part of 5 now survive.

The *Agricola* was written in 98 and is a life of the historian's father-in-law, who was a consul, Roman general in Britain, and one of the victims of Domitian.

Selection No. 1 refers to the emperor Augustus and Nos. 2-4 to Tiberius. No. 2 speaks of the revival of the *lex maiestatis*, which later became dangerous, but Tiberius seems quite reasonable here, especially when he says that the gods can take care of themselves. No. 3 discusses the arguments for chance or fate in the lives of men. No. 4 is the famous character-sketch of Tiberius, which to modern readers often seems unfair. No. 5 is the liberal speech of the emperor Claudius, who proposed that the chiefs of the Aeduan Gauls should be allowed to hold office in Rome. No. 6 refers to Nero and the persecution of the Christians, No. 7 to Thrasea Paetus, the Stoic who opposed Nero and was forced to commit suicide. Nos. 8-9 are the opening chapters of the *Histories*, describing the horrors of the civil war after Nero's death and the happiness of finding free speech again under Nerva and Trajan, the good emperors who followed Domitian. Nos. 10 and 12 are character-sketches of the emperor Galba and the Stoic Helvidius Priscus, and No. 11 is about the sack of Cremona in the civil war. Nos. 13 and 15 describe the humiliation of living under Domitian's rule, and No. 14 is the speech that Tacitus puts in the mouth of Calgacus, a Caledonian chief who criticizes Roman imperialism.

## SIDE I THE ANNALS OF TACITUS

### Band 1: I, 1-2, Urbem Romam - mallent

I. VRBEM Romam a principio reges habuere; libertatem et consulatum L. Brutus instituit. Dictaturae ad tempus sumebantur; neque decemviralis potestas ultra biennium, neque tribunorum militum consulare ius diu valuit. Non Cinnae, non Sullae longa dominatio; et Pompei Crassique potentia cito in Caesarem, Lepidi atque Antonii arma in Augustum cessere, qui cuncta discordiis civilibus fessa nomine principis sub imperium accepit. Sed veteris populi Romani prospera vel adversa claris scriptoribus memorata sunt; temporibusque Augusti dicendis non defuere decora ingenia, donec gliscente adulatione deterrentur. Tiberii Gaique et Claudii ac Neronis res florentibus ipsis ob metum falsae, postquam occiderant recentibus odiis compositae sunt. Inde consilium mihi pauca de Augusto et extrema tradere, mox Tiberii principatum et cetera, sine ira et studio, quorum causas procul habeo.

II. Postquam Bruto et Cassio caesis nulla iam publica arma, Pompeius apud Siciliam oppressus, exutoque Lepido, interfecto Antonio, ne Iulianis quidem partibus nisi Caesar dux reliquus, posito triumviri nomine, consulem se ferens et ad tuendam plebem tribunicio iure contentum, ubi militem donis, populum annona, cunctos dulcedine otii pellexit, insurgere paulatim, munia senatus, magistratum, legum in se trahere, nullo adversante, cum ferocissimi per acies aut proscriptioe cecidissent, ceteri nobilium, quanto quis servitio promp-

I. ROME at the outset was a city state under the government of kings: liberty and the consulate were institutions of Lucius Brutus. Dictatorships were always a temporary expedient: the decemviral office was dead within two years, nor was the consular authority of the military tribunes long-lived. Neither Cinna nor Sulla created a lasting despotism: Pompey and Crassus quickly forfeited their power to Caesar, and Lepidus and Antony their swords to Augustus, who, under the style of "Prince,"<sup>1</sup> gathered beneath his empire a world outworn by civil broils.<sup>2</sup> But, while the glories and disasters of the old Roman commonwealth have been chronicled by famous pens, and intellects of distinction were not lacking to tell the tale of the Augustan age, until the rising tide of sycophancy deterred them, the histories of Tiberius and Caligula, of Claudius and Nero, were falsified through cowardice while they flourished, and composed, when they fell, under the influence of still rankling hatreds. Hence my design, to treat a small part (the concluding one) of Augustus' reign, then the principate of Tiberius and its sequel, without anger and without partiality, from the motives of which I stand sufficiently removed.

II. When the killing of Brutus and Cassius had disarmed the Republic; when Pompey had been crushed in Sicily,<sup>1</sup> and, with Lepidus thrown aside and Antony slain, even the Julian party was leaderless but for the Caesar; after laying down his triumviral title and proclaiming himself a simple consul content with tribunician authority to safeguard the commons, he first conciliated the army by gratuities, the



tior, opibus et honoribus extollerentur ac novis ex rebus aucti, tuta et praesentia quam vetera et periculosa mallent.

populace by cheapened corn, the world by the amenities of peace, then step by step began to make his ascent and to unite in his own person the functions of the senate, the magistracy, and the legislature. Opposition there was none: the boldest spirits had succumbed on stricken fields or by proscription-lists; while the rest of the nobility found a cheerful acceptance of slavery the smoothest road to wealth and office, and, as they had thriven on revolution, stood now for the new order and safety in preference to the old order and adventure.

Band 2: I, 72-73, Nomen patris - dis curae

Nomen patris patriae Tiberius, a populo saepius ingestum repudiavit; neque in acta sua iurari, quamquam censente senatu, permisit, cuncta mortalium incerta, quantoque plus adeptus foret, tanto se magis in lubrico dictitans.<sup>1</sup> Non tamen ideo faciebat fidem civilis animi; nam legem maiestatis reduxerat, cui nomen apud veteres idem, sed alia in iudicium veniebant, si quis prodicione exercitum aut<sup>2</sup> plebem seditionibus, denique male gesta re publica maiestatem populi Romani minuisset: facta arguebantur, dicta inpune erant. Primus Augustus cognitionem de famosis libellis specie legis eius tractavit, commotus Cassii Severi libidine, qua viros feminasque illustres procacibus scriptis diffamaverat; mox Tiberius, consultante Pompeio Macro praetore an iudicia maiestatis redderentur, exercendas leges esse respondit. Hunc quoque asperavere carmina incertis auctoribus vulgata in saevitiam superbiamque eius et discordem cum matre animum.

LXXIII. Haud pigebit referre in Falanio et Rubrio, modicis equitibus Romanis, praetemptata crimina, ut quibus initiis, quanta Tiberii arte gravissimum exitium inreperit, dein repressum sit, postremo arserit cunctaque corripuerit, noscatur. Falanio obiciebat accusator, quod inter cultores Augusti, qui per omnis domos in modum collegiorum habebantur, Cassium quendam, mimum corpore infamem, adscivisset, quodque venditis hortis statuum Augusti simul mancipasset. Rubrio crimini dabatur violatum periurio numen<sup>1</sup> Augusti. Quae ubi Tiberio notuere, scripsit consulibus non ideo decretum patri suo caelum, ut in perniciem civium is honor verteretur. Cassium histrionem solitum inter alios eiusdem artis interesse ludis, quos mater sua in memoriam Augusti sacrasset; nec contra religiones fieri, quod effigies eius, ut alia numinum simulacra, venditionibus hortorum et domuum accedant. Ius iurandum perinde aestimandum quam si Iovem fefellisset: deorum iniurias dis curae.

Tiberius rejected the title *Father of his Country*,<sup>2</sup> though it had been repeatedly pressed upon him by the people: and, disregarding a vote of the senate, refused to allow the taking of an oath to obey his enactments.<sup>3</sup> "All human affairs," so ran his comment, "were uncertain, and the higher he climbed the more slippery his position." Yet even so he failed to inspire the belief that his sentiments were not monarchical.<sup>4</sup> For he had resuscitated the *Lex Majestatis*, a statute which in the old jurisprudence had carried the same name but covered a different type of offence—betrayal of an army; seditious incitement of the populace; any act, in short, of official maladministration diminishing the "majesty of the Roman nation." Deeds were challenged, words went immune. The first to take cognizance of written libel under the statute was Augustus; who was provoked to the step by the effrontery with which Cassius Severus<sup>5</sup> had blackened the characters of men and women of repute in his scandalous effusions: then Tiberius, to an inquiry put by the praetor, Pompeius Macer, whether process should still be granted on this statute, replied that "the law ought to take its course." He, too, had been ruffled by verses of unknown authorship satirizing his cruelty, his arrogance, and his estrangement from his mother.

LXXIII. It will not be unremunerative to recall the first, tentative charges brought in the case of Falanius and Rubrius, two Roman knights of modest position; if only to show from what beginnings, thanks to the art of Tiberius, the accursed thing crept in, and, after a temporary check, at last broke out, an all-devouring conflagration.<sup>1</sup> Against Falanius the accuser alleged that he had admitted a certain Cassius, mime and catamite, among the "votaries of Augustus," who were maintained, after the fashion of fraternities, in all the great houses: also, that when selling his gardens, he had parted with a statue of Augustus as well. To Rubrius the crime imputed was violation of the deity of Augustus by perjury. When the facts came to the knowledge of Tiberius, he wrote to the consuls that a place in heaven had not been decreed to his father in order that the honour might be turned to the destruction of his countrymen. Cassius, the actor, with others of his trade, had regularly taken part in the games which his own mother had consecrated to the memory of Augustus<sup>2</sup>; nor was it an act of sacrilege, if the effigies of that sovereign, like other images of other gods, went with the property, whenever a house or garden was sold. As to the perjury, it was on the same footing as if the defendant had taken the name of Jupiter in vain: the gods must look to their own wrongs.<sup>3</sup>

Band 3: VI, 22, Sed mihi - tulerit

XXII. Sed mihi haec ac talia audienti in incerto iudicium est, fatone res mortalium et necessitate immutabili an forte volvantur. Quippe sapientissimi

XXII. For myself, when I listen to this and similar narratives, my judgement wavers. Is the revolution of human things governed by fate and

mos veterum quique sectas<sup>1</sup> eorum aemulantur diversos reperies, ac multis insitam opinionem non initia nostri, non finem, non denique homines dis curae; ideo creberrime tristia in bonos, laeta apud deteriores esse. Contra alii fatum quidem congruere rebus putant, sed non e vagis stellis, verum apud principia et nexus naturalium caesarum; ac tamen electionem vitae nobis relinquunt, quam ubi elegeris, certum imminentium ordinem. Neque mala vel bona, quae vulgus putet: multos, qui conflictari adversis videantur, beatos, at plerosque quamquam magnas per opes miserrimos, si illi gravem fortunam constanter tolerant, hi prospera inconsulte utantur. Ceterum plurimis mortalium non eximitur, quin primo cuiusque ortu ventura destinentur, sed quaedam secus quam dicta sint cadere, fallaciis ignara dicentium: ita corrumpi fidem artis, cuius clara documenta et antiqua aetas et nostra tulerit.

Band 4: VI, 51, Pater ei - utebatur

LI. Pater ei Nero et utrimque origo gentis Claudiae, quamquam mater in Liviam et mox Iuliam familiam adoptionibus transierit. Casus prima ab infantia ancipites; nam proscriptum patrem exul secutus, ubi domum Augusti privignus introiit, multis aemulis conflictatus est, dum Marcellus et Agrippa, mox Gaius Luciusque Caesares viguerunt; etiam frater eius Drusus prosperiore civium amore erat. Sed maxime in lubrico egit accepta in matrimonium Iulia, inpudicitiam uxoris tolerans aut declinans. Dein Rhodo regressus vacuos principis penatis duodecim annis, mox rei Romanae arbitrium tribus ferme et viginti obtinuit. Morum quoque tempora illi diversa: egregium vita famaue, quoad privatus vel in imperiis sub Augusto fuit; occultum ac subdolum fingendis virtutibus, donec Germanicus ac Drusus superfuere; idem inter bona malaque mixtus incolumi matre; intestabilis saevitia, sed obtectis libidinibus, dum Seianum dilexit timuitque: postremo in scelera simul ac dedecora prorupit, postquam remoto pudore et metu suo tantum ingenio utebatur.

Band 5: XI, 24, His atque talibus - exempla erit

XXIV. His atque talibus haud permotus princeps et statim contra disseruit et vocato senatu ita exorsus est: "Majores mei, quorum antiquissimus Clausus origine Sabina simul in civitatem Romanam et in familias patriciorum adscitus est, hortantur uti paribus consiliis in re publica<sup>1</sup> capessenda, transferendo huc quod usquam egregium fuerit. Neque enim ignoro Iulios Alba, Coruncanios Camerio, Porcios Tusculo, et ne vetera scrutemur, Etruria

changeless necessity, or by accident? You will find the wisest of the ancients, and the disciples attached to their tenets, at complete variance; in many of them<sup>1</sup> a fixed belief that Heaven concerns itself neither with our origins, nor with our ending, nor, in fine, with mankind, and that so adversity continually assails the good, while prosperity dwells among the evil. Others<sup>2</sup> hold, on the contrary, that, though there is certainly a fate in harmony with events, it does not emanate from wandering stars, but must be sought in the principles and processes of natural causation. Still, they leave us free to choose our life: that choice made, however, the order of the future is certain. Nor, they maintain, are evil and good what the crowd imagines: many who appear to be the sport of adverse circumstances are happy; numbers are wholly wretched though in the midst of great possessions—provided only that the former endure the strokes of fortunes with firmness, while the latter employ her favours with unwisdom. With most men, however, the faith is ineradicable that the future of an individual is ordained at the moment of his entry into life; but at times a prophecy is falsified by the event, through the dishonesty of the prophet who speaks he knows not what; and thus is debased the credit of an art, of which the most striking evidences have been furnished both in the ancient world and in our own.<sup>3</sup>

LI. The son of Nero,<sup>2</sup> on both sides he traced his origin to the Claudian house, though his mother, by successive acts of adoption, had passed into the Livian and, later, the Julian families. From earliest infancy he experienced the hazards of fortune. At first the exiled attendant of a proscribed father, he entered the house of Augustus in the quality of step-son; only to struggle against numerous rivals during the heyday of Marcellus and Agrippa and, later, of Gaius and Lucius Caesar; while even his brother Drusus was happier in the love of his countrymen. But his position was the most precarious after his preferment to the hand of Julia, when he had to tolerate, or to elude,<sup>1</sup> the infidelities of his wife. Then came the return from Rhodes; and he was master of the heirless imperial house for twelve years,<sup>2</sup> and later arbiter of the Roman world for virtually twenty-three. His character, again, has its separate epochs. There was a noble season in his life and fame while he lived a private citizen or a great official under Augustus; an inscrutable and disingenuous period of hypocritical virtues while Germanicus and Drusus remained: with his mother alive, he was still an amalgam of good and evil; so long as he loved, or feared, Sejanus, he was loathed for his cruelty, but his lust was veiled; finally, when the restraints of shame and fear were gone, and nothing remained but to follow his own bent, he plunged impartially into crime and into ignominy.<sup>3</sup>

XXIV. Unconvinced by these and similar arguments, the emperor not only stated his objections there and then, but, after convening the senate, addressed it as follows:<sup>5</sup>—"In my own ancestors, the eldest of whom, Clausus,<sup>6</sup> a Sabine by extraction, was made simultaneously a citizen and the head of a patrician house, I find encouragement to employ the same policy in my administration, by transferring hither all true excellence, let it be found where it will. For I am not unaware that the Julii



Lucaniaque et omni Italia in senatum accitos, postremo ipsam ad Alpes promotam, ut non modo singuli viritim, sed terrae, gentes in nomen nostrum coalescerent. Tunc solida domi quies et adversus externa floruit, cum Transpadani in civitatem recepti, cum specie deductarum per orbem terrae legionum additis provincialium validissimis fesso imperio subventum est. Num paenitet Balbos ex Hispania nec minus insignis viros e Gallia Narbonensi transivisse? Manent posterii eorum nec amore in hanc patriam nobis concedunt. Quid aliud exitio Lacedaemoniis et Atheniensibus fuit, quamquam armis pollerent, nisi quod victos pro alienigenis arcebant? At conditor nostri Romulus tantum sapientia valuit, ut plerosque populos eodem die hostis, dein civis habuerit. Advenae in nos regnaverunt: libertinorum filiis magistratus mandare non, ut plerique falluntur, repens, sed priori populo factitatum est. At cum Senonibus pugnativimus: scilicet Vulsci et Aequi numquam adversam nobis aciem instruxere. Capti a Gallis sumus: sed et Tuscis obsides dedimus et Samnitium iugum subimus.<sup>1</sup> Ac tamen,<sup>2</sup> si cuncta bella recenseas, nullum brevioris spatio quam adversus Gallos confectum: continua inde ac fida pax. Iam moribus artibus adfinitatibus nostris mixti aurum et opes suas inferant potius quam separati habeant. Omnia, patres conscripti, quae nunc vetustissima creduntur, nova fuere: plebeii magistratus post patricios, Latini post plebeios, ceterarum Italiae gentium post Latinos. Inveterascet hoc quoque, et quod hodie exemplis tuemur, inter exempla erit."

Band 6: XV, 44, Sed non ope - absumerentur

Sed non ope humana, non largitionibus principis aut deum placamentis decebat infamia, quin iussum incendium crederetur. Ergo abolendo rumori Nero subdidit reos et quaesitissimis poenis adfecit, quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat. Auctor nominis eius Christus Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio adfectus erat; repressaque in praesens exitiabilis superstitio rursus erumpbat, non modo per Iudaeam, originem eius mali, sed per urbem etiam, quo cuncta undique atrocitas aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque. Igitur primum correpti qui fatebantur, deinde indicio eorum multitudo ingens haud perinde in crimine incendii quam odio humani generis convicti sunt. Et pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergibus contexti laniatu canum interirent, † aut crucibus adfixi aut flammam mandati †, atque ubi defecisset dies, in usum nocturni luminis urerentur.<sup>1</sup> Hortos suos ei spectaculo Nero obtulerat et circense ludicrum edebat, habitu aurigae permixtus plebi vel curriculo insistens. Unde quamquam adversus sontis et novissima exempla meritis miseratio oriebatur, tamquam non utilitate publica, sed in saevitiam unius absumerentur.

came to us from Alba, the Coruncanii from Camerium,<sup>1</sup> the Porcii from Tusculum; that—not to scrutinize antiquity—members were drafted into the senate from Etruria, from Lucania, from the whole of Italy;<sup>2</sup> and that finally Italy itself was extended to the Alps,<sup>3</sup> in order that not individuals merely but countries and nationalities should form one body under the name of Romans. The day of stable peace at home and victory abroad came when the districts beyond the Po were admitted to citizenship, and, availing ourselves of the fact that our legions were settled throughout the globe, we added to them the stoutest of the provincials, and succoured a weary empire. Is it regretted that the Balbi crossed over from Spain and families equally distinguished from Narbonese Gaul? Their descendants remain; nor do they yield to ourselves in love for this native land of theirs. What else proved fatal to Lacedaemon and Athens, in spite of their power in arms, but their policy of holding the conquered aloof as alien-born? But the sagacity of our own founder Romulus was such that several times he fought and naturalized a people in the course of the same day! Strangers have been kings over us: the conferment of magistracies on the sons of freedmen is not the novelty which it is commonly and mistakenly thought, but a frequent practice of the old commonwealth.—'But we fought with the Senones.'—Then, presumably, the Volscians and Aequians<sup>1</sup> never drew up a line of battle against us.—'We were taken by the Gauls.'—But we also gave hostages to the Tuscans<sup>2</sup> and underwent the yoke of the Samnites.<sup>3</sup>—And yet, if you survey the whole of our wars, not one was finished within a shorter period<sup>4</sup> than that against the Gauls: thenceforward there has been a continuous and loyal peace. Now that customs, culture, and the ties of marriage have blended them with ourselves, let them bring among us their gold and their riches instead of retaining them beyond the pale! All, Conscript Fathers, that is now believed supremely old has been new: plebeian magistrates followed the patrician; Latin, the plebeian; magistrates from the other races of Italy, the Latin. Our innovation, too, will be parcel of the past, and what to-day we defend by precedents will rank among precedents."

But neither human help, nor imperial munificence, nor all the modes of placating Heaven, could stifle scandal or dispel the belief that the fire had taken place by order. Therefore, to scotch the rumour, Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices,<sup>1</sup> whom the crowd styled Christians.<sup>2</sup> Christus, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus,<sup>3</sup> and the pernicious superstition was checked for a moment, only to break out once more, not merely in Judaea, the home of the disease, but in the capital itself, where all things horrible or shameful in the world collect and find a vogue. First, then, the confessed members of the sect were arrested; next, on their disclosures, vast numbers<sup>1</sup> were convicted, not so much on the count of arson as for hatred of the human race.<sup>2</sup> And derision accompanied their end: they were covered with wild beasts' skins and torn to death by dogs; or they were fastened on crosses, and, when daylight failed were burned to serve as lamps by night. Nero had offered his Gardens for the spectacle, and gave an exhibition

<sup>1</sup> So the *Mediceus*, corruptly and, it would seem, defectively; nor is it possible to restore the original with the help of the version of *Sulpicius Severus* (about 400 A.D.):—interirent, multi crucibus adfixi aut flamma usti, plerique in id reservati ut, cum defecisse e.q.s. (*Chron. ii. 29*). *Nipperdey* cut the knot by cancelling aut crucibus . . . flammandi.

in his Circus, mixing with the crowd in the habit of a charioteer, or mounted on his car. Hence, in spite of a guilt which had earned the most exemplary punishment, there arose a sentiment of pity, due to the impression that they were being sacrificed not for the welfare of the state but to the ferocity of a single man.

#### Band 7: XVI, 34-35, Tum ad Thraseam - exemplis

XXXIV. Tum ad Thraseam in hortis agentem quaestor consulis missus vesperascente iam die. Inlustrium virorum feminarumque coetum frequentem<sup>1</sup> egerat, maxime intentus Demetrio Cynicae institutionis doctori, cum quo, ut coniectare erat intentione vultus et auditus, si qua clarius proloquebantur, de natura animae et dissociatione spiritus corporisque inquirebat, donec advenit Domitius Caecilianus ex intimis amicis et ei quid senatus censuisset exposuit. Igitur flentis queritantisque, qui aderant, facessere prope Thrasea neu<sup>2</sup> pericula sua miscere cum sorte damnati hortatur, Arriamque temptantem mariti suprema et exemplum Arriae matris sequi monet retinere vitam filiaeque communi subsidium unicum non adimere.

XXXV. Tum progressus in porticum illic a quaestore reperitur, lactitiae propior, quia Helvidium generum suum Italia tantum arceri cognoverat. Accepto dehinc senatus consulto Helvidium et Demetrium in cubiculum inducit; porrectisque utriusque brachii venis, postquam cruorem effudit, humum super spargens, propius vocato quaestore, "Libamus" inquit "Iovi liberatori. Specta, iuvenis; et omen quidem di prohibeant, ceterum in ea tempora natus es, quibus firmare animum expediat constantibus exemplis."

XXXIV. The consul's quaestor was then sent to Thrasea: he was spending the time in his gardens, and the day was already closing in for evening. He had brought together a large party of distinguished men and women, his chief attention being given to Demetrius,<sup>2</sup> a master of the Cynic creed; with whom—to judge from his serious looks and the few words which caught the ear, when they chanced to raise their voices—he was debating the nature of the soul and the divorce of spirit and body. At last, Domitius Caecilianus, an intimate friend, arrived, and informed him of the decision reached by the senate. Accordingly, among the tears and expostulations of the company, Thrasea urged them to leave quickly, without linking their own hazardous lot to the fate of a condemned man. Arria,<sup>3</sup> who aspired to follow her husband's ending and the precedent set by her mother and namesake, he advised to keep her life and not deprive the child of their union of her one support.<sup>1</sup>

XXXV. He now walked on to the colonnade; where the quaestor found him nearer to joy than to sorrow, because he had ascertained that Helvidius, his son-in-law, was merely debarred from Italy. Then, taking the decree of the senate, he led Helvidius and Demetrius into his bedroom, offered the arteries of both arms to the knife, and, when the blood had begun to flow, sprinkled it upon the ground, and called the quaestor nearer: "We are making a libation," he said, "to Jove the Liberator. Look, young man, and—may Heaven, indeed, avert the omen, but you have been born into times when it is expedient to steel the mind with instances of firmness."

## SIDE II THE HISTORIES OF TACITUS

### Band 8: I, 1, Initium - licet

I. INITIUM mihi operis Servius Galba iterum Titus Vinius consules erunt. Nam post conditam urbem octingentos et viginti prioris aevi annos multi auctores rettulerunt, dum res populi Romani memorabantur pari eloquentia ac libertate: postquam bellatum apud Actium atque omnem potentiam ad unum conferri pacis interfuit, magna illa ingenia cessere; simul veritas pluribus modis infracta, primum inscitia rei publicae ut alienae, mox libidine adsentandi aut rursus odio adversus dominantis. Ita neutris cura posteritatis inter infensos vel obnoxios. Sed ambitionem scriptoris facile averseris,<sup>1</sup> obtrectatio et livor pronis auribus accipiuntur; quippe adulationi foedum crimen servitutis, malignitati falsa species libertatis inest. Mihi Galba Otho Vitellius nec beneficio nec iniuria cogniti. Dignitatem nostram a Vespasiano inchoatam, a Tito auctam, a Domitiano longius provectam non abnuerim: sed incorruptam fidem professis neque amore quisquam et sine odio dicendus est. Quod si vita suppeditet, principatum divi Nervae et imperium Traiani, uberem securiorumque materiam, senectuti seposui, rara temporum

I. I BEGIN my work with the second consulship of Servius Galba, when Titus Vinius was his colleague.<sup>1</sup> Many historians have treated of the earlier period of eight hundred and twenty years from the founding of Rome, and while dealing with the Republic they have written with equal eloquence and freedom.<sup>2</sup> But after the battle of Actium, when the interests of peace required that all power should be concentrated in the hands of one man,<sup>3</sup> writers of like ability disappeared; and at the same time historical truth was impaired in many ways: first, because men were ignorant of politics as though they were not their concern; later, because of their passionate desire to flatter; or again, because of their hatred of their masters. So between the hostility of the one class and the servility of the other, posterity was disregarded. But while men quickly turn from a historian who carries favour, they listen with ready ears to calumny and spite; for flattery is subject to the shameful charge of servility, but malignity makes a false show of independence. In my own case I had no acquaintance with Galba, Otho, or Vitellius, through either kindness or injury at their hands. I



felicitate ubi sentire quae velis et quae sentias dicere licet.

Band 9: I, 2-3, Opus - ultionem

II. Opus adgredior opimum casibus,<sup>1</sup> atrox proeliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace saevum. Quattuor principes ferro interempti: trina bella civilia, plura externa ac plerumque permixta: prosperae in Oriente, adversae in Occidente res: turbatum<sup>2</sup> Illyricum, Galliae nutantes, perdomita Britannia et statim omissa<sup>3</sup>: coortae in nos Sarmatarum ac Sueborum gentes, nobilitatus cladibus mutuis Dacus, mota prope etiam Parthorum arma falsi Neronis ludibrio. Iam vero Italia novis cladibus vel post longam saeculorum seriem repetitis adficta. Haustae aut obrutae urbes, fecundissima Campaniae ora; et urbs incendiis vastata, consumptis antiquissimis delubris, ipso Capitolio civium manibus incenso. Pollutae caerimoniae, magna adulteria: plenum exiliis mare, infecti caedibus scopuli. Atrocius in urbe saevitum: nobilitas, opes, omissi gestique honores pro crimine et ob virtutes certissimum exitium. Nec minus praemia delatorum invisae quam scelera, cum alii sacerdotia et consulatus ut spolia adepti, procurationes alii et interiorum potentiam, agerent verterent cuncta odio et terrore. Corrupti in dominos servi, in patronos liberti; et quibus deerat inimicus per amicos oppressi.

III. Non tamen adeo virtutum sterile saeculum ut non et bona exempla prodiderit. Comitatae profugos liberos matres, secutae maritos in exilia coniuges: propinqui audentes, constantes generi, contumax etiam adversus tormenta servorum fides; supremae clarorum virorum necessitates fortiter toleratae<sup>1</sup> et laudatis antiquorum mortibus pares exitus. Praeter multiplicis rerum humanarum casus caelo terraque prodigia et fulminum monitus et futurorum praesagia, laeta tristia, ambigua manifesta; nec enim umquam atrocioribus populi Romani cladibus magisve iustis indicibus adprobaturum est non esse curae deis securitatem nostram, esse ultionem.

cannot deny that my political career owed its beginning to Vespasian; that Titus advanced it; and that Domitian carried it far forward;<sup>1</sup> but those who profess inviolable fidelity to truth must write of no man with affection or with hatred. Yet if my life but last, I have reserved for my old age the history of the deified Nerva's reign and of Trajan's rule, a richer and less perilous subject, because of the rare good fortune of an age in which we may feel what we wish and may say what we feel.<sup>2</sup>

II. The history on which I am entering is that of a period rich in disasters, terrible with battles, torn by civil struggles, horrible even in peace. Four emperors fell by the sword;<sup>3</sup> there were three civil wars, more foreign wars, and often both at the same time. There was success in the East, misfortune in the West. Illyricum was disturbed, the Gallic provinces wavering, Britain subdued and immediately let go.<sup>4</sup> The Sarmatae and Suebi rose against us; the Dacians won fame by defeats inflicted and suffered; even the Parthians were almost roused to arms through the trickery of a pretended Nero.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Italy was distressed by disasters unknown before or returning after the lapse of ages. Cities on the rich fertile shores of Campania were swallowed up or overwhelmed;<sup>1</sup> Rome was devastated by conflagrations, in which her most ancient shrines were consumed and the very Capitol fired by citizens' hands.<sup>2</sup> Sacred rites were defiled; there were adulteries in high places. The sea was filled with exiles, its cliffs made foul with the bodies of the dead. In Rome there was more awful cruelty. High birth, wealth, the refusal or acceptance of office—all gave ground for accusations, and virtues caused the surest ruin. The rewards of the informers were no less hateful than their crimes; for some, gaining priesthoods and consulships as spoils, others, obtaining positions as imperial agents and secret influence at court, robbed and ruined without limit, inspiring universal hatred and terror. Slaves were corrupted against their masters, freedmen against their patrons; and those who had no enemy were crushed by their friends.

III. Yet this age was not so barren of virtue that it did not display noble examples. Mothers accompanied their children in flight; wives followed their husbands into exile; relatives displayed courage, sons-in-law firmness, slaves a fidelity which defied even torture. Eminent men met the last necessity with fortitude, rivalling in their end the glorious deaths of antiquity. Besides the manifold misfortunes that befell mankind, there were prodigies in the sky and on the earth, warnings given by thunderbolts, and prophecies of the future, both joyful and gloomy, uncertain and clear. For never was it more fully proved by awful disasters of the Roman people or by indubitable signs that the gods care not for our safety, but for our punishment.

Band 10: I, 49, Hunc exitum - imperasset

Hunc exitum habuit Servius Galba, tribus et septuaginta annis quinque principes prospera fortuna emensus et alieno imperio felicior quam suo. Vetus in familia nobilitas, magnae opes: ipsi medium ingenium, magis<sup>1</sup> extra vitia quam cum virtutibus. Famae nec incuriosus nec venditor; pecuniae alienae non adpetens, suae parcus, publicae avarus; amicorum libertorumque, ubi in bonos inci-

This was the end of Servius Galba. He had lived seventy-three years, through the reigns of five emperors, with good fortune, and he was happier under the rule of others than in his own. His family was of the ancient nobility and possessed great wealth. Galba himself was of mediocre genius, being rather free from faults than possessing virtues. He was neither careless of reputation nor one who cared to boast of it. He was not greedy for another's property; he was frugal with his own, stingy with



disset, sine reprehensione patiens, si mali forent, usque ad culpam ignarus. Sed claritas natalium et metus temporum obtentui, ut, quod segnitia erat, sapientia vocaretur. Dum vigebat aetas militari laude apud Germanias floruit. Pro consule Africam modcrate, iam senior citeriorem Hispaniam pari iustitia continuit, maior privato visus dum privatus fuit, et omnium consensu capax imperii nisi imperasset.

Band 11: III, 33, Quadraginta - defensum

XXXIII. Quadraginta armatorum milia inrupere, calonum lixarumque amplior numerus et in libidinem ac saevitiam corruptior. Non dignitas, non aetas protegebat quo minus stupra caedibus, caedes stupris miscerentur. Grandaevos senes, exacta aetate feminas, vilis ad praedam, in ludibrium trahebant: ubi adulta virgo aut quis forma conspicuus incidisset, vi manibusque rapientium divulsus ipsos postremo direptores in mutuam perniciem agebat. Dum pecuniam vel gravia auro templorum dona sibi quisque trahunt, maiore aliorum vi truncabantur. Quidam obvia aspernati verberibus tormentisque dominorum abdita scrutari, defossa eruere: faces in manibus, quas, ubi praedam egresserant, in vacuas domos et inania templa per lasciviam iaculabantur; utque exercitu vario linguis moribus, cui cives socii externi interessent, diversae cupidines et aliud cuique fas nec quicquam illicitum. Per quadriduum Cremona suffecit. Cum omnia sacra profanaque in ignem<sup>1</sup> considerent, solum Mefitis templum stetit ante moenia, loco seu numine defensum.

Band 12: IV, 5-6, Helvidius - requirementium

Helvidius Priscus [regione Italiae Carecina] e municipio Cluviis,<sup>1</sup> patre, qui ordinem primi pili duxisset, ingenium inlustre altioribus studiis iuvenis admodum dedit, non, ut plerique, ut nomine magnifico segne otium velaret, sed quo firmior adversus fortuita rem publicam capesseret. Doctores sapientiae secutus est, qui sola bona quae honesta, mala tantum quae turpia, potentiam nobilitatem ceteraque extra animum neque bonis neque malis adnumerant. Quaestorius adhuc a Pacto Thrasea gener delectus e moribus soceri nihil aeque ac libertatem hausit, civis, senator, maritus, gener, amicus, cunctis vitae officiis aequabilis, opum contemptor, recti pervicax, constans adversus metus.

VI. Erant quibus adpetentior famae videretur, quando etiam sapientibus cupido gloriae novissima exuitur. Ruina soceri in exilium pulsus, ut Galbae principatu rediit, Marcellum Eprum, delatorem Thraseae, accusare adgreditur. Ea ultio, incertum maior an iustior, senatum in studia diduxerat: nam si caderet Marcellus, agmen reorum sternebatur. Primo minax certamen et egregiis utriusque orationibus

the state's. Kindly and complacent toward friends and freedmen, if he found them honest; if they were dishonest, he was blind even to a fault. But his high birth and the terror which the times inspired masked the truth, so that men called wisdom what was really indolence. While he was vigorous physically, he enjoyed a reputation for his military service in the German provinces. As proconsul he governed Africa with moderation and, when he was already an old man, ruled Hither Spain with the same uprightness. He seemed too great to be a subject so long as he was subject, and all would have agreed that he was equal to the imperial office if he had never held it.

XXXIII. Forty thousand armed men burst into the town; the number of camp-followers and servants was even greater, and they were more ready to indulge in lust and cruelty. Neither rank nor years protected anyone; their assailants debauched and killed without distinction. Aged men and women near the end of life, though despised as booty, were dragged off to be the soldiers' sport. Whenever a young woman or a handsome youth fell into their hands, they were torn to pieces by the violent struggles of those who tried to secure them, and this in the end drove the despoilers to kill one another. Individuals tried to carry off for themselves money or, the masses of gold dedicated in the temples, but they were assailed and slain by others stronger than themselves. Some, scorning the booty before their eyes, flogged and tortured the owners to discover hidden wealth and dug up buried treasure. They carried firebrands in their hands, and when they had secured their loot, in utter wantonness they threw these into the vacant houses and empty temples. In this army there were many passions corresponding to the variety of speech and customs, for it was made up of citizens, allies, and foreigners; no two held the same thing sacred and there was no crime which was held unlawful. For four days did Cremona supply food for destruction. When everything sacred and profane sank into the flames, there stood solitary outside the walls the temple of Mefitis,<sup>1</sup> protected by either its position or its deity.

Helvidius Priscus was born in the town of Cluviae [in the district of Caracina<sup>2</sup>]. His father had been a centurion of the first rank. In his early youth Helvidius devoted his extraordinary talents to the higher studies, not as most youths do, in order to cloak a useless leisure with a pretentious name, but that he might enter public life better fortified against the chances of fortune. He followed those teachers of philosophy who count only those things "good" which are morally right and only those things "evil" which are base, and who reckon power, high birth, and everything else that is beyond the control of the will as neither good nor bad.<sup>3</sup> After he had held only the quaestorship, he was selected by Pactus Thrasea to be his son-in-law;<sup>4</sup> from the character of his father-in-law he derived above everything the spirit of freedom; as citizen, senator, husband, son-in-law, and friend he showed himself equal to all of life's duties, despising riches, determined in the right, unmoved by fear.

VI. Some thought that he was rather too eager for fame, since the passion for glory is that from which even philosophers last divest themselves. Driven into exile by the ruin of his father-in-law, he returned



testatum; mox dubia voluntate Galbae, multis senatorum deprecantibus, omisit Priscus, variis, ut sunt hominum ingenia, sermonibus moderationem laudantium aut constantiam requirentium.

## AGRICOLA

### Band 13: 2-3, Legimus - venimus

2 Legimus, cum Aruleno Rustico Paetus Thrasca, Senecioni Herennio<sup>1</sup> Priscus Helvidius laudati essent, capitale fuisse, neque in ipsos modo auctores, sed in libros quoque eorum saevitum, delegato triumviris ministerio ut monumenta clarissimorum ingeniorum in comitio ac foro urerentur. scilicet illo igne vocem populi Romani et libertatem senatus et conscientiam generis humani aboleri arbitrabantur, expulsis insuper sapientiae professoribus atque omni bona arte in exilium acta, ne quid usquam honestum occurreret. dedimus profecto grande patientiae documentum; et sicut vetus aetas vidit quid ultimum in libertate esset, ita nos quid in servitute, adempto per inquisitiones etiam loquendi audiendique commercio. memoriam quoque ipsam cum voce perdidissemus, si tam in nostra potestate esset oblivisci quam tacere.

3 Nunc demum redit animus; set quamquam primo statim beatissimi saeculi ortu Nerva Caesar res olim dissociabiles miscuerit, principatum ac libertatem, augetque quotidie felicitatem temporum Nerva Traianus, nec spem modo ac votum securitas publica, sed ipsius voti fiduciam ac robur adsumpserit, natura tamen infirmitatis humanae tardiora sunt remedia quam mala; et ut corpora nostra lente augescunt, cito extinguuntur, sic ingenia studiaque oppresseris facilius quam revocaveris: subit quippe etiam ipsius inertiae dulcedo, et invisae primo desidia postremo amatur. quid? si per quindecim annos, grande mortalis aevi spatium, multi fortuitis casibus, promptissimus quisque saevitia principis interciderunt, pauci, ut ita dixerim, non modo aliorum sed etiam nostri superstites sumus, exemptis e media vita tot annis, quibus iuvenes ad senectutem, senes prope ad ipsos exactae aetatis terminos per silentium venimus.

under Galba and brought charges against Marcellus Eprius, who had informed against Thrasea.<sup>1</sup> This attempt to avenge him, at once notable and just, divided the senators: for if Marcellus fell, it was the ruin of a host of the guilty. At first the struggle was threatening, as is proved by the eloquent speeches on both sides; later, since Galba's attitude was uncertain, Priscus yielded to many appeals from his fellow senators and gave up the prosecution. This action called forth varied comments according to the nature of those who made them, some praising his moderation, others regretting his lack of firmness.

It is recorded that when Rusticus Arulenus<sup>1</sup> extolled Thrasea Paetus, when Herennius Senecio extolled Helvidius Priscus, their praise became a capital offence, so that persecution fell not merely on the authors themselves but on the very books: to the public hangman, in fact, was given the task of burning in the courtyard of the Forum the memorials of our noblest characters.

They imagined, no doubt, that in those flames disappeared the voice of the people, the liberty of the Senate, the conscience of mankind; especially as the votaries of Philosophy also were expelled, and all liberal culture exiled, in order that nowhere might anything of good report present itself to men's eyes.

Assuredly we have furnished a signal proof of our submissiveness; and even as former generations witnessed the utmost excesses of liberty, so have we the extremes of slavery; wherein our "Inquisitors"<sup>2</sup> have deprived us even of the give and take of conversation. We should have lost memory itself as well as voice, had forgetfulness been as easy as silence.

Now at last heart is coming back to us: from the first, from the very outset of this happy age, Nerva has united things long incompatible, Empire and liberty; Trajan is increasing daily the happiness of the times; and public confidence has not merely learned to hope and pray, but has received security for the fulfilment of its prayers and even the substance thereof. Though it is true that from the nature of human frailty cure operates more slowly than disease, and as the body itself is slow to grow and quick to decay, so also it is easier to damp men's spirits and their enthusiasm than to revive them: nay, listlessness itself has a certain subtle charm, and the languor we hate at first we learn to love: what else were possible? For the term of fifteen years, a large space in human life, chance and change have been cutting off many among us; others, and the most energetic, have perished by the Emperor's ferocity; while the few who remain have outlived not merely their neighbours but, so to say, themselves; for out of their prime have been blotted fifteen years, during which mature men reached old age and old men the very bounds almost of decrepitude, and all without opening their lips.



30 "Quotiens causas belli et necessitatem nostram

intueor, magnus mihi animus est hodiernum diem consensumque vestrum initium libertatis toti Britanniae fore; nam et universi servitutis expertes et nullae ultra terrae ac ne mare quidem securum imminente nobis classe Romana. ita proelium atque arma, quae fortibus honesta, eadem etiam ignavis tutissima sunt. priores pugnae, quibus adversus Romanos varia fortuna certatum est, spem ac subsidium in nostris manibus habebant, quia nobilissimi totius Britanniae eoque in ipsis penetrabilibus siti nec servientium litora aspicientes, oculos quoque a contactu dominationis inviolatos habebamus. nos terrarum ac libertatis extremos recessus ipse ac sinus famae in hunc diem defendit; atque omne ignotum pro magnifico est: sed nunc terminus Britanniae patet, nulla iam ultra gens, nihil nisi fluctus et saxa, et infestiores Romani, quorum superbiam frustra per obsequium ac modestiam effugeris. raptores orbis, postquam cuncta vastantibus defuere terrae, iam et mare scrutantur: si locuples hostis est, avari, si pauper, ambitiosi, quos non Oriens, non Occidens satiaverit: soli omnium opes atque inopiam pari affectu concupiscunt. auferre trucidare rapere falsis nominibus imperium, atque ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant.

"As often as I survey the causes of this war and our present straits, my heart beats high that this very day and this unity of ours will be the beginning of liberty for all Britain. We are all of us untouched yet by slavery: there is no other land behind us, and the very sea even is no longer free from alarms, now that the fleet of Rome threatens us. Battle therefore and arms, the strong man's pride, are also the coward's best safety. Former battles in which Rome was resisted left behind them hopes of help in us, because we, the noblest souls in all Britain, the dwellers in its inner shrine, had never seen the shores of slavery and had preserved our very eyes from the desecration and the contamination of tyranny: here at the world's end, on its last inch of liberty, we have lived unmolested to this day, in this sequestered nook of story; for the unknown is ever magnified.

"But to-day the uttermost parts of Britain are laid bare; there are no other tribes to come; nothing but sea and cliffs and these more deadly Romans, whose arrogance you shun in vain by obedience and self-restraint. Harriers of the world, now that earth fails their all-devastating hands, they probe even the sea: if their enemy have wealth, they have greed; if he be poor, they are ambitious; East nor West has glutted them; alone of mankind they behold with the same passion of concupiscence waste alike and want. To plunder, butcher, steal, these things they misname empire: they make a desolation and they call it peace.

Band 15: 44-45, Nam sicut - muniebat

nam sicut iuaret durare<sup>1</sup> in hanc beatissimi saeculi lucem ac principem Traianum videre, quod augurio votisque apud nostras auras ominabatur, ita festinatae mortis grande solacium tulit evasisse postremum illud tempus, quo Domitianus non iam per intervalla ac spiramenta temporum, sed continuo et velut uno ictu rem publicam exhaustit.

45 Non vidit Agricola obsessam curiam et clausum armis senatum et eadem strage tot consularium caedes, tot nobilissimarum feminarum exilia et fugas. una adhuc victoria Carus Metius censebatur, et intra Albanam arcem sententia Messalini strepebat, et Massa Baebius tum reus erat: mox nostrae duxere Helvidium in carcerem manus; nos Mauricum Rusticumque divisimus,<sup>2</sup> nos innocenti sanguine Senecio perfudit. Nero tamen subtraxit oculos suos iussitque scelera, non spectavit: praecipua sub Domitiano miseriarum pars erat videre et aspici, cum suspiria nostra subscriberentur, cum denotandis tot hominum palloribus sufficeret saevus ille vultus et rubor, quo se contra pudorem muniebat.

For though it would have suited him to survive to the light of this happy age, and to see Trajan ruling—a consummation which he prognosticated in our hearing alike in prayer and prophecy—yet he reaped a great compensation for his premature death, in escaping those last days wherein Domitian no longer fitfully and with breathing spaces, but with one continuous and, so to speak, single blow, poured forth the life-blood of the state.

It was not his fate to see the Senate-house besieged, the Senate surrounded by armed men, and in the same reign of terror so many consulars butchered, the flight and exile of so many honourable women. Metius Carus was still rated at one victory only; Messalinus' rasping voice was confined to the Alban council-chamber; and Baebius Massa was at that time in prison. A little while and our hands it was which dragged Helvidius to his dungeon; we it was who put asunder<sup>1</sup> Mauricus and Rusticus; Senecio bathed us in his unoffending blood. Nero after all withdrew his eyes, nor contemplated the crimes he authorised. Under Domitian it was no small part of our sufferings that we saw him and were seen of him; that our sighs were counted in his books; that not a pale cheek of all that company escaped those brutal eyes, that crimson face which flushed continually lest shame should unawares surprise it.<sup>2</sup>

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